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Monson** (p.47)

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THE NEW MISSIONARY DISCUSSIONS AND THE FUTURE OF CORRELATION

By John-Charles Duffy

September 2005—\$5.95



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THE CHRIST OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

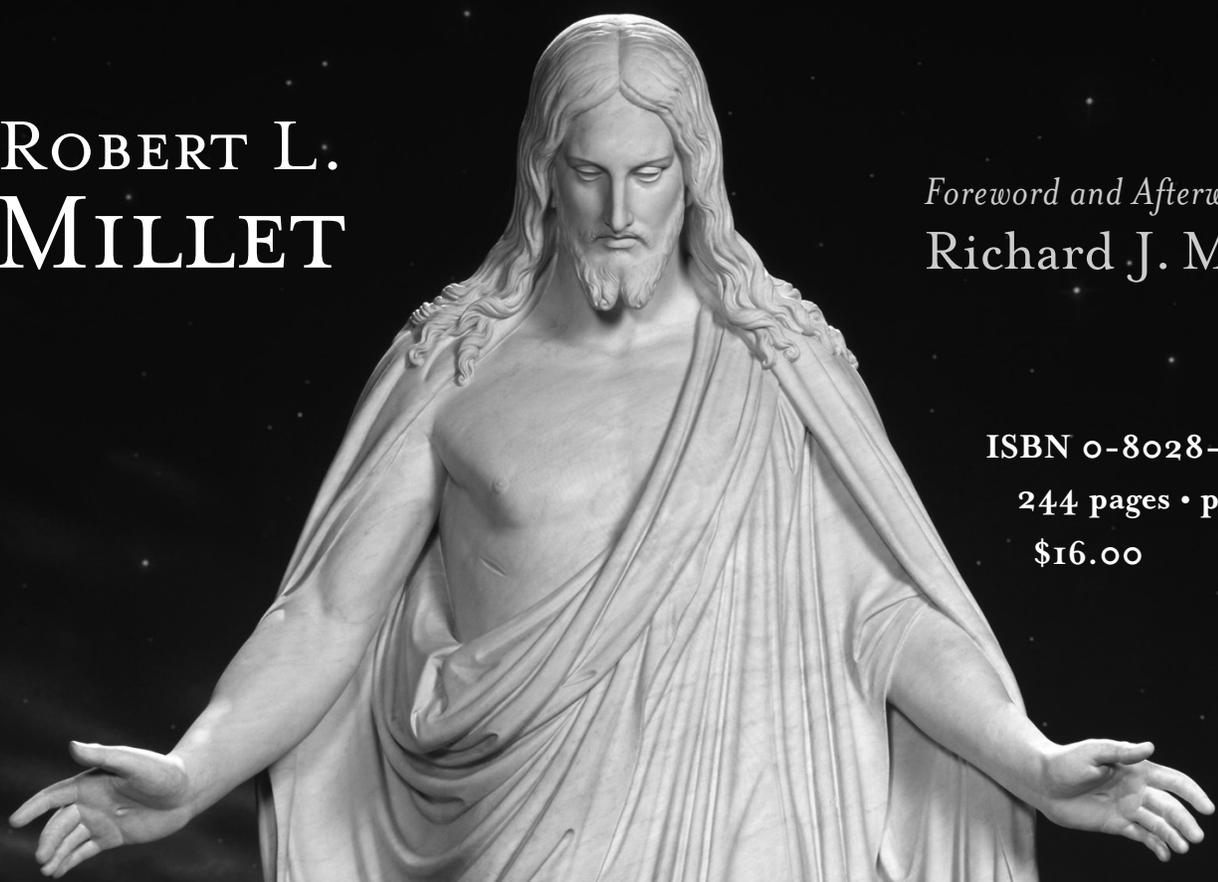
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NOMINAL CONVERSION

THROUGH THE YEARS, I HAVE enjoyed D. Michael Quinn's thoughtful, deeply felt, and wonderfully researched inspections of life. And so the first article I read in the May 2005 SUNSTONE was his, "To Whom Shall We Go? Historical Patterns of Restoration Believers with Serious Doubts." I was not disappointed in what he had to say, but I worry that his approach is so sweeping and inclusive that it would lead readers to assume that most of those considered "less active" Church members or outright deserters reached that point through incidents so deeply scaring as to mutilate their belief system.

The article's subtitle suggests that disengaged members carefully studied their beliefs and concluded they could no longer accept perceived injustices or inconsistencies and then fled for their eternal lives. I would have no problems with the article if that approach were limited to a certain set of Restoration believers. But while Quinn correctly notes that persons in the Church's "lost members file" should be somehow noted in any statistical analysis, he incorrectly assumes that "these people apparently do not want to be located because they want no affiliation with Mormonism." He further complicates the issue by including in his inspection of serious doubters early members who did not follow Brigham Young geographically and/or philosophically.

My experience among converts is that disengagement from the Church is far less dramatic and involves many who would be puzzled by suggestions that they rushed to free themselves from some kind of ecclesiastical double talk, philosophic doubts over God's ultimate grasp on them, or anger. Rather, they just—I know this is more boring than Quinn's assessment—dropped out much like a yawning high school truant.

People join churches because they feel the new system addresses some need better than the system or lack of system currently being followed. The need often is not deeply religious. Rather it could be for attention or a place to send their children for religious instruction. They want to find a spouse or a source for financial assistance. They want a church that makes sense, and twice-a-week presentations by LDS missionaries make a great deal of sense. But after baptism, even in the most loving ward, attention dwindles. Even diligent once-a-month home teachers may lack missionary zeal. Yes, children get

two hours of instruction, but at a cost: parents must endure three hours of instruction on a day cherished in many ways as a day off. Financial assistance in a church that requires they first give up 10 percent of their own, often meager, finances? Add the likelihood that these converts are the only Mormons in their extended families and, if African American, face attending a white church (check out the general authorities, audience, and choir at general conference). Psychology, not philosophy, will hold better answers to why most members leave the church.

In short, church membership requires effort considerably beyond many people's past experience with non-church-going or other-church-going, and they lack the endurance or foresight needed to offer a sacrifice today for future promises. Life is tough enough. It's easier to stay in bed, have a leisurely breakfast, take in a ballgame, or shop. Why can't a good Christian socialize in the corner tavern or over a mid-morning cup of coffee? It all sounded fine once. They don't ponder questions raised by the Abraham story, and they don't understand Job except to know that he was patient and that it's certainly better to praise God than curse him. Celestial, terrestrial, telesial? Too complicated. What's wrong with heaven and hell?

Curious about whether my sense of reasons for inactivity jived with reality, I quickly ran through our ward directory, considering each inactive person or family and what I knew about their reasons for not attending church more regularly. I concluded that maybe 14 percent of those we never see in church stay away out of some doctrinal or religious objections or confusion and that 78 percent don't attend because of lack of interest. I am unsure about the other 8 percent.

I truly wish people would arrive at their belief system—whether supportive or in opposition—through the kind of reasoning, prayer, and thorough study Quinn suggests. But I don't think it happens. People on both sides tend to be swept along or aside by tradition, generalities, touchy-feely experiences—or lack of them—gossip, friends, and family.

How much better it would be if all people followed the advice of Hugh B. Brown, quoted in the same SUNSTONE issue, to "admire men and women who have developed the questing spirit, who are unafraid of new ideas as stepping stones to progress."

GARY RUMMLER

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

A DOUBTFUL MODEL

BUILDING ON THE WORK OF JAMES Fowler who builds upon the work of Jean Piaget, Dan Wotherspoon, in his editorial “All We Have” (SUNSTONE, May 2005, 7–9) suggests that there are higher stages of faith just as there are higher stages of cognitive development. At the highest stage, one explicitly doubts and subsequently proves or rejects the beliefs one held at the lower, modal level of faith that is supposedly fostered by organized religion. Presumably, having passed through the Borderlands (to borrow SUNSTONE columnist D. Jeff Burton’s phrase), having come to know and accept God’s will in a new, more profound faith, these more enlightened believers will be the preeminent exemplars of the full spectrum of Christian virtues.

Well, this is an empirically testable hypothesis. For my part, I haven’t seen it. I have yet to see a post-doubt Mormon who is more profoundly Christian than a Spencer W. Kimball or Thomas S. Monson (or the many others like them I have known)—men who, to all outward appearances, languish at the Stage Three modal level Fowler and Wotherspoon describe, having never explicitly doubted, in their adulthood, their childhood faith.

The Fowler/Wotherspoon analysis calls to mind a professor’s wry comment on Abraham Maslow. At the apex of Maslow’s developmental pyramid is the mature, self-actualized humanist, a man remarkably like—Abraham Maslow. I think it no accident that intellectuals would generalize to faith a model that focuses on the stages of intellectual development. But, to echo Boyd K. Packer, the mantle of faith is greater than the intellect. For intellectuals, post-doubt faith is the only available option. I can’t help but doubt their—perhaps subconscious—motives when they make their only faith option the *summum bonum* of religious life.

VAL LARSEN
Harrisonburg, Virginia

BECK MISREPRESENTED

TANIA RANDS LYONS’ REVIEW OF Martha Beck’s latest book, (SUNSTONE Feb 2005) *Leaving the Saints: How I Lost the Mormons and Found My Faith*, leads readers to expect a book filled with “the requisite cast of characters straight out of nineteenth century anti-Mormon exposés: secret rites, blood

atonement, murderous Danites, and, of course, polygamy.” I had read and loved all three of Beck’s previous books and her monthly column in *Oprah* magazine and have consistently found Beck’s writing to be witty and entertaining, but more important, authentic, honest, and empowering. Rands’ review is so negative that I wondered if my impressions about Beck had been wrong. Upon reading the book and carefully examining the review again, however, I have concluded that Lyons has critically misrepresented the book’s story and message.

Lyons’ review is primarily an assault on Beck’s character and credibility, mixed with information from the book. Note that she begins her review by calling into question the veracity of Beck’s first book, *Expecting Adam*, which Lyons said she had loved when she had read it five years earlier. Lyons uses several techniques to discredit Beck’s story. One is to take quotes from different places in the book and put them side by side in an effort to show that Beck’s statements are not internally consistent. For example, Beck is quoted from page 6, “The only conviction I embrace absolutely is this: Whatever I believe, I may be wrong.” Rands then juxtaposes it with a quote from page 21: “Of one thing I am absolutely certain: I haven’t invented a single

thing.” These statements appear to show that Beck is contradicting herself; however, they make sense when read within the story as a whole. Besides, questioning one’s beliefs, which is a sign of open-mindedness, is not the same as inventing facts.

Lyons also focuses on a few peculiar incidents in the book that depict life in Provo, Utah, while ignoring the book’s central theme. For example, she recounts Beck’s assertion that men at BYU were required to wear socks because “ankle hair is an extension of pubic hair.” Lyons also repeats Beck’s story of a bishop telling a woman she’s a second-class citizen, and a hair stylist’s demand that Martha obtain permission from her husband before he’ll cut her hair short. These trivial incidents, which add color to the story, are used to cast doubt on the larger assertions in Beck’s book. Although these particular events are hard to believe, I have lived in Utah (and attended BYU) long enough to accept that they are entirely possible. Perhaps Lyons has done neither.

Lyons also demonstrates a lack of understanding of *Leaving the Saints* when she criticizes Beck’s narrative style. Lyons maintains that Beck has not produced an “independently verifiable truth claim” and faults Beck for not applying qualitative research methods



“I get it! To speak German, I have to talk like Yoda!”

or anthropological principles in her writing. She also criticizes Beck's use of dialogue instead of third-person reporting. Lyons declares, "Of course it makes the story eminently more interesting to read, but I found myself distracted by the knowledge that these detailed conversations...were being reconstructed from memory." She also censures Beck for not providing an "intelligent critique of the [LDS] Church."

In making these criticisms, Lyons seems to have misunderstood the purpose of Beck's book: It is a personal memoir, not a sociology research project nor a formal analysis of Mormon doctrine. Beck is not building a case to be presented in a court of law through "straight description and recorded evidence," as Lyons suggests she should; she's telling *her* story.

Lyons also condemns Beck's "witty, saucy, humorous" style, even though Lyons says she had enjoyed this approach in previous books. Anyone familiar with Beck's work will recognize that her self-deprecating humor is basic to her writing and is not unique to this story. Not only is her style entertaining and engaging, but in this book, it offers an especially welcome relief from the grim reality of the abuse and its effect on Beck, which included persistent anorexia and a desire to commit suicide that Beck says beset her from age six.

Above all, Lyons misses one of the major aspects of *Leaving the Saints* when she assumes that readers must believe that either Beck is a "pathologically devoted liar" or that her father, Mormon apologist Hugh Nibley, was a "pathetic, deeply disturbed man living in his own private hell." Hugh Nibley's brilliance is undisputed, and his voluminous works stand on their own merits. He is deeply admired and respected for his scholarly and personal contributions to BYU and the Mormon church.

But a superior intellect does not automatically translate into effective social skills; in fact, at times, it may mitigate against them. Nibley's personal eccentricities are almost as legendary as his prodigious mental gifts. No one who knew him or his family is surprised that his ability to relate to others did not match his intellectual capacity. These traits do *not* automatically mean that we should believe that he sexually abused his daughter. I am simply pointing out that neither proposition is mutually exclusive. It is entirely possible to respect Nibley's scholarship and writings *and* believe that Martha is telling the truth about her experiences. People who molest children are not evil monsters, as we might like to believe. They are complicated

individuals who cope with internal and external pressures in ways that hurt others.

Again, a major point of Beck's book that Lyons seems to have missed is Beck's sensitivity in discussing her father's vulnerability and the complex set of circumstances that she believes led to his transgressions against her. The central focus of *Leaving the Saints* is how Beck worked through her pain and anger to recognize her father's humanity and to love and forgive him.

Not surprisingly, some LDS Church members and Nibley family members have strongly reacted to *Leaving the Saints*. Lyons reacts strongly as well, for she does not stop at criticizing the book itself but calls into question Beck's sanity and character. Lyons writes, "Was she a bright but deeply mentally disturbed woman with an obsessive need to be admired and a mercenary approach to book publishing? Or...[was] she simply trying to heal and help others break the stifling silence that often surrounds abuse?"

A common saying in Mormonism is "by their fruits ye shall know them." What are Martha Beck's "fruits?" She has built a flourishing career as a life coach (described on National Public Radio as "the best-known life coach in America") and as a writer, including a monthly column in *Oprah* magazine. Is this the picture of a "deeply mentally disturbed woman?" What about the suggestion that Beck has "an obsessive need to be admired and a mercenary approach to book publishing?" I believe that given her successful career, it seems highly unlikely that Beck would be writing such an intensely personal book because she needs the money. Moreover, *Leaving the Saints* is her fourth book, not her first; the other three were all bestsellers. And as Lyons points out, Beck was not the first to publish assertions of her father's sexual abuse. Her brother-in-law's biography of Hugh Nibley mentions Martha's claim, then dismisses its validity.

The contention that Beck has an obsessive need to be admired seems curious as well. In *Leaving the Saints*, Beck describes the consequences of telling her family of the abuse she'd suffered and her sorrow at leaving BYU, Utah, and the LDS church: "Death had come . . . for almost everything familiar: our childhood haunts, our friendships, our jobs, our house, our families." (p 276). She has lost nearly all contact with her parents and siblings. She says, "I still grieve every day for the people and things I lost when I left the Saints" (p. 303). If Beck were really obsessed with getting praise and approval, would she have chosen this path?

Leaving the Saints: How I Lost the Mormons

and Found My Faith is a difficult book for Mormons to read—or review. It is, after all, the story of a woman's spiritual growth and how it took her out of the Mormon religion and brought her a closer connection to God. While Beck ultimately feels compassion for her father and forgives him, our hearing about sexual abuse is troubling, particularly when it involves one of Mormonism's most prominent intellectual icons. It is disappointing but not surprising that Lyons has chosen to mount an attack on author Martha Beck rather than give a true review of the book. I hope that SUNSTONE readers will disregard Tania Rands Lyons's clearly biased and inaccurate book review, and read *Leaving the Saints* for themselves. Though Beck's writing is at times poignant and achingly sad, her story is ultimately joyous and inspiring. She invites us to share the joys and sorrows of her path to peace. Readers will find strength and support for their journey as well.

LARAIN SANDS
Springville, Utah

Tania Rands Lyons responds:

WHEN I AGREED TO WRITE THIS book review for SUNSTONE, I did so under the condition that I could write a personal essay about my experience reading the book, rather than a formal, academic book review. Because of my sense of affinity with Martha's background; my respect for her as a wonderful writer; my understanding of the academic discipline in which she was trained; my own struggles growing up in the rich but imperfect culture of Mormonism; my acquaintanceship with members of the Nibley family who were genuinely baffled by Beck's claims; my feminism, which tends to side with female victims of abuse; the awful, bitter legacy of incestuous sexual abuse in my extended family; and the painful confusion of contradictory accusations of physical abuse in my own family growing up, *Leaving the Saints* was an intensely difficult and personal experience for me.

I realize that most readers of Beck's story will be part of her extensive, well-earned fan base who would be untroubled by an insider's understanding of Mormonism or by contact with members of the Nibley family who have been devastated by Martha's allegations. I also realize that many faithful Mormons who read her book may be looking for an easy out—a comfortable way to dismiss the difficult accusations found there against the Church and the well-respected Hugh Nibley. I tried to avoid this temptation. I wrote my review as a memoir and titled it as such. It

was simply the story of how I struggled with the book and how I came to terms with it through soul-searching, careful reading, research, and interviewing. Since my essay was published, I have heard from victims of incestual abuse who say that Beck's writing rings true to their own experiences. I've also heard from victims of false accusations of abuse (identified as false memory syndrome) who have shared the nightmare of that experience and expressed gratitude for my taking an even-handed approach to Beck's book.

I appreciate Ms. Sands comments and the other responses, positive and negative, that my review generated. I still stand by my review, however, and the process I used to obtain my conclusions. Ms. Sands and I agree on one thing: ultimately each reader will have to make his or her own peace with *Leaving the Saints*.

SAME OLD, SAME OLD

WHAT IS OFF TO SUNSTONE FOR opening its pages for a long-overdue discussion of the concept of paradigm shifts and its application to Book of Mormon studies. Although I found it frustrating and baffling at times, I appreciate Robert Rees's letter to the editor about my essay, "Is a 'Paradigm Shift' in Book of Mormon Studies Possible?" (SUNSTONE, March 2005), which explored the possibility of a non-historical but inspired paradigm for the Book of Mormon. But disappointingly, Rees resorts to personal attack and simply reiterates the apologists' position without responding to the main issues raised in my essay.

Rees portrays himself as the dispassionate, objective, sophisticated, reasonable, balanced scholar caught "somewhere in between" the harsh rhetoric of the apologists and naturalist critics. What Rees evidently fails to comprehend is that his construction of the situation is itself rhetorical, if not purely fictional, because there is no such thing as neutrality, and the use of rhetoric is unavoidable. Indeed, in his *Dialogue* article that he references (vol. 35, no. 3 [Fall, 2002]), Rees links naturalist critics with such language as "extreme," "no more reasonable," "doctrinaire," "contentions," "critical ideologies," "bias," "difficulty seriously considering," "speculative at best," "unexplained," "strains credulity," "assumption," "never satisfactorily demonstrated," "disturbing," "intoxicated with reason," and "too slavishly dependent." His exclusive use of the term "naturalist critics" to describe Book of Mormon skeptics is also rhetorical and apologetic since "naturalism" does not ade-

quately describe all those who question Book of Mormon historicity. Clearly, Rees is not as objective and dispassionate as he thinks and more involved in the debate than he wants to admit.

Rather than respond directly to the issues raised in my essay, Rees implies that I'm narrowminded because I don't allow that "some of us are using our best scholarly skills, our best cognitive and *spiritual sensibilities*, and our most balanced judgment to try to come to terms with this complex and challenging text" (emphasis added). Nowhere do I imply that apologists are insincere. Rather, my discussion is about methodology, and especially about how some apologists have appropriated the arguments of Thomas Kuhn and postmodernists as justification for corrupting the scientific method with "spiritual sensibilities" and privileging positive over negative evidence.

Bewilderingly, Rees practically makes my case for me when, at the end of his letter, he quotes the late Stephen J. Gould's call for "non-overlapping magisteria or domains of authority and teaching" for science and religion. In making this claim, Gould rejects so-called scientific creationism and intelligent design theory as pseudo-scientific. How does this assertion differ from what I'm suggesting is being done in many Book of Mormon discussions? How does Rees not see the irony in his appeal to Gould? And how exactly does Rees's response to me differ from that of the fundamentalists who undoubtedly reject

Gould's suggestion and insist that biblical authority and historicity are inseparable?

Ignoring the methodological issues raised in my essay, Rees simply reiterates some of the evidence on both sides of the issue without acknowledging how my discussion reframed the evidence. "It is possible," Rees asserts, "to be impressed with and even challenged by some arguments naturalistic critics make without being fully convinced by their arguments and what they put forth as evidence." But do not the fundamentalists say the same thing about evolution? This is the point I am trying to make in my essay, that the methods some apologists use to resist being "fully convinced" by negative evidence are similar to those used by the creationists, who among other things appeal to Kuhn's "paradigm shift" to justify unorthodox approaches and resist evidence for evolution. Rees sidesteps this issue.

"[I]t is possible," Rees writes, "to think deeply about the implications of recent DNA findings without concluding that we currently have the whole picture of genetic markers." Such an assertion is an example of how a Mormon apologist minimizes the effect of negative evidence. Bible fundamentalists might say that "it is possible to think deeply about the implications of the fossil record without concluding that we currently have the whole picture of pre-historic peoples." Is it "possible" to be unmoved by negative evidence? Yes, of course, and my essay explains why. I quote Barbour's statement that "any

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particular hypothesis can be maintained by rejecting or adjusting other auxiliary hypotheses," as well as Schick's and Vaughn's observation that "no amount of evidence logically compels us to reject a hypothesis." Rees should seriously consider the "possibility" suggested in the balance of Schick's and Vaughn's statement that a time comes when "maintaining a hypothesis in the face of adverse evidence can be manifestly unreasonable." Determining when that threshold has been crossed will, I suspect, remain a private decision. Meanwhile, the precariousness of Book of Mormon historicity should be acknowledged: there is simply no direct evidence linking the Book of Mormon to ancient America, and the apologists' case rests on isolated parallels and wishful thinking.

Regardless, Rees's comment about the implications of DNA evidence fails to acknowledge that (1) Mormon scientists themselves do not anticipate the discovery of Israelite markers; (2) there is no corroborating evidence of a Hebrew presence in Central America; (3) it assumes a highly-questionable limited geography and local colonization theory; and (4) it is an untestable, and therefore *ad hoc*, rationalization.

In his letter, Rees also tries to detract from the real issues when he challenges critics to explain how the uneducated Joseph Smith could have written the Book of Mormon himself. This is nothing but a red herring since the inability to explain how Joseph Smith did it has no probative value in determining whether or not the Book of Mormon is historical. In other words, if it is determined that the Book of Mormon is not history, then speculations about Joseph Smith's talent or lack of it become irrelevant.

Rees is also quick to label my discussion of "pious fraud" and "inspired fiction" as "disingenuous," but what other options are there if the Book of Mormon is deemed non-historical? I'm sure the fundamentalists are equally suspicious of Gould's statement that the "magisterium of religion extends over questions of ultimate meaning and moral value." However, like Gould, I'm trying to separate the Book of Mormon's historical claims from its value as a religious, perhaps "inspired," document. Rees can accuse me of being disingenuous all he wants, but in doing so, he is not attacking my views. Rather, he is being intolerant towards other believers: those within the LDS community who have struggled with these difficult issues and have adopted an inspired fiction paradigm for the Book of Mormon. Neither Rees nor anyone that I'm aware of has yet given a cogent argument as to why such a view of the

Book of Mormon can't be held.

Rees hyperbolizes: "Had Moses admitted that he made up the Ten Commandments, if the sacrifice of Isaac turned out to be Abraham's imaginative storytelling, and if the parting of the Red Sea was a fable borrowed from other traditions, we would see these prophets in a much different light than we do." And how does this statement differ from the fundamentalists' response to Gould? Paraphrasing Rees, they might argue: "Had Moses admitted that he made up the story of Creation, that it was merely imaginative storytelling, or that it was a fable borrowed from other traditions, we would see Moses in a much different light." Avoiding that weaker light is precisely the motivation for pious deception. Why? Because, as Rees seems to admit, believing one version instead of another requires more faith. Perhaps Moses was "inspired" to compose the Ten Commandments based on the laws of Hammurabi but decided to tell his people that God wrote them with his own finger because that is what he thought they needed to hear?

DAN VOGEL
Westerville, Ohio

TOO GREAT A LEAP

BLAKE OSTLER'S SECOND ARTICLE addressing Book of Mormon historicity in light of DNA issues, "DNA Strands in the Book of Mormon" (SUNSTONE, May 2005, 63–71), is a serious but wholly unsuccessful effort to defend a theory of Lehite origin and identity which, despite its recent ascendancy, is fraught with problems that Ostler appears not to recognize and clearly does not assess.

As I told Blake when I importuned him on the street about this, certain problems in his article result from his incomprehensible failure to acquire and read my, er, world-famous, unpublished paper presented at the 2004 Salt Lake Sunstone symposium, "The Secrets of NIMs: When the Book of Mormon Was Dictated, Were There 'Others' in It?" His article repeats the popular myth, for example, that the theory of Lehite identity adopted by many contemporary advocates of Book of Mormon historicity concerns the "limited geography theory" of the text, a theory Ostler claims was first discussed in the nineteenth century.

The current theory of Lehite identity, however, while it typically assumes a limited Mesoamerican setting, is not even about the narrative's geographic scope. Rather, it is the result of a separate evolution in understanding regarding the relationship between the Book of Mormon immigrants and the an-

cient indigenous inhabitants of this hemisphere. The general position Ostler is advocating about this relationship has been called by different names, including the Amerindian "Others" theory. The current version claims that, in terms of their biological and genetic identity, a majority of the actors in the Book of Mormon were Amerindians. I'll refer to it here as the Amerindian Majority Theory, or AMT.

By way of background, the evolution of LDS beliefs about the relationship between the book's Israelite immigrants and indigenous Amerindians has occurred in four discernible stages:

STAGE ONE: *Book of Mormon immigrants and descendants inhabit an otherwise empty hemisphere.* This is the view held by Joseph Smith and his contemporaries.

STAGE TWO: *Book of Mormon immigrants and descendants are only a sub-group of hemispheric inhabitants; separate indigenous "others" existed elsewhere in the hemisphere during Book of Mormon times.* B. H. Roberts and Hugh Nibley never moved beyond this stage.

STAGE THREE: *Indigenous "others" become actors in the text, but only on the "Lamanite" side of things. They are only recognized and referenced as generic "Lamanites" by Nephite record keepers.* John Sorenson's 1985 *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* articulates this position but also suggests that, at some later point, Nephites also mixed with indigenous Amerindians.

STAGE FOUR: *Indigenous "others" become actors in the text on the Nephite side as well.* John Sorenson adopts this position more clearly in 1992 with his article "When Lehi's Party Arrived in the Land, Did They Find 'Others' There?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, 1 (1992), 1–34. In this view, from the time of Nephi forward, biological Amerindians and their descendants comprise the majority of all actors in the text. (See John L. Sorenson and Matthew P. Roper, "Before DNA," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 [2003], 14.)

Dating the development of the Stage Four AMT a bit more precisely, it was not even suggested that Amerindians might comprise the majority of Nephite, as well as Lamanite,

actors until Sorenson's 1992 article. In his 1985 *An Ancient American Setting*, he is still imagining the indigenous Amerindians as being, for the early Nephites, only mysterious "dark-skinned lurkers in the forest" (p. 84). Moreover, not until Sorenson and Matthew Roper wrote their joint article "Before DNA," is any reference made to the large initial influx of Amerindians needed, among other things, to make possible the construction of the Nephite temple.

Ostler appears not to recognize either that this rather dramatic shift from Stage Three to Stage Four has occurred or why it is necessary. Again, the issue is not the geographic scope of the narrative (hemispheric or limited), upon which Ostler focuses. Nor were any of the above-noted shifts between stages driven by anyone's (much less Book of Mormon critics') naïve failure to appreciate what Ostler refers to as the "hyperbolic" and "overstated" nature of population-size claims made in ancient texts. (See Ostler, "DNA Strands," text and accompanying notes, pages 68–69.)

Rather, as Sorenson observes in his "Others" article, unless an influx of indigenous Amerindians is inferred, serious population-size anomalies inhere in the narrative itself. That is, absent an influx of inferred "others," the Book's narrative results in unrealistic, implausibly high growth rates for the immigrant Israelites. The Book is rescued from this dire alternative, Sorenson believes, by the inferred presence of Amerindian "others" as actors in the text. He then identifies many passages which confirm for him the existence of these "others," though he fails to address either the crucial early "entry point" for these necessary, indigenous actors into the narrative or its implications. If we adopt Sorenson's Mesoamerican location for the book's events, these necessary, inferred actors would be early Mayans. Hence, I have referred to the "others" or "outsiders" that Sorenson (and now Ostler) locate in the text as Necessary, Inferred Mayans, or "NIMs." (Note that nothing in my comments here turns on whether these necessary, inferred "others" are construed to be indigenous Mayans, Mesoamericans, Amerindians, or, under Ostler's view, indigenous "Islanders of the Sea.")

WITH THAT BACKGROUND in mind, a few of the grave problems in Ostler's article can be summarized here. One of the most serious involves his claim that Nephi understood the divine curse of the darkened skin to result from the Lamanites' violation of an Israelite prohibition against intermarriage with in-

digenuous non-Israelites. In addition to the fact that Nephi never mentions or even hints at such a prohibition and that the Deuteronomic code itself suggests a rather permissive approach to the practice (Deuteronomy 21:10–14), the Stage Three situation or "scenario" Ostler assumes for Nephi simply isn't viable. Simply put, by the time Nephi begins his "small plates" account, given the nature of the tasks, pursuits, and accomplishments recounted for his people at 2 Nephi 5, he is already in a Stage Four situation. That is, he and his fellow Israelites are already a minority among the indigenous Amerindians with whom they have merged. Virtually everyone who has thought seriously about this, including historicity advocates, now accepts that view. (For instance, see Sorenson and Roper, "Before DNA," 14.)

Ostler thus recognizes the structural importance of what he dubs the "Great Separation" of the Lehte families, but not the more fundamental significance of the "Great Leap" from a small family group to a full-blown society that is reported for the Nephites at 2 Nephi 5. It is that leap in the narrative that requires the influx and inferred presence of the NIMs (though for Ostler they might be termed "Necessary, Inferred Islanders"). The insurmountable problem this creates for Ostler's claim that Nephi would have seen intermarriage between indigenous Amerindians and Lamanites as a violation of Israelite law is that, by the time he is making his record, Nephi's own people are composed principally of just such darker-skinned Amerindians. Moreover, given the much larger numbers of such inferred Amerindians among the people of Nephi, as compared to the immigrant Israelites themselves (see "Before DNA," at 14, or my Sunstone "NIMs" presentation), intermarriage with them would have been an obvious necessity for the Nephites as well. Hence, the ideas and beliefs that Ostler attributes to Nephi: (1) that intermarrying with the indigenous "others" constitutes a crime, an "abomination" under Israelite law and (2) that such intermarriage is the reason that Laman and his followers were "cut off from the presence of the Lord," in addition to lacking any basis in the text, are beliefs and opinions it would be nonsensical for Nephi to hold. Ostler's claim that Nephi would see such intermarriage among the Lamanites as a religious "abomination" is also flatly contradicted by Jacob's unqualified praise of marriage as practiced among the Lamanites (Jacob 3:5–7). Apparently oblivious to these problems, the closest Ostler comes to acknowledging them is when he concedes eu-

phemistically that "within one or two generations," the Nephites as well as the Lamanites would have been intermarrying with the indigenous "others" ("DNA Strands," 64).

Actually, when the text is interpreted in accordance with the inferred social and biological context of Stage Four and the AMT, the problems presented by the one-sided Lamanite curse are even more fundamental than the preceding comments may make clear. Perhaps the most fundamental structural, compositional problem presented by the AMT is best summarized in question form. Given the size of the necessary "influx"



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of Amerindians into both Israelite groups that had to occur before the composition of 2 Nephi 5, why would Nephi structure his founding story of LeHITE identity and Lamanite genesis using a counterfactual account of visible skin color differences between the two groups? Put a bit more broadly, the question is: Within the AMT-dictated social and biological context, how and why would a wholly counterfactual narrative regarding darker-skinned Lamanites and lighter-skinned Nephites first be conceived, and then perpetuated? These questions point out the fundamental incongruity between the AMT-dictated context and the structure of Nephi's account of LeHITE identity. That fundamental incongruity between authorial context and narrative structure renders them logically and practically inconsistent; it is the most basic reason Ostler's argument was doomed to founder.

Ostler's failure to appreciate the significance of the "Great Leap" and the initial population-size anomaly it creates is also reflected in the nature of the textual references he claims are confirming evidence of indigenous "others." For example, he gives four individual examples of evidence in Jacob's record for the existence/presence of the NIMs. What he fails to appreciate is that all the "extra" historical actors he identifies—the "extra" females available for polygamy, the too-large audiences implied for Jacob's two "convocations," and Sherem as well—all result from the very same initial anomaly. Specifically, what constitutes each of Ostler's later actors as "extra"—and simultaneously turns them into "NIMs" (or "Islanders")—is Nephi's narrative preceding the Great Leap: the narrative that yields far too few Israelites to build the temple, fight the wars, raise crops, tend herds, and otherwise inhabit the society. That pre-Leap segment of the narrative is thus the "base-text" of the initial anomaly. It will always yield, each time for the same reason, the deficit of necessary Israelites revealed or implied in the subsequent narrative. So when Jacob condemns polygamy, or Sherem doesn't already know Jacob, what Ostler sponsors as separate, confirming instances of "others" is instead simply a repetition of exactly the same question-begging inference.

Hence, in the context of a debate about the book's historicity, Ostler's accumulation of four "separate" instances of indigenous others in Jacob's record is like re-reading the same astonishing news report in four different copies of the morning paper, and finally feeling reassured about its accuracy. That circularity results in part from ignoring

the fundamental issue presented by any critical assessment of the AMT, which Ostler never recognizes or addresses: Whether the claimed instances of indigenous "others" he and Sorenson identify in the text are indeed references to ancient Mayans/Islanders who animated the world of Nephi and Jacob, or instead are simply Ostler's and Sorenson's own post-hoc, albeit creative, interpretive effort to explain away the initial population-size anomaly in the narrative, as it recurs later in the text.

The challenge for Ostler, accordingly, is to identify some basis in the text for claiming that those new "extra" persons are evidence of indigenous Mayans or Islanders, not just evidence of the "extra" actors who automatically result from the anomaly. To be sure, his "Lamanite curse" argument, if successful, would avoid such circularity and support an inference that Nephi was indeed aware of indigenous "others." For the reasons noted above, however, that argument fails. Ostler's argument also ignores the clear elaboration in the earlier text of the basis and rationale for the curse.

The initial "founding covenant" made with Nephi when the land of promise is first mentioned assures him that, if obedient to the commandments, he will prosper, will be led to a land of promise, and will also be made a "ruler and teacher" over his brethren. If they nevertheless rebel against him, they "shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord" (1 Nephi 2:19–22). And if they rebel against the Lord, Nephi is told, "I will curse them even with a sore curse." Through that rebellion they will also become "a scourge" to Nephi's seed in the land of promise (1 Nephi 2:23–24).

Just as we should expect if we have read that textual prelude, when Nephi eventually reports the curse, he characterizes it as the fulfillment and confirmation of the original founding covenant and divine prophecy regarding the land of promise. In their first act of defiance in the new land, the brothers reject Nephi's desire to "rule over" them because they should rightly "rule over this people," and seek to take his life (2 Nephi 5:2–4). In fulfillment of exactly what was promised and foretold in the founding covenant, which Nephi recites for good measure, by rebelling against him as their ruler and teacher, and refusing to "hearken" unto him, his brothers are indeed "cut off from the presence of the Lord" (2 Nephi 5:19, 20). Just as foretold, Nephi further confirms, the Lord "had caused the cursing to come upon them," and hence they will indeed become "a scourge" to Nephi's people (2 Nephi 5: 21, 25).

Note that nowhere in any of the early conceptual groundwork and foreshadowing provided for the curse, nor in the eventual meticulous characterization of it as the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies made in the founding covenant with Nephi, is anything said or even hinted about intermarriage between Israelites and indigenous peoples or about any prohibition of it. So it is perhaps less puzzling than telling when, unconstrained by the text, Ostler first informs us that such intermarriage "constitutes a particular category of crime: an 'abomination,'" next advises that the crime's penalty is "to be cut off from the Lord's presence," and then fancifully observes: "This is exactly how Nephi treats the same crime when committed by Laman and Lemuel" ("DNA Strands," 64).

ENDING ON A less serious and dreary note, the only evidence of a "crime" here, we might say, involves not an ancient religious "abomination" but a modern infraction we could make up especially for the occasion. We could call it "aggravated eisegesis." The deeply mitigating, extenuating circumstance in this case would be the fundamental incongruity I mentioned above. And by helping illustrate the extent of that incongruity through his creative, doomed argument, Ostler has already performed his community service.

Further comments on Ostler's article, along with a broader discussion of issues raised by the AMT, are posted at the Zarahemla City Limits website, <<http://home.comcast.net/~zarahemla/>>. You will find them under "Longer Essays."

DAVID A. ANDERSON
Salt Lake City, Utah

Blake T. Ostler responds:

I AM HAPPY TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY to respond to David Anderson's letter. I will respond to the arguments in the order Anderson addresses them.

1. *The matter of when "indigenous others" theories arose is a sideshow.* I believe Anderson is correct about the general time frame of the emergence of the "indigenous others" position. However, is it really important? My point in even bringing up when these theories arose is merely to show that they did not appear in order to answer problems presented by arguments from DNA but in response to what the text itself requires. The salient point is that the theses about the presence of indigenous others emerged before the DNA argument appeared. So it is not created

ad hoc to respond to the DNA argument. What is relevant is what the text says. If the Book of Mormon text supports the presence of a large population of indigenous Amerindians already present when Lehi arrived, as I argue, then the DNA arguments are based on a false view of the Book of Mormon. It doesn't matter *when* it is realized that this is what the Book of Mormon text best supports. Anderson's issue about the evolution of the idea of indigenous others is merely a sideshow to the issues I raise.

2. *The "Great Leap" in population sizes Anderson claims is textually uncertain, but even if accepted, it supports my thesis rather than challenges it.* Anderson argues that my entire argument suffers because it doesn't consider the great increase in population numbers prior to 2 Nephi 5. I believe that the text suggests that indigenous others were already present by the time Nephi and his brothers separate from the Laman and Lemuel group in 2 Nephi 5:6. In fact, I had considered including a similar argument to Anderson's but to support *my* position! I ultimately didn't include it in my essay because it seems textually uncertain to me.

In 2 Nephi 5:6, Nephi writes: "I, Nephi, did take my family, and also Zoram and his family, and Sam, mine elder brother and his family, and Jacob and Joseph, my younger brethren, and also my sisters, and *all those who would go with me.* And *all those who would go with me* were those who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God; wherefore, they did hearken unto my words" (emphasis added). Nephi seems to be careful to name all of those in his family and the family of Zoram who went with him—but who were the others who believed in his words who went with him? If they were not family members or Zoram's family, who is left? It could be that Nephi is referring to members of Ishmael's family, but it also seems quite plausible to suggest that the text presumes that at the time Nephi separated from Laman and Lemuel, others besides those who arrived with Lehi's party were present.

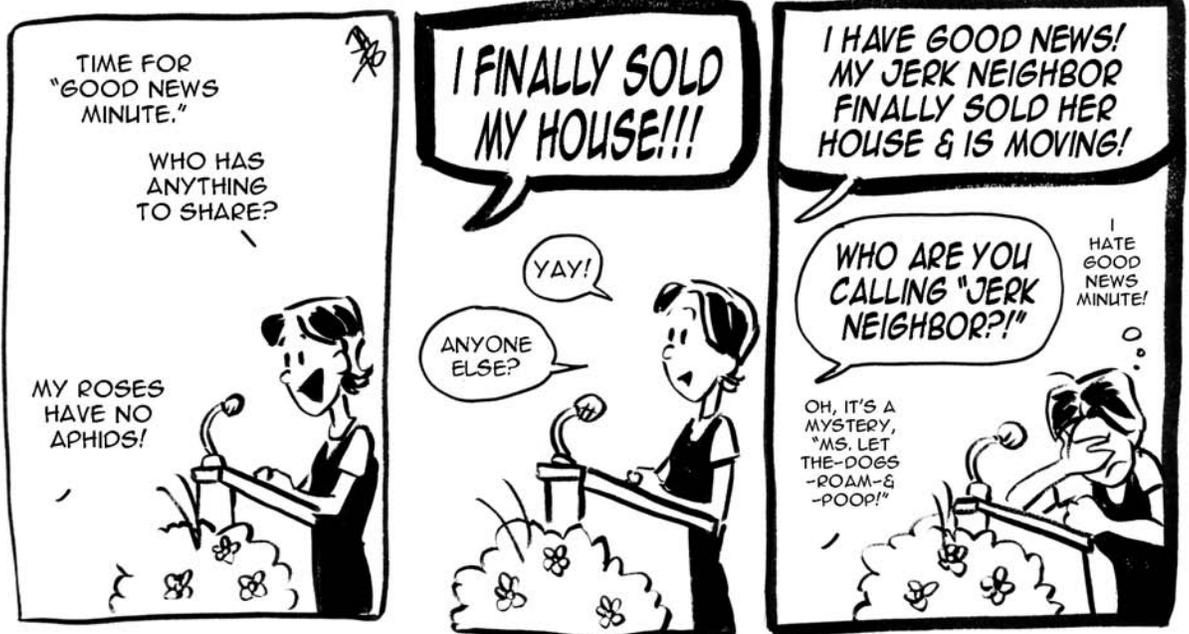
And since all of Anderson's instances showing the presence of indigenous others occur after this Great Separation in 2 Nephi 5:6, they don't challenge my thesis but rather support it.

Anderson also asserts that there is a textual incongruity given "the size of the necessary 'influx' of Amerindians into both Israelite groups before composition of 2 Nephi 5." What is this incongruity? He asserts that it is: "the narrative that yields far too few Israelites to build the temple, fight the wars, raise the crops, tend herds, and otherwise inhabit the society." Here, Anderson is mistaken about the text. Everything he cites to support the pre-Leap anomaly occurs *after* the Great Separation that I identify as the basis in the text for positing indigenous others, not before, as he asserts. In other words, his argument actually supports my thesis—to make sense, the text requires indigenous others.

However, while I accept that there were indeed already indigenous others present in the text by the time the issue of intermarriage with others by Laman and Lemuel's followers arises (as seems quite necessary in any event), I think the evidence Anderson cites is uncertain. Let's take the textual instances he thinks require a large population of unidentified others. How many people does it take to build a temple that has the same layout as the temple of Solomon but smaller? (2 Nephi 5:16) Well, temple shrines having the same general layout as the much larger temple of Solomon have been found at several places, including Shechem, Beth Shean, and elsewhere that are quite small and could easily be

built in a short period of time by three or four people. No need for a large population here. However, if a large number of indigenous others left with Nephi when he departed in the Great Separation, then certainly others would be available to assist him. What of the wars Anderson claims? Well, there just aren't any wars reported in the text prior to 2 Nephi 5:6. There are only squabbles between brothers. How many people does it take to raise crops? Not many. How many does it take to watch herds? Not many. The evidence Anderson cites just won't support his assertion of a population anomaly.

3. *Anderson's demands for express statements about who the indigenous are is unreasonable.* Anderson claims that the fact that the text assumes the presence of others somehow presents a challenge: "The challenge for Ostler . . . is to identify some basis in the text for claiming that those new 'extra' persons are evidence of indigenous Mayans or Islanders, not just evidence of the 'extra' actors who automatically result from the anomaly." Yet such a demand is patently unreasonable. He argues that the text logically requires a large population of others to make sense of the events in it—thus supporting my thesis—however, he claims that unless the text expressly states who these others are and expressly acknowledges that they are non-Lehites, such a large population of Lehites must be seen as problematic for the text. However, a moment of reflection will show that this basic argument is logically fallacious. To provide textual evidence that there are indigenous others who are non-Lehites and non-Israelites already present



when Lehi arrives, it isn't necessary for the text to expressly say that the others are non-Lehites or non-Israelites.

4. *Anderson's arguments against the evidence I provide for intermarriage with non-Israelites are fallacious.* Anderson says he finds my argument for intermarriage unconvincing, yet he doesn't deal at all or respond in any way to the evidence itself. So why does he believe that the argument for intermarriage is unconvincing? Because "the insurmountable problem [the assumed great leap in population numbers] creates for Ostler's claim that Nephi would have seen intermarriage between indigenous Amerindians and Lamanites as a violation of Israelite law, is that by the time he is making his record, Nephi's own people are comprised principally of just such dark-skinned Amerindians." Where is Anderson's textual support for this claim? He cites none, and I can't imagine what he has in mind. Nephi makes no reference or inference to dark-skinned Nephites—and even the fact that there may have been indigenous Amerindians among Nephi's people doesn't require or even suggest that they interbred or intermarried at the time in question. But even if Anderson's claim were logical, how would it be a problem? Nephi mentions others who left with him in the Great Separation, so there is textual evidence that suggests the possibility of non-Lehites in his party before any of the events Anderson cites that supposedly require others. Anderson's argument is based on a series of nonsequiturs.

Yet Anderson follows these claims with the assertion that any notion of intermarriage with indigenous populations as being an abomination and breach of covenant is "nonsensical for Nephi to hold." Why so? Because "intermarriage with others would have been a necessity for Nephites themselves." This is a nonsensical claim. Just because a lot of people are doing something doesn't mean that it doesn't violate covenants. As an Israelite, Nephi would disapprove of intermarriage with non-Israelites even if many of those who followed him married others during his lifetime (though there is no textual support for the view that Nephi's followers had begun intermarrying during his lifetime). But even if they had begun to intermarry, why would this be a problem? Doesn't it just support my thesis that the text requires the presence of others to make sense of it? Anderson doesn't dispute the four instances where I show that the text mentions others already present who are not Lehites.

Citing Jacob 3:5–7, Anderson also asserts that the notion that intermarriage is an

"abomination" is "flatly contradicted by Jacob's unqualified praise of marriage as practiced by the Lamanites." Is Anderson serious? Jacob clearly and flatly states that marrying additional wives is an "abomination" and breach of covenant (Jacob 2:10, 16, 28, 31)—which I demonstrate is a term in Hebrew thought that refers to intermarriage with non-Israelites. Further, in this passage, Jacob isn't approving of "marriage as practiced by the Lamanites" but of the fact that they love their wives and children without practicing plural marriage. In fact, Jacob says nothing about their marriage practices except that they don't practice polygamy. Anderson's reading of the text is once again based on non-existent textual assumptions about what the text supposedly says.

Anderson's final argument that intermarriage as a breach of covenant is not convincing because "nowhere in any of the conceptual foreshadowing provided for the curse, nor in the eventual meticulous characterization of it as the fulfillment of the promises and prophecies made in the founding covenant with Nephi, is anything said or even hinted at about intermarriage between Israelites and indigenous peoples or any prohibition of it." This is what we lawyers refer to as a "diversionary argument," an argument that is correct as far as it goes but misdirects the jury away from the actual evidence. Anderson simply ignores the textual evidence that I cite. The text expressly refers to "mixing seed" as a breach of covenant, and mixing seed is clearly a reference to intermarriage and expressly says that those who do so will be "cut off from the presence of the Lord," which is the penalty for breach of covenant (as Anderson admits). See 2 Nephi 5:20–23. So Anderson is simply mistaken if he believes that pointing to lack of evidence for intermarriage elsewhere in the text shows that it is not mentioned in the texts that I cite.

Unlike Anderson, I don't have a reference to an anti-Mormon website where I have posted my arguments to refer readers to, but I suggest as places to start the articles located at <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/ai195.html> and <http://farms.byu.edu/publications/reviewvolume.php?volume=15&number=2>.



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DEVOTIONAL

WALKING THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

By Frances Lee Menlove

LET'S LOOK TOGETHER at that curious and haunting encounter of the two disciples walking the road to Emmaus. I have been drawn to this story for personal reasons, but I'll get to them later.

This story is found in Luke 24:13–35 and goes like this: Two of Jesus' disciples are walking dejectedly home from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. Their beloved Jesus has been crucified and died.

While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them. "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place."

Then the stranger talked to them about the scriptures, interpreting them as he walked along. As they came near the village to which they were going, the stranger walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying,

"Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went into stay with them. When he was at the table

with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to them.

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. (Luke 24:15–21, 29–31, New Revised Standard Version)

They hurried back to Jerusalem and found the eleven companions together, and they told what had happened to them on the road to Emmaus and how they had recognized Jesus as they broke bread together, and then how he had vanished.

THERE are so many questions about this story, it's hard to know where to begin.

How can it be that the two disciples could walk and talk with Jesus for several miles and not recognize him? How can it be that he explains the scriptures and they don't know who he is? Also puzzling is the stranger's intention to continue on without stopping. Only when they urge him to stay does he stop. And it is only after they show hospitality to the stranger are their eyes opened. And then, as their eyes are opened, in that moment, that very moment, he disappears.

Books are filled with commentaries on this odd story. But one day, I heard John Dominic Crossan, a leading New Testament scholar, give a cryptic and profound interpretation. "What do you make of the story of Cleopas on the road to Emmaus?" he was asked. "Oh," he replied, without missing a beat, "The Road to Emmaus never happened. The Road to Emmaus happens every day."¹ That was his answer. The Road to Emmaus never happened. The Road to Emmaus happens every day.

A MAP shows us that Emmaus is a town a few miles northwest of Jerusalem. And yet, that Road to Emmaus is a road we have all walked down.

Cleopas and his companion grappled with disappointment, defeat, and despair on their trek down the Road to Emmaus. We've all traveled down that same road, when the world is too much with us, when we despair at living a lukewarm existence, when we want to shut the door and forget. Forget that what we intended to do and what we did don't match. Forget that power is so often not on the side of justice. Forget that pain and death and sorrow are no respecters of age or innocence.

Last December I took a walk down the Road to Emmaus. I was diagnosed with breast cancer. On my way home from the doctor's office that day, I decided to stop by the library to see if it had any books on breast cancer. I knew next to nothing, except, of course, dread. I found several books, and as I put them on the counter to check them out, the librarian said, "I remember when I was checking out these books." Then she paused, looked something up on the computer, wrote a note on a paper, handed me the paper and said, "You need this book, too." Dutifully, I went back downstairs to the stacks, found the book, and returned to check it out.

I thanked her, and as I was turning to leave, she said, "You know, there is a sisterhood." There is a sisterhood. Yes, there is, and it has sustained me often on my walk down the Emmaus road, a road that has left me boobless and hairless and with a keen gratitude for sisterhood. I had seen that librarian several times before. She was no stranger. But that day she was *the* stranger, the stranger I met on the Road to Emmaus. The stranger who reflected the Spirit of Christ.

A couple of years ago, I was helping out at a weeklong day camp for children called "Peace Village." The kids hear stories of peace heroes, learn about non-violent conflict resolution, make crafts, go on hikes, and play games. I was helping at the registration table, which was set near the edge of the playground full of laughing, running, jumping, yelling kids. A father asked me to register his seven-year-old daughter Kelly. Kelly was clinging to his leg, sobbing. "She wants to go home," he told me, "because she is the only one here wearing a dress. I've assured her she can wear shorts or pants tomorrow. I think she will be okay for today," he added.

After the registration was complete, one of the teen helpers took Kelly off to introduce her to her teacher. I spotted my seven-year-old granddaughter Annika and whispered to her that there was a new girl in her class who didn't know anyone and was upset because



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 the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. She has four children, six grandchildren, and lives in Oregon. This sermon was given as a devotional address at the 2005 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium (tape #SL05–201).

she was wearing a dress. "She needs a friend," I said as I pointed out Kelly in her green dress.

That was Monday. On Friday, the last activity of Peace Village is a candle ceremony. The forty kids, ages six to thirteen, sit on the floor in a large circle, each holding an unlit candle. One candle is lit, then one by one each camper selects another camper who has been special to him or her for some reason during the week and lights that person's candle, saying something nice about them such as "Thank you for helping me on the hike." "I had fun playing foursquare with you." Or "You make me laugh." Kelly, with her candle lit, walked purposefully across the circle to Annika, lit her candle, and said, "You are the nicest person I have ever known." Kelly had met a special stranger on her walk down the Emmaus road. A stranger who reflected Jesus's light.

On this road that happens every day, sometimes we are the disciple, and sometimes we are the stranger.

Rabbi Kushner tells this story about a student's Great Aunt Sussie. One snowy afternoon in Nazi Germany, she was riding home from work on the bus. The SS Storm troopers

stopped the bus and began to examine papers of identification, systematically working their way down the aisle. Jews were told to leave the bus and go to a truck parked around the corner. Great Aunt Sussie was near the back of the bus, and she began to cry and tremble. The man next to her asked if she was all right. She said "I am a Jew. They are going to take me." Suddenly this man exploded with disgust. He began to curse and scream at her. "You stupid [woman]," he roared. "I can't stand being near you." The SS men asked what all the yelling was about. "Damn her," the man shouted angrily, "I'm so fed up. She always does this! My wife has forgotten her papers again!" The soldiers laughed and moved on. Great Aunt Sussie and the man got off the bus together.²

Great Aunt Sussie never saw the man again. Great Aunt Sussie never learned the name of that stranger who saved her. But this story is told and retold in her family.

Another stranger met. A stranger reflecting God's light.

Sometimes we are the one walking the Road to Emmaus; sometimes we are the

stranger. The Road to Emmaus happens every day.

KNOWING that the Road to Emmaus happens every day, Teresa of Avila, the sixteenth century mystic, tells us bluntly what we are to do. This is what she says:

Christ has no body now on earth
but yours,
no hands but yours, no feet but
yours.

Yours are the eyes through which
the compassion of Christ is to
look out on a hurting world.

Yours are the feet with which he is
to go about doing good.

Yours are the hands with which he
is to bless now.³

Sometimes the Road to Emmaus is in cyberspace. Bob Rees, in his essay "Personal Reflections on Homosexuality," recounts exchanges via email with gay Mormons. As you read these outpourings, you understand why Rees calls this a "dark time as far as our understanding of homosexuality is concerned." It is also clear Bob is walking side by side on this Road to Emmaus with his gay brothers. "I

am concerned about your depression," he writes to one. "Your worth to your Heavenly Father is inestimable, and you must not forget that. I will be your friend, whatever you decide to do, and I will be happy to talk with you as you work things out."

"I will be your friend, whatever you decide to do."⁴

Bob is right. There is a darkness today that we can't ignore. Our lesbian and gay sisters and brothers are carrying the burden of growing social and legal hostility in our country. Laws are being proposed, and sometimes passed, denying their fitness as parents and rejecting the value of their relationships. For example, there is a law under consideration in Alabama to forbid libraries and schools from buying books by gay authors or with gay characters! Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner, *The Color Purple*. Wow!

Gary M. Watts is a medical doctor, a Mormon, a husband, and the father of a gay son. At the 1996 Salt Lake Sunstone symposium, Brother Watts asked these two things of his Sunstone audience:

"First" he urged, "get comfortable with the concept that homosexuals



JEANNETTE ATWOOD

"Yes, Brother Hill, we can now forego the recommend questions and go straight to your bloodwork to determine faithfulness."

are just as capable of moral relationships as are heterosexuals, and second, be willing to articulate that position publicly.” He goes on:

Too many of our good Church members stand by and watch the hurt and anguish inflicted on our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered brothers and sisters, and on us, their parents and friends, by unthinking, insensitive, uninformed individuals. Too many declare for themselves an “ethical exemption” and simply decide to not get involved.

He is asking us to say “no” to the silence. He is asking us not to let our conscience look away or fall asleep. He is asking us to walk with them on the Road to Emmaus.

They don’t want tolerance, Brother Watts continues:

They don’t want tolerance because they are victims. They see themselves, rightly, as rational, moral individuals with a right to love whomever they will. . . . [T]hey have arrived, appropriately, at a position that the morality of relationships is based on the way those relationships are conducted, not on who is involved in them.⁵

Let’s offer them radical inclusion in the full life of our Church communities, without demanding they become who they are not, without the barriers of a willingness to change or guilt-laden celibacy as the price of admission. Homosexuality is a given, not a chosen. We cannot look the other way. There is too much at stake. Remember we are talking about an intolerance which leads to broken lives, lives lived out in fear and secret, families sundered, and even suicide.

Can we see Jesus in our lesbian sisters, in our gay brothers? Can we act in such a way that they can see Jesus in us?

Look around us. Among the members of this family and household of God are lesbian sisters and gay brothers. They can be our teachers, offering us lessons of the heart. They are walking with patience and faith and with hearts made deep by pain. Let us walk along with them. Let us learn from them.

THE Road to Emmaus happens every day. Sunstone gatherings are promising places for disciples, walking the road with steps weighted by grief or despair, to encounter strangers. The Sunstone fellowship is a place of refuge, of joy in being listened to and excitement in meeting new people and new ideas.

Listen again to the exhortation of Teresa

of Avila. I will then conclude with a few words to live by:

Christ has no body now on earth
but yours,
no hands but yours, no feet but
yours.

Yours are the eyes through which
the compassion of Christ is to
look out on a hurting world.

Yours are the feet with which he is
to go about doing good.

Yours are the hands with which he
is to bless now.

And now, the words to live by:

Life is short, and we have not much
time to gladden the hearts of those
who travel the way with us. So be
swift to love and make haste to be
kind.⁶

The Road to Emmaus happens every day.
The Road to Emmaus runs through
Sunstone. Sometimes we are the disciple;
sometimes we are the stranger. ☺

NOTES

1. This remark appears with slightly different wording in John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus, A Revolutionary Biography* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), 197.

2. *God at 2000*, Marcus Borg and Ross Mackenzie, eds. (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Morehouse Publishing, 2000), 68–69.

3. Quoted in James C. Howell, *Your Hands are the Hands of Christ* (Nashville, Tennessee: Upper Room Books, 1998), 9–10.

4. Robert A. Rees, “In a Dark Time the Eye Begins to See”: Personal Reflections on Homosexuality among the Mormons at the Beginning of a New Millennium,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 137–151.

5. This 1996 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium session (SL96–255) was reprinted as Gary M. Watts, “Mugged by Reality” *SUNSTONE*, December 1997, 43–51.

6. On online search reveals many different sources for this quote, few of which agree perfectly about its origins. Some claim it is a thirteenth-century benediction, others cite its presence on the doors of churches, etc. I discovered it as a favorite quote used by New Testament scholar Marcus Borg, who apparently found it in the journal of Swiss writer and philosopher Henri-Frederic Amiel, 1821–1881.

My daughter-in-law, Joanna Gardner, wrote the following poem for me as I walked my Road to Emmaus last January. I share it as further evidence of the sisterhood in action. You can visit Joanna online at www.joannagardner.com.



FOR FRANCES, ON BEGINNING CHEMO

Of all the forms of medicine
To which we are subjected,
The one that makes me swear out loud
With bad words and invective
Is chemotherapy, my friends,
That unattractive pill
Which is no fun to have to take,
No fun to pay the bill.

The medics mused, I understand,
A little bit like this:
“We’ll make a toxic potion
That would make a Chevy sick!
Those nasty cells could not withstand
The onslaught of the drug,
And if it causes side effects,
Well, who are we to judge?”

And they were right, the dirty rats,
Their treatment killed the cells,
But only after making folks
Feel anything but well.
But there’s a way to get revenge:
Don’t give them satisfaction,
No matter how much chemistry
They call up into action.

“Tra-la,” we’ll say, when first we barf!
“Ho-ho,” when first we heave!
And, “Toodle-oo,” we’ll call out to
Those first brain cells that leave.
For chemo kills the weak neurons
And leaves the strong behind,
Perhaps our long-term gift will be
Some leaner, keener minds!

So let the cocktails do their worst,
Let caustic juices drip,
Let saltine crackers line the shelves,
Let ginger ale be sipped,
Our upset stomachs will calm down
And hearts will not stay heavy,
For we are smarter, sexier,
And stronger than that Chevy!

— JOANNA GARDNER

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

Holly Welker

WHY I GO TO SUNSTONE

"What are you doing at Sunstone, then?"

IT'S A QUESTION I am asked each year. Sometimes the question is posed with genuine curiosity; sometimes it's an accusation. Why would someone who isn't a practicing or believing Mormon attend a symposium on Mormonism? It's also a question I asked at one point. Although I had read, subscribed to, published in, cited in my own scholarship, and learned from the print version of SUNSTONE for years, I had never attended a symposium until 2001—and the decision finally to do so wasn't easy. Early in 2001, I submitted an essay for publication ("Confronting the Powers," SUNSTONE, January 2002); a few months later I got a message from editor Dan Wotherspoon, letting me know that he'd accepted the essay, and requesting that I read a version of it at the symposium. I told him I'd think about it.

Why would I want to go to that? I asked myself. *It's all fine and good in print, where you can read what intrigues you and ignore what doesn't, and nobody interrupts the author in the middle of a point. But this live version . . . I'm sure it will just be a bunch of disgruntled inactives arguing about stuff with a bunch of bossy hard-liners.* I'd seen and participated in enough of that already. But Dan was graciously, persistently insistent that I'd enjoy the symposium, so I queried a few friends who had attended.

"Of course you should go," they told me. "For every panel that doesn't interest you, you'll find one that does. And you'll meet so many incredibly cool people."

So I went. And Dan and my friends were right—so right, in fact, that I've been back every year, and plan to go again. But what draws me back?

The short answer is that Sunstone is a place where I can ignore pronouncements about what I *should* believe and value and figure out what I *do* believe and value—about my own history, my own faith, about how to move through this complicated world

as a moral, ethical person, all the while employing a vocabulary and frame of reference shared by the people I'm talking to. I certainly can and do spend much of my time pondering questions of ethics and truth with people who have no connection to Mormonism, but sometimes it's nice not to have to explain how the particulars of my Mormon upbringing affect my views on larger questions of spirituality and ethics.

The long answer goes something like this: I try to accept that Sunstone is everyone else's forum as much as it is mine. I know there will be plenty going on that doesn't matter to me, and that's OK. Chief among the panels or presentations that don't interest me are any that focus on Joseph Smith. He may or may not have been a living prophet once, but he's not a living prophet any more—at least not to me. I find him only marginally more interesting than, say, Mary Baker Eddy, founder of Christian Science; or William Miller, the farmer from upstate New York and Baptist preacher whose apocalyptic visions helped launch the Second Great Awakening of the 1820s and '30s. But I accept that to many people, even to people who are no longer or never were faithful Mormons, Joseph Smith and his teachings are of vital interest—after all, he made a lasting impression on U.S. history, and he shaped an institution that affects millions of lives. And I don't discount the possibility that the right presentation could succeed in making Joseph Smith's life compelling to me again.

Nor do I worry much about the daily workings of the Church. At the time I'm writing, Gordon B. Hinckley is still president, but I can't name his counselors. Weeks will go by in which I don't hear a single mention of the Church. Unless the Church takes a political stand, I don't see the current institution as having much effect on my life. But these days I don't live in the intermountain West, where I spent my childhood. If I did, I might feel differently.

What I do care about is how my training as a Mormon has shaped and continues to shape the choices I make and the ideals I espouse.

PRIMO Levi wrote, "Changing moral codes is always costly; all heretics, apostates, and dissidents know this."¹ I would add that changing moral codes rarely involves a complete renunciation of one's old ideology. Often the change comes because a beloved and honored aspect of the ideology (for instance, an emphasis on disciplined religious study and the belief that each person should ask for confirmation that something billed as scripture is indeed a source of spiritual truths) somehow comes into conflict with another aspect of the ideology (such as directives not to probe religious mysteries or question the utterances of leaders). In such a situation, the first belief often is not abandoned; in fact, it is embraced all the more fully.

There are parts of my Mormon past I shed easily enough, parts I struggle to escape, parts I still embrace gladly, and parts so inescapably central to who I am that it takes careful, deliberate scrutiny to tease them out in the first place—and even more work to understand them. How I see the world, what I find meaningful in the world, is irrevocably shaped by my Mormon upbringing.

For instance: I have ancestors who joined the Church in 1832. One of my ancestors survived the Haun's Mill Massacre only by pretending to be dead. I had two ancestors in the Mormon Battalion, one on my father's side and one on my mother's. One of my ancestors arrived in Salt Lake with Brigham Young and was named the first bishop of the city—indeed he was the only man to be bishop of the entire city. There are polygamists all over my family tree. Every one of my siblings has been married in the temple. I grew up in a town so Mormon that we held our high school prom in the church's cultural hall. One of the primary, crucial events of my life was my mission in Taiwan and the crisis of faith I suffered there. I even approach my job as an English professor in a way shaped by Mormonism. I love exegesis, or critical exploration of a text, and I know one reason for that is all those exercises I'd learned to do with scripture: leave it in context and see what it means; take it out of context and use it to explicate something; find something else to explicate it.

So if anyone can claim to be an ethnic Mormon, I think I can. And it is partly by virtue of my religious training and partly due to my temperament that I believe quite strongly Plato's maxim that "an unexamined



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life is not worth living.” Thus, if the Church somehow lost all its members tomorrow and existed only as a historical relic, I would still be concerned with scrutinizing and puzzling out how my present life has been shaped by my past, including the twenty-six years I spent as a devout Mormon, obeying the commandments, participating in the culture and passionately studying the doctrines of the Church.

Chances are slim that the Church will lose all its members tomorrow, and so I am also faced with the challenge of interacting respectfully with my parents, siblings, nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends who remain in the Church. I share with my family the legacy of sacrifice and creation given to us by our Mormon forebears, and I value that legacy. I have chosen to honor it by imitating my forebears and swapping a belief system I no longer find meaningful for something that offers me greater hope of grace and redemption, just as they did, while many in my family honor that legacy by remaining in the faith our ancestors chose. The challenge for all of us is to love and be happy for one another.

Maturity and generosity aren't always required in order to be happy for someone who behaves exactly as you believe s/he should and is then rewarded for that behavior. But it can take maturity and generosity to be happy for someone who flourishes in a system that made you miserable or in a system you don't approve of. How, then, do those who are gladly devout and those who are cheerfully inactive or excommunicated manage to share the cultural legacy of Mormonism and the network of relationships forged through Mormonism? For instance, should I cease to care about or pretend not to know people I loved on my mission, simply because I no longer believe what I preached then, that membership in the Mormon church is necessary to salvation? How do those of us who are no longer among the faithful reconcile a view of the world shaped by Mormonism with the sense that Mormonism is not adequate in helping us navigate the world? How do we avoid conflict with those we love who still rely on Mormonism as a moral and spiritual compass?

These are some of the questions that concern me, and I come to Sunstone because it helps me pose and answer those questions in meaningful, lively, and constructive ways.

IN March 2004, Karen Armstrong, one of my favorite writers and scholars, published *The Spiral Staircase*, a sequel to her earlier memoir, *Through the Narrow Gate*. In *The Spiral Staircase*, she discusses the differ-

ence between orthopraxy (right behavior) and orthodoxy (right thought), and convincingly cites the argument that in many religions, orthodoxy and doctrine are of little significance—what matters is behaving rightly, cultivating behaviors that change us for the better, regardless of what we believe.

This argument was so revolutionary and astonishing to me that I needed to explore it further. Remarkably, once I abandoned the idea that orthodoxy—that troublesome, unswallowable bone in my throat—mattered at all, I felt more at liberty to celebrate and embrace those practices inherited from Mormonism that truly have enriched my spiritual life. Thus I proposed a panel for the 2004 symposium: “Doing Things That

Sunstone is a place where I can ignore pronouncements about what I *should* believe and value and figure out what I *do* believe and value.

Change Us: Mormonism as Praxis” (reprinted in SUNSTONE, December 2004). I wanted panelists to consider the special benefits offered by cultivating religious habits and behaviors either unique to Mormonism or approached in a uniquely Mormon manner. I hoped the panel would be positive and validating for any audience: active, faithful Mormons could affirm those practices that reinforce their faith, while people who were no longer active or believing Mormons could acknowledge and remember what was valuable about their training as Mormons. The idea was to celebrate the ways in which Mormonism inculcates and encourages behaviors that truly do make us better people, regardless of belief.

That panel was one of the highlights of my four years at Sunstone—and I've been to some stellar presentations. It truly became a celebration, and no one in the audience seemed to think that anyone would need to justify a desire to identify and embrace the elements of our religious training that help us live lives of greater spiritual awareness and maturity, despite the fact that we had shed elements of that training.

That's what Sunstone offers me: a forum where I can work to identify and embrace the elements of my religious training that help me live with greater spiritual awareness and maturity, which, admittedly, is something you can do at Church. But Sunstone also offers me a forum where I can ask if there have been elements of my training as a Mormon that get in the way of spiritual maturity, which is something you really can't do at Church. For me, it's about deciding, as con-

sciously and deliberately as possible, what I want to keep and what I want to lose—and in order to do that, it helps to be around people who recognize some value in Mormonism to begin with, who don't think religion as a whole and Mormonism in particular are a waste of time. I am sure I will continue to encounter people who find it baffling that I want to discuss any element of Mormonism when I no longer subscribe to its doctrines. But at Sunstone, I also find people who understand where I'm coming from—and who are also willing to help me figure out where I want to go next.

I would differentiate here between community and kinship. I admit I don't feel much of a sense of community at Sunstone:

there are too many different groups devoted to too many different doctrines and too many people who don't fit in to any group for there truly to be a community. But I don't see that as a bad thing. That lack of cohesiveness means there's room to ask your own questions, spend an hour listening to someone else's questions. You may not agree with people or change their minds, but no one even pretends that that needs to happen. And at each symposium, I have been lucky enough to meet someone who becomes a genuine friend, who challenges and inspires me not only for one weekend in late summer, but all year long.

A YOGA teacher once explained the spiritual quest to me this way: it's as if we're all wandering through some giant maze of a corn field, the stalks too high for us to see who or what is in the next row. But if we're lucky, we find people we can wave to at those moments when we come out of a row, before we forge back down the narrow paths of the field, just so we remember that others are pursuing the same quest, even though ultimately, we must all do it alone. I buy that explanation; it resonates with my experience. Sunstone for me is the end of a row: I come out, take a deep breath, look around; I greet other seekers and hear something about their quests; then I get on a plane and head home, where I plunge once more into the maze. ☺

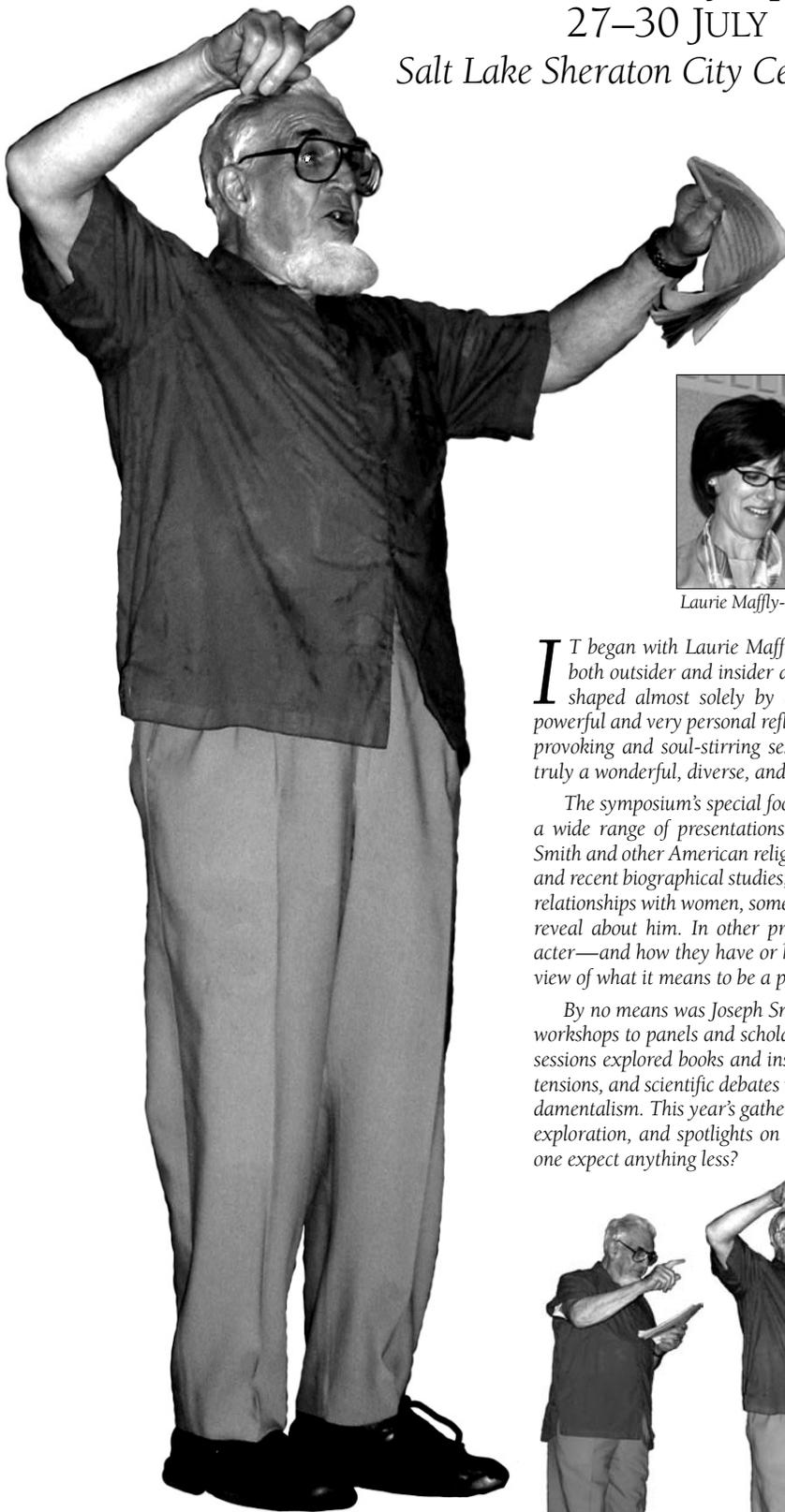
NOTE

1. Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Summit Books,

OPEN FORUM, OPEN HEARTS

The 2005 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium and Workshops
27–30 JULY

Salt Lake Sheraton City Centre Hotel



Laurie Maffly-Kipp



Greg Prince



Darius Gray



Jack Newell

IT began with Laurie Maffly-Kipp's fascinating Smith-Pettit Lecture examining the ways that both outsider and insider discourses about Joseph Smith and the Mormon tradition have been shaped almost solely by questions of Smith's sincerity. It ended with L. Jackson Newell's powerful and very personal reflection on his spiritual journey. And it contained ninety-five thought-provoking and soul-stirring sessions in between. The 2005 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium was truly a wonderful, diverse, and heart-healthy feast.

The symposium's special focus on Joseph Smith during his two-hundredth birthday year yielded a wide range of presentations on the Prophet, including poetry readings; comparisons between Smith and other American religious figures; reflections on how he's been portrayed in art, literature, and recent biographical studies; and examinations of his myth-making abilities, his views about and relationships with women, some of his lesser-known teachings, and even what his handwriting might reveal about him. In other presentations, speakers explored Smith's elusive and complex character—and how they have or have not been able to reconcile his life and contradictions with their view of what it means to be a prophet.

By no means was Joseph Smith the only topic. In presentations ranging from half- and full-day workshops to panels and scholarly papers, plus film screenings and theatrical performances, other sessions explored books and insightful authors; the Book of Mormon and other scriptures; politics, tensions, and scientific debates in Utah and Mormon culture; humanitarianism; feminism; and fundamentalism. This year's gathering also featured its usual fare of speculative theology, philosophical exploration, and spotlights on important social issues. It was a Sunstone symposium! How could one expect anything less?





Ed Kimball



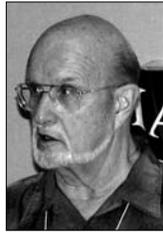
Charlotte England



Newell Bringhurst



Parker Blount



Armand Mauss



Margaret Toscano



Robert Kirby



Jan Shipps



Carol Quist



William Stanford



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Jennifer Jones



Boyd Petersen



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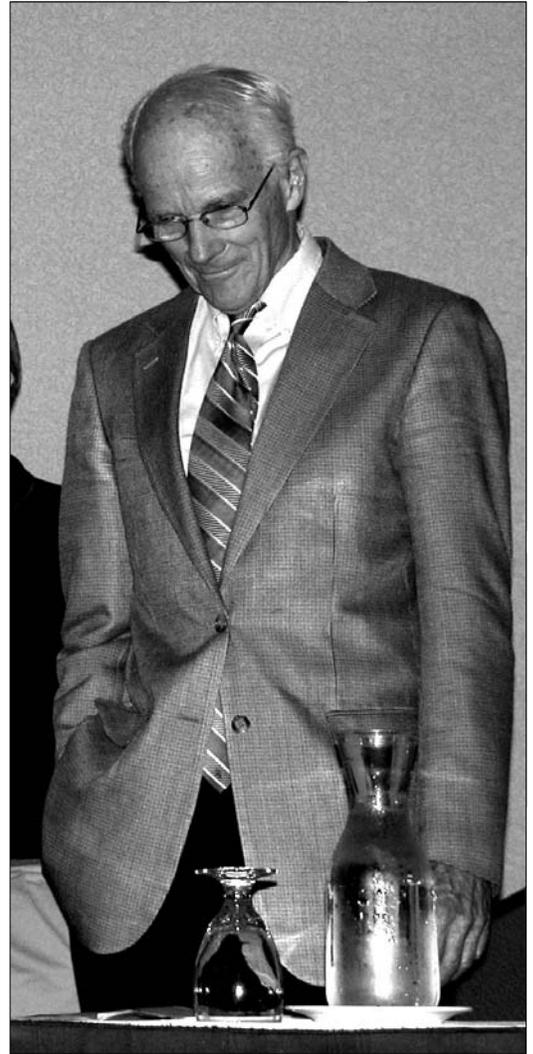
Brian Mulvey



Devery Anderson



Erin Jennings



ABOVE: Toby Pingree listens as he's honored for his outstanding leadership of the Sunstone Board of Directors for the past five years. During the same evening, Pingree officially passed on the board chairmanship to Michael J. Stevens, current board member and professor of management and organizational behavior.

FACING PAGE: Ardean Watts in action. Sunstone often touts "spirited congregational hymn signing" during its plenary sessions. Under Watts's direction, which always includes insights into (and usually some good-natured grimaces about) tune histories, keys, and metres, it's impossible not to get caught up in the spirit of worship or celebration.



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2005 SALT LAKE

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FROM THE EDITOR

AN EAGERNESS FOR THE DANCE

By Dan Wotherspoon

greater depth in that earlier editorial but ran out of space. Since then, I received a letter to the editor from subscriber Val Larsen (page 3), with whom I also shared a fruitful email exchange. His response to my editorial has shown me that I may have overemphasized “doubt” as a *sine qua non* of the journey from Holmes’s first simplicity to his second.

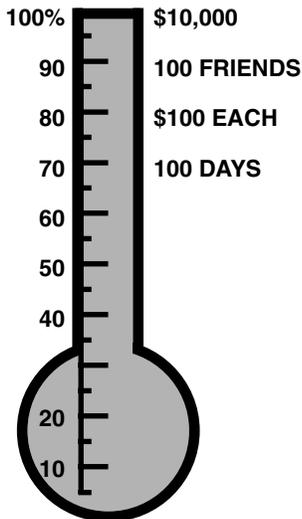
I still believe the term “doubt” identifies an important characteristic of the complexity Holmes describes as the Rubicon dividing the simplicities. But because “doubt” is so often identified with an intellectual temperament, that term’s overuse can obscure the whole-souled nature of the journey I’ve been trying to describe. In my earlier essay, I paired the Holmes quote with the language used by King Lamoni’s father as he was struck by the difference between the understanding he then possessed and everything that the gospel hinted lay ahead: “I will give all that I possess, yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy. . . . I will give away all my sins to know thee” (Alma 22:15–18). I wrote at both ends of that essay about “gut-level” tussles and a kind of “joy” that implies, for me, far more than intellectual attainment alone. Still, Larsen’s response to my essay led me to notice how much of the material in between focused on intellectual processes—a “pulling-apart stage,” a “more explicit examination of all aspects of our previously held faith.” I’m grateful for Larsen’s critiques, and I want to be sure to emphasize both feeling and thinking as they relate to the journey toward faith on the far side of complexity.

What are some of the key shifts that might serve as markers on the path to the second simplicity, a goal for which we, like Lamoni’s father, might feel compelled to give “all we have”? What secrets are being lived by those whom Larsen calls “profoundly Christian”—or whom Fowler describes as “incarnators and actualizers of the spirit of an inclusive and fulfilled human community”³—that the rest of us can learn from? Gnosis of this type defies easy description, but I still feel compelled to forge ahead with this meditation. As I do, I in no way want to imply that I am more than a sojourner on the journey through complexity. I am trying, rather, to describe a shift which has begun to take root in my life and which I’ve grown to trust as pointing toward the faith I desire to embody—but which is far from a finished product.

I HAVE long loved the confidence of Alma’s teaching that what is worthy and enriching will prove itself through ex-

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IN MY MAY 2005 editorial, “All We Have,” I began to explore the connection between doubt and faith. My exploration there focused on the subtle and not-so-subtle ways that a tradition’s institutional workings often discourage its adherents from fully embodying the highest forms of faith called for by the tradition’s most transcendent teachings. Using James W. Fowler’s discussion of “modal developmental levels,”¹ I suggested that our church, like others, has a center of gravity that can inhibit members from developing their faith beyond a “testimony” of certain bedrock claims. I proposed that this disconnect between the actual and the ideal is due in part to a failure to distinguish between two kinds of “simplicity” and a misunderstanding about the nature of the

journey that bridges the distance between two kinds of “faith.”

My gateway to that discussion was a statement by Oliver Wendell Holmes: that he “would not give a fig for the simplicity *this side* of complexity,” but that he “would give [his] life for the simplicity on the *other side* of complexity” (my emphases). I take “simplicity,” as Holmes uses the term, to mean something akin to “faith.” My hunch is that the best hope for a shift from the first kind of faith (the simplicity that stands on this side of complexity) to the second (the simplicity that lies on the other side of complexity) is to more fully describe the second, as well as to describe the “complexity” that separates them.²

I had hoped to explore these matters in

perimentation. The robustness in Alma's view reminds me of the revelation which says that truths "act for [themselves] . . . otherwise there is no existence" (D&C 93:30). As an empiricist and pragmatist, I can get on board with "results." I love that the gospel calls us to consider *every* result, *every* truth that acts, asserting its existence and flexing its muscle, regardless of how well it fits with our expectations or previous experiences.

A key line of demarcation between the two kinds of faith, I believe, is found in the eagerness with which each is willing to continually experiment with particulars. As the famous line goes, "The devil is in the details." William James points out that some facts are "wild"; they defy easy categorization. "Universals" are cleaner, simpler to deal in, than particulars, for particulars embody the potential for "acting" in ways that add complexity to our sense of the world, for challenging what our previous experiments have led us to believe was a settled perspective.

Regarding matters of religion and belief, I sense that most of those who have glimpsed the complexity Holmes speaks of recognize that encounters with particulars have served as key markers of their journey into complexity—especially wild particulars that their hearts and minds haven't already tamed through past experience or that don't neatly fit into a pre-formed schema. Perhaps a collision with human suffering affected their heart in a way far more profoundly than their until-then easy theodicy could manage. Maybe a loved one "came out," and the honesty of that person's struggle so moved them that, despite theological pronouncements they had previously believed, they could no longer view same-sex attraction as sinful. Possibly an encounter with certain facts of history or the formation of scripture set them reeling, wondering if they'd ever be able to find new foundations upon which to build. Whatever the trigger—and the possibilities are endless when we are willing to be truly affected by the world outside the one we construct with our minds—these mismatches with thought-to-be-fixed truths unsettle our foundations. They lead us into chaos caused by a loss of trust in what we had previously felt or thought to be the way things are.

At this point in the journey, we must be careful about how we handle our unexpected result. We must refrain from creating new generalizations or drawing conclusions that stretch beyond what our discordant finding has actually revealed. It takes strength to relax and simply "be with" the result of our experiment for a while. For just because

Saying yes to the invitation to the dance once again with universals has meant a going-on-fifteen-years-now struggle to feel truly oriented in both my human *and* religious skins.

we've ventured into complexity doesn't mean we've overcome our natural longing for simplicity. Hence, too often when we get caught in the vortex created by an unexpected result, we try to escape by turning the exception to a formerly held precept into the grounds for a new rule. In our rush to salve our newly vulnerable hearts or restore order to an upended worldview, we are tempted to redeem the agitator by turning it into our new guiding truth or overarching premise for how life "really is." When we're disappointed by a result that clouds our vision, what simpler solution is there than to enthrone that result—even if it's still only a "feeling" or proposition—as the new final truth?

A WILLINGNESS to experiment with particulars and to be profoundly affected by unexpected results is an important marker along the path to the second type of faith. But what would "shift" look like if we stayed "in" our questions rather than succumbing to the conclusion that nothing will ever be simple or feel "universally" true again? Paradoxically, perhaps, I believe the key to this kind of journey is found in a willingness to experiment with universals again.

Fowler's name for the highest stage of faith is "universalizing faith." By this he means a way of incarnating in the world that fully identifies with the entire commonwealth of being and the imperatives of absolute love and justice.⁴ Yet in describing this transcendent manifestation of faith, Fowler is careful to never let us forget that all faith, even universalizing faith, is lived in a context of "particulars." Even as Jesus, or Buddha, or Gandhi, or Teresa of Calcutta achieved full identification with the divine and its purposes, they all lived in specific times and places and used particular cultures' texts to communicate with those they met about the nature of their experience. They achieve transcendence through a fully engaged dance with both universals and particulars.

This dance, I believe, is the key to the journey to the second simplicity. In the first simplicity, we tend to favor what feels universal. In the chaos brought on by complexity, we gravitate toward exploring particulars. In the movement toward the second simplicity, we re-engage with the deep tugging of the universal or divine.

FOR me, saying yes to this invitation to the dance once again with universals, has meant a going-on-fifteen-years-now struggle to feel truly oriented in both my human *and* religious skins. While there is certainly an intellectual element to my wrestle, the shift that is underway in me is fueled far more by what Alma calls "swellings" in the breast and soul (Alma 32:28, 34) than by musings of my mind. I feel called to come out of my head and into my heart—to be stirred once again by truths in the New Testament and Book of Mormon that feel universal. But this time, these universals feel more poignant because of my continued deep experimentation with particulars. Conversely, the particulars I now encounter are being backlit by the kind of meaning that only universals can give.

It's a fight. It's a dance. It's muddy but occasionally bright. It's lonely but accompanied by a sense that it's *the* universal journey, that I am in communion with fellow travelers from all faiths walking a different-yet-similar path. It's complex. But it's also starting to feel much simpler. 🙏

NOTES

1. Fowler defines the modal developmental level as "the average *expectable level of development for adults* in a given community. In faith terms, it refers to the conscious or unconscious image of adult faith toward which the educational practices, religious celebrations and patterns of governance in a community all aim. The modal level operates as a kind of magnet in religious communities. Patterns of nurture prepare children and youth to grow up *to* the modal level—but not beyond it. . . . The operation of the modal level in a community sets an effective limit on the ongoing process of growth in faith." See James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1995), 294 (emphasis in original).

2. Ken Wilber's work, which takes a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding the interplay between individuals and cultures, suggests that once a shift in the center of gravity in a society has occurred, the same forces that acted to pull individuals to grow up to the modal level will act in the same way in pulling them up to the level of the new center. See especially his, *A Theory of Everything: An Integral Vision for Business, Politics, Science, and Spirituality* (Boston: Shambhala, 2000), and his *Kosmic Consciousness* (Louisville, Colorado: Sounds True, 2003), 10-volume CD-ROM, especially disc 3.

3. Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 200.

4. *Ibid.*, 199–200.



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MORMON MEDIA IMAGE

IF YOU COULD HIE TO COLA

By Hugo Olaiz



PHOTO: CBS

COLD CASE ANTI-HERO ROY BRIGHAM ANTHONY
A severe upbringing in a Mormon household prompts him to become a deluded serial killer.

WITH A HISTORY one can trace back to *Trapped by the Mormons*, media portrayals of Latter-day Saints reached another low on 1 May, when CBS aired an episode of its detective series *Cold Case*. The episode revolves around Roy Brigham Anthony, a Mormon serial killer who comes from Provo, Utah. Roy tells detectives he was “obeying [God’s] orders” when he accomplished his murderous deeds. “God’s work can be brutal,” reflects the unrepentant Roy shortly before being released from prison. “That’s why I’m glad I’m getting out—I’ve got a lot of work to catch up on!”

But Roy isn’t the only creepy one. The show’s other two Mormon characters, Roy’s abusive father Edward and Roy’s mystical Aunt Louise, share responsibility for twisting Roy’s mind and leading him to become a psychopath. Edward and Louise are presented in a halo of weirdness—literally, as the flashback scenes in Aunt Louise’s apartment were shot in cold, surreal colors. The background track from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* during the scenes at the aunt’s home accentuates the grotesque.

The bizarre and the grotesque are revisited in a scene at a movie theater, where Roy goes with beautiful co-worker Kelly. “Why is he wearing those clothes?” Roy asks as he sees Tim Curry wearing female underwear in a fa-

mous scene from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

“Because he is a transvestite from Transsexual, Transylvania,” he is told, “and an alien.”

“Our God is from another planet,” Roy replies, “near the star Cola [sic].”

The most offensive scene involves Kelly’s taking Roy near the stage during a live-actor reenactment of scenes from *Rocky Horror*. While the movie plays in the background, Kelly proceeds to undress Roy, revealing his temple garments.

“You got to listen to God, Roy,”

Aunt Louise says as she drags him out of the theater.

“Is that who talks to me?” asks Roy. “I thought the voice meant I was crazy.”

“Joseph Smith heard an avenging voice,” replies Aunt Louise. “So did Brigham Young, your namesake. They were the fathers of the Latter-day Saints.”

In sum, Anthony and his family are as accurate a representation of Mormons as David Koresh and his Davidian Branch are of Seventh-day Adventists. The *Cold Case* episode has left Latter-day Saints . . . well . . . cold, because it reduces Mormons and Mormonism to a bizarre world of sexually and emotionally repressed individuals, funny underwear, delusional avenging voices, and an alien God who lives not on Kolob but Cola. Toss polygamy into the mix, and you have a working treatment for *Bizarre Mormonism for Dummies*.

COMPLAINTS about the show appeared in the *Deseret Morning News*. “Someone please do a story on the very unfair misrepresentation of LDS family life as depicted on *Cold Case* (CBS) May 1,” wrote Lisa Michnick in a letter to the editor. “I was shocked, hurt, and offended by one of my heretofore favorite shows.”

Chris Hicks, a movie critic for the same

paper, did exactly that in a 670-word critique that calls the show “something new for a mainstream TV series—the most mean-spirited attack I can remember seeing.” In making his case, Hicks notes: “Most TV shows that portray religious people as nutjobs tend to show them as generic. The characters usually belong to some unnamed Christian faith. Or pains are taken to identify them as, say, ‘non-practicing’ Catholics or Baptists or whatever.” That’s not what happened in this instance.

But to call this show mean-spirited implies that the intention of the show was to offend, and intentions are difficult to prove. Mormons have been ridiculed, but not necessarily offended, by other TV shows, such as *South Park*.¹ The very nature of the crude Comedy Central show, proud of its own ridiculousness and well known as an equal-opportunity offender, makes its mocking of Mormons almost benign by comparison to that of *Cold Case*.

What really makes this show cross the line seems to be its depiction of the garments (which Aunt Louise calls “garmies”), revealed with the lurid *Rocky Horror* in the background. When HBO depicted Mormon garments for the miniseries *Angels in America*, no public outcry followed. But when a real-life reporter chose the sacred garments for a not-so-serious piece written during the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, the protest was loud and clear.²

Except for the two-sentence letter and Hicks’s article in the *Deseret Morning News*, no one seems to have noticed Roy’s passage through primetime TV. With such a lack of official or public response, I am left to wonder: Did Church leaders intentionally not respond to avoid drawing attention to the show as a result of their condemnation, as may have happened with Jon Krakauer’s *Under the Banner of Heaven*? Are Mormons in general feeling more mainstream and less conspicuous so that when something like this airs, they no longer feel the need to defend themselves against bizarre characterizations? Is it that no one really cares as long as a show is purely fictional? Or would a simpler explanation be that since it was aired on Sunday, few Mormons devout enough to protest the show actually saw it? ☹

NOTES

1. SUNSTONE, November 2001, 17; SUNSTONE, December 2003, 9.

2. See, for example, “Intolerant and Insensitive,” *Washington Post*, 6 March 2002, A18.

HUGO OLAIZ is SUNSTONE news editor.



CORNUCOPIA

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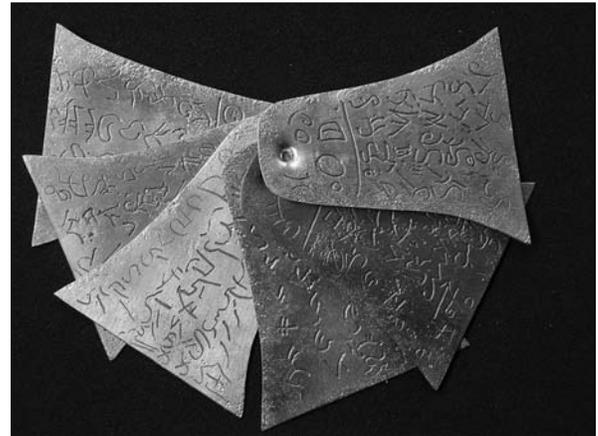
Cybersaints

WHEN THE “WINDOWS OF HEAVEN” CLOSE, THE FREE MARKET IS OPEN ALL NIGHT

I AM NOT ONE WHO IS INTO THE WHOLE ONLINE auction phenomenon. I always suffer a niggling sense of dread that I am bidding far above the real value of whatever item has caught my eye. This, of course, does not prevent me from window shopping at eBay and other sites to gape in wonder at the latest kitsch Mormon moneychangers are flogging for the righteous adornment of one's person, transport, or abode. One might well criticize such idleness as unproductive in building up the kingdom, but it is within this vast landfill of LDS consumerism that I occasionally happen upon a gem or two. Several such jewels can be found in the fascinating collection of products offered on eBay by a vender who goes by the name “Kapelomancer.”

In an interview with me, Kapelomancer described himself as an ex-Mormon who is just trying to recoup past tithing paid. In his quest for restitution, he offers for sale several humorous products and others that are just downright cool. Inspired by the 2003 *South Park* episode, “All about Mormons” (SUNSTONE, December 2003, 9), he first created “The Prophet Kit”—a top hat and two seer stones. Though he meant it as a joke, its popularity led him to create exactly accurate replicas of other mystical artifacts from early Mormon history. These include the peep stone thought to belong to Joseph (preserved by the descendants of Lewis Bidamon's half-sister and on display until recently at the Wilford Wood museum in Bountiful, Utah), Joseph's silver ceremonial dagger and Jupiter talisman, the Kinderhook Plates, and even the metal plates known as “The Record of Rajah Manchou of Verito” discovered under the direction of James Strang.

True to his first sardonic impulse, Kapelomancer also offers for sale a Zelfh, the White Lamanite, action figure (a helmeted, human skeleton with a spear point lodged in its rib cage), a pair of action figures called the “White and Delightful Nephite” and the “Dark and Loathsome Lamanite,” empty wine bottles commemorating the wine purchased by Joseph while in Carthage Jail, a stone taken from the



Kapelomancer's replica of the Kinderhook Plates (above) and the Joseph Smith peepstone (left).

altar built by Adam in Missouri and mounted with its own smartly engraved brass plaque, and a Book of Mormon complete with a parental warning about the excessive violence found therein.

Depending on the item for sale, Kapelomancer says an auction can generate up to 4,000 hits and as many as 150 emails. The messages he receives range from, “I find your sense of humor refreshing” to “You are one of Satan's minions.” Fascinatingly, most of his sales are made to Utah buyers. Upon receiving an item, many of his customers write to tell him why they bought it. Some, he says, are true believers who want to use the item in a Family Home Evening lesson. Others are unbelieving but active Mormons or ex-Mormons who enjoy the item for its historical value or as a conversation piece.

Kapelomancer will soon be offering facsimiles of the Book of Abraham papyri, Brigham Young's bloodstone amulet, Hyrum's seer stone, Joseph's magic cane, the Smith family magic square parchment, and the Urim and Thummim made of glass and crystal set in a silver frame and handle. The metal

items are crafted by Native American artisans while the other items are custom-made for Kapelomancer in Thailand, the Philippines, and Egypt. (It seems that globalization has not spared even esoteric Mormon history.)

Kapelomancer has instructed NetMo to wish all bidders “Adam’s speed” but to remind them that all sales are final.

NETMO

*Holding out for Fanny Alger’s corset
Seventh Ring of eBay Hell*

Blogwatch

The LDS “Bloggernacle,” as the conglomeration of Mormon-oriented blogs has come to be affectionately known, is a wonderful place to visit to take the pulse of today’s Church culture. It’s also a great source for the “short musings” and things lovely or “of good report” Sunstone likes to feature in Cornucopia.

The following selection, posted 13 September 2005 to the blog, “By Common Consent,” is by Ronan James Head and is reprinted here with the author’s permission. Head is editor of Archipelago: a Mormon Studies e-Journal. He describes himself as “a Briton living in Baltimore, Maryland, who is getting a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies at John Hopkins University.”

MORMONISM’S OPEN PULPIT: BLESSING OR CURSE?

HERE IS ONE INDISPUTABLE FACT ABOUT Mormonism, . . . Mormons say crazy things from the pulpit.” Everyone knows this. Missionaries sweat about bringing investigators to sacrament meeting (“I do hope the talks aren’t *crazy*”). Fast and testimony meeting is worse (“Will Brother *Crazy* get up?”). My ward, in an effort to get people to bring their friends to church, has set a date where specially selected non-*crazy* people will talk.

I’m sure everyone has their favourite bizarre sacrament meeting moment. Mine is of a brother in England who demonstrated that “evolution can’t be true as humans and monkeys have one crucial difference: humans have sex face to face.”

Cue sinking into the pew agony.

For a missionary church so bothered about PR, it’s a wonder we have an open pulpit policy where anything goes. Some of us intellectual snobs crave a well-honed homily from a multi-degreed priest. To allow Sister DeWalt to drawl on about wringing the necks of chickens with a prayer in her heart is a crime. *It’s a crime!*

But here’s the truth: I have long thought that the Mormon

All-seeing Eye

THE MIRROR HAS TWO FACES



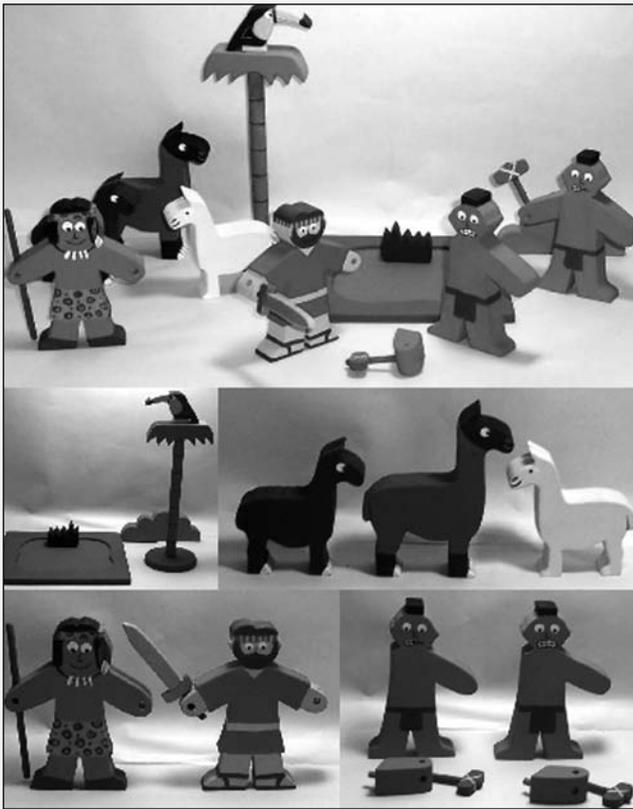
In order to create the image, you must send two carefully posed pictures—even if your son’s grooming has not yet quite reached the missionary standard. “You don’t need to worry about your subject’s hair style or the length of the sideburns,” the site explains. “If his hair is long, just pull it back behind the ear, perhaps tied in back like a pony tail.”

Photoshop clearly precedes the miracle!

IN CASE YOUR PROSPECTIVE missionary son can’t grasp what it means to be a soldier in God’s army, the good people of Celestialheritage.com will, for a mere \$35–\$85, create an icon recalling the fantasy-like ad campaigns of the U.S. armed forces.

“Depicted in this painting is the Savior himself placing the helmet on his young missionary,” explains the site, “who grips the gleaming sword of the spirit in his hand which is the reflection of the holy scriptures.” Less clear is why the shield reflects from the elder’s backpack, and even less clear is why the soldier’s helmet doesn’t reflect from a biker’s helmet—which, as your son will eventually discover, is the primary helmet he will need to survive in this particular army.

Train up a child . . .



BOOK OF MORMON PLAYSETS THAT MY TEACHERS SHOULD NOT USE

IF YOU'RE A PARENT OR PRIMARY TEACHER looking to dispel the misconception that going on a mission is uncool and boring, you might want to consider buying the "Ammon at the Waters of Sebus" playset auctioned on DeseretBook.com this past July.

"Now you can enjoy the story of Ammon over and over again," reads the description for the \$45 handmade wooden action figure playset. Among other items, the playset includes Ammon with a sword and two Lamanite robbers with clubs and—yes—removable arms! Your future missionary can enjoy this story over and over again indeed!

We wonder if this entrepreneur might be hard at work on a "Nephi and the Plates of Brass" playset, including a Laban figure with a detachable head.

open pulpit is both our curse and our blessing. Once in a while, something so heart-felt, so uncontrived graces the pulpit that it is worth a decade of craziness. In the household of God, all are equal. Even the weird ones who say *crazy* stuff. There's a wonderful practicality to all this, too: I have absolutely no fear of public speaking, something I ascribe in large part to having given my first talk when I was nine. I talked about Elijah and the priests of Baal. I don't think it was crazy.

In the end, madness I can forgive. Just don't bore me.

The following short piece by Wilfried Decoo was posted 19 September to the LDS blog, "Times and Seasons." It is reprinted with permission. For the author's profile and other posts, see www.timesandseasons.org.

THE FLUTE

JESSICA IS SAD.

It's Friday afternoon and the algebra class is dragging on. Jessica is the only Mormon in this Catholic parish school. Except for nine-year-old Chrissie in the elementary section across the narrow playground, but that hardly counts. Jessica is in high school.

It is late September, still sunny. The windows are open and

sounds from other classes drift by. The two sycamores on the playground gather light on their yellowing leaves. But today, for Jessica, the world is black and red.

Yes, agreed, she has a few friends here. But the frontiers are rigid between clans. And the Word of Wisdom is a shaky rope to walk when teasers rock the poles.

Jessica is sad for things still to be lost. Lost in what she has learned to call the elusiveness of life. Words make concepts to adopt. She harbors regrets, not knowing where the pain comes from. Wishing to be someone else. Feeling guilty for her fury last night at home. Convinced of future failures.

Right now she could scribble a poem filled with doubts and hurt and scars and stains and a bleeding heart and life hanging on a hinge.

Suddenly, time stops. The teacher falls silent, lifts her head. Faces turn to the windows. The buzzing from other classes dies out. From the other side of the playground, the melody of a flute fans out over the school. It comes from the fourth grade.

It's only one of the children, assigned to show a talent, and playing with the hesitant charm of a child. But the slow, unknown tune is carried by the wind or by angels. The school listens.

Jessica bites on her lip. A wave of bliss scatters the gloom.

She is the only one who knows. Chrissie is playing "I Am a Child of God."

Sackcloth and ashes

MIXED MESSAGES

ANY MORMON GIRL WHO, AFTER SENDING her boyfriend on a mission, wears a T-shirt that reads “He thinks I’m waiting” is clearly letting everyone know that she’s not really waiting, right? Not so, according to the Deseret Book summer catalog, which came up with this counterintuitive, correlated interpretation for the T-shirt it sells: “Waiting for that special missionary to get home and sweep you off your feet? Let those other guys know it with this fun, not-so-subtle T-shirt.”

Not-so-subtle indeed! The online catalog of LDS Living, the company which actually produces the shirt, makes clear that it has a different consumer in mind. The product description there reads, “Not sure when to send him the Dear John? . . .”

Rocks of agesWE THANK THEE, O GOD,
FOR . . . BILLY GRAHAM?

WHAT DO PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY (95) and evangelical preacher Billy Graham (86) have in common? For one thing, they have both just been honored in very public arenas, one for celebrating his 95th birthday, the other for holding a final Crusade for Christ in New York. A comparison of the two religious leaders:

BIG RECENT EVENT:

Hinckley: July 22, birthday bash at the Conference Center in Temple Square

Graham: June 24-25, Crusade for Christ at Flushing Meadows Corona Park

MUSIC PROVIDED BY:

Hinckley: The Mormon Tabernacle Choir

Graham: The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir

RECEIVED HIS PRESIDENTIAL GOLD MEDAL:

Hinckley: In 2004

Graham: In 1996

GAVE HIS FIRST BIG SPEECH:

Hinckley: April 1958, Mormon Tabernacle

Graham: May 1957, Madison Square Garden

MOBILITY AID:

Hinckley: Cane

Graham: Walker

FAMILY:

Hinckley: Wife (deceased), 5 children, 25 grandchildren, 43 great grandchildren

Graham: Wife, 5 children, 19 grandchildren, numerous great-grandchildren

ON JOHN PAUL II:

Hinckley: “An extraordinary man of faith, vision, and intellect.”

Graham: “The most influential voice for morality and peace in the world during the last 100 years.”

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE THE WORLD FACES:

Hinckley: “Reconciling our faith with the growing secularism in the world.”

Graham: “Our need for moral and spiritual renewal.”

REFLECTIONS ON DEATH:

Hinckley: “There’s no question in my life we’ll go on living after we leave here. I don’t dwell on it a lot. I just accept it and move forward.”

Graham: “I look forward to death with great anticipation. I’m looking forward to seeing God face to face, and that can happen any day.”

New developments in missionary teaching offer a window into farther-reaching developments in Church discourse and administration. They serve as a starting point for identifying ongoing trends in the Church's attempt to define "the gospel" and manage diversity.

THE NEW MISSIONARY DISCUSSIONS AND THE FUTURE OF CORRELATION

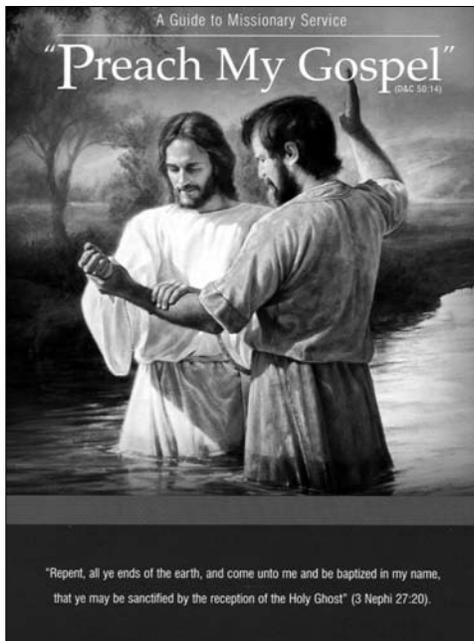
By John-Charles Duffy

AN OCTOBER 2004 SATELLITE broadcast introduced LDS mission presidents and mission leaders worldwide to *Preach My Gospel*, the redesigned missionary guide that supersedes all previous proselyting and training materials. Laid out in a colorful, user-friendly style unusual for Church manuals, the 200-page publication presents, among other things, a series of five discussions (or lessons, as they are now called) to replace those that missionaries had been using since the mid-1980s. President Boyd K. Packer told mission presidents that *Preach My Gospel* is "a major change in direction" for LDS missionary teaching, a change that had already been signaled, in part, by a First Presidency letter of December 2002 instructing missionaries to stop memorizing their presentations. The *Church News* trumpeted that *Preach My Gospel* is "perhaps the most dynamic revamping of missionary labors since the first missionary discussions were introduced in the 1930s."¹

Granted that Church publicity tends toward self-congratu-



JOHN-CHARLES DUFFY is a William N. Reynolds Fellow at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he is working toward a doctorate in religious studies. His interest in the development of LDS missionary discussions dates back nearly a decade, to his first Sunstone symposium presentation in 1996. He used the 1986 discussions while serving a mission in the Dominican Republic.



latory hyperbole (as is true of the promotion surrounding any organization's new initiatives). Nevertheless, *Preach My Gospel* does mark a shift in the content and method of LDS missionary teaching. Church leaders have touted the new manual as equipping missionaries to more effectively teach by the Spirit—that is, by freeing them to rely more on inspiration as opposed to following a standardized program.²

This development in missionary teaching offers a window into farther-reaching developments in Church discourse and administration. That is, the new missionary discussions serve as a starting point for identifying ongoing trends in Church correlation. In its most familiar sense, "correlation" refers to the process of centralizing, standardizing, and simplifying Church organiza-

tions and publications that has been underway since the 1960s, first through the Correlation Committee, created under the leadership of Harold B. Lee in 1961, and more recently through the Correlation Department, which, as of 1987, must approve all Church publications and programs. Correlation is about much more, though, than editing lesson manuals and streamlining channels of communication. Correlation encompasses a philosophy—one might even say, a theology—of Church governance, in which LDS doctrines about priesthood and prophetic authority are synthesized with strategies for organizational efficiency drawn from the world of business. This philosophy sets a premium on strong central authority, uniform procedures, and unified discourse. As I use the term, "correlation"

refers to this philosophy, as well as to the institutional structures and evolving initiatives by which it is implemented. Through correlation, Church headquarters moves to define “the gospel” and to manage diversity within the Church.³

One of correlation’s several objectives is to preserve purity of doctrine in Church discourse, which is to say that correlation acts as a mechanism to police and promote orthodoxy.³ What constitutes orthodox, or correlated, discourse changes over time: a small-scale example of such change would be the recent proscription on calling God’s love unconditional.⁴ A more dramatic example would be the emergence of a conspicuously Christ-centered discourse in the Church beginning in the 1950s (about which I will say more below).

Standardized missionary discussions have been one instrument of correlation—and an important one, given that missionary teaching is a preeminent arena for deploying versions of LDS orthodoxy. How and what missionaries teach goes a long way toward shaping investigators’ and new members’ understandings of LDS religion. Church leaders have therefore sought to control missionaries’ representations of the religion (no doubt with mixed success) through standardized missionary discussions and training materials. Such standardization affects not only investigators and new members; it can also influence what missionaries and other long-term Church members understand as constituting orthodox LDS belief and practice. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Church leaders have promoted *Preach My Gospel* for use not only by missionaries but also by parents teaching their children, in presidency meetings, ward councils, and so on.⁵ The Church’s control over its members’ understanding of orthodoxy is hardly absolute; but correlated missionary materials are a potentially powerful means of inculcating orthodoxy in new and long-time members alike.

My analysis of *Preach My Gospel* considers both the content and the mechanism of correlation. In examining the *content* of correlation, I will ask: What is the discourse that the Church currently promotes as orthodox gospel teaching, and how does that discourse compare to previous standardized missionary lessons, especially the 1986 discussions? In examining the *mechanism* of correlation, I will ask: How does the much-touted flexibility of the new missionary lessons relate to Church leaders’ larger efforts to establish a particular kind of relationship between uniformity and diversity in an increasingly international church?

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

How have the missionary discussions changed over the last half-century?

PRIOR TO THE 1950s, there was no churchwide system of missionary lessons, though individual mission presidents might create lesson series of their own. LeGrand Richards’s extremely popular *A Marvelous Work and a Wonder* began as one such series. The so-called Anderson Plan, created in the late 1940s by missionary Richard L. Anderson (later a professor in the BYU Religion Department), was another pop-

FIGURE 1. The Standardized Missionary Discussions. Since the mid-20th century, the Church has produced five sets of standardized missionary discussions. Each set superseded the one before.

- 1952** *A Systematic Program for Teaching the Gospel*
- 1961** *A Uniform System for Teaching Investigators*
- 1973** *The Uniform System for Teaching Families*
- 1986** *The Uniform System for Teaching the Gospel*
- 2004** *Preach My Gospel*

ular pre-standardized system; reputedly, eleven thousand copies of Anderson’s plan were made in response to requests from missionaries around the world. Early teaching plans typically called for extended meetings with investigators: the Anderson Plan contained twenty-eight discussion topics, while LeGrand Richards expected investigators to receive weekly lessons for at least six months before baptism.⁶

The first set of missionary lessons to come from Church headquarters, *A Systematic Program for Teaching the Gospel*, was created in 1952 under the direction of Gordon B. Hinckley. Though published by the Church, *A Systematic Program* was designated for optional use.⁷ The program consisted of only seven lessons—a dramatic reduction from previous plans. The lessons took the form of Socratic dialogues between missionaries and a hypothetical investigator named “Mr. Brady.” The lessons relied heavily on logic and scriptural prooftexts, and the dialogues had a tendency to be patronizing and manipulative.⁸ (See sidebar, pages 28–29).

In 1961, the same year as the creation of the Correlation Committee, Hinckley, then an assistant to the Twelve, unveiled *A Uniform System for Teaching Investigators* at the first worldwide seminar for mission presidents. These were the first missionary discussions intended for mandatory churchwide use.⁹ They were also the first to be called “discussions” rather than “lessons.” Six in number, the 1961 discussions were written as a series of dialogues with the investigator, now named Mr. Brown, who was led via question-and-answer into agreement with a series of numbered conclusions. Flannel board images provided a visual supplement to the spoken presentation.

The 1961 discussions were superseded in 1973 by *The Uniform System for Teaching Families*.¹⁰ These discussions, seven in all, were printed in a two-column format: the right-hand page contained the missionary’s presentation, while the facing left-hand page contained aids for teaching such as suggested scriptures and ideas for responding to potential investigator objections. As in previous discussions, the missionaries posed questions to “Mr. Brown,” but his responses were not spelled out, as they had been in the 1952 and 1961 discussions, and the questions posed were more open-ended. Flipcharts replaced flannel boards as the discussions’ accompanying visual component.

1952

ELDER: I humbly declare to you from the bottom of my heart that Joseph Smith's testimony is true. It is logical, sensible and scriptural, so it must be true. And I know that you know in your heart that it is true. . . . When Joseph Smith came out of the grove, who had the true concept of God, Joseph Smith or the ministers of the world?

MR. BRADY: Joseph Smith.

ELDER: Joseph Smith had the true knowledge of God. That being true, it follows that the churches of the world were wrong. To our knowledge, there was not a single church in the year 1820 that taught the true nature of God. Now, Mr. Brady, I notice that you have several small children in your family and I assume that you love them dearly. Is that correct?

MR. BRADY: Of course.

ELDER: Mr. Brady, is it not a serious thing to have your children taught a false doctrine of God?

MR. BRADY: I suppose so, but I have never thought of that before.

[Editor's note: The elders invite Mr. Brady to bring his children to Sunday School, then continue:]

ELDER: Mr. Brady, how did Joseph Smith get the true knowledge of God? Who appeared to him?

MR. BRADY: God and Jesus Christ.

ELDER: Yes, and when God speaks to men in this manner, they are called what?

MR. BRADY: Prophets.

ELDER: Exactly, and so that would make Joseph Smith a What?

MR. BRADY: A prophet?

ELDER: Yes, Joseph Smith became a great prophet, and I want you to know that I know with all my heart that these things are absolutely true.

1961

ELDER: I know that Joseph Smith did see the Father and the Son. In fact, he could see them just as clearly as you can see Elder Jones and me. And he could see that his own body truly was created in the image and likeness of God. At that time the churches taught that God was only a spirit, that he had no body. BUT WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT GOD FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF JOSEPH SMITH?

BROWN: That he has a real body.

ELDER: Yes, he does. THE CHURCHES ALSO TAUGHT THAT GOD THE FATHER AND JESUS CHRIST, HIS SON, WERE BOTH THE SAME BEING. BUT WHAT DID JOSEPH SMITH SEE?

BROWN: He saw two Personages in the form of men.

2. The Father and the Son have bodies.

* * *

ELDER: Of course, that is true; God does have a body; he is a real God; and he made us to be like him. From what we have said here, Mr. Brown, WHY WAS JOSEPH SMITH A PROPHET?

BROWN: Because he saw and spoke with the Father and the Son.

ELDER: SO WHAT ARE THE TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH SO IMPORTANT?

BROWN: Because his teachings come directly from God.

3. Joseph Smith was a prophet of God.

* * *

ELDER: I am sure they do. In the grove of trees that day, Joseph Smith asked the Savior which of the churches he should join. Joseph was told that he must join none of them. Why do you suppose Jesus told him that?

BROWN: They must not have been teaching the truth.

ELDER: Exactly right.

1973

MISSIONARY: Mr. and Mrs. Brown, suppose you put yourselves in the position of this young man, Joseph Smith. Picture yourselves as Joseph Smith, struggling to know the truth about religion. As you are reading in the Bible, you read the promise in James (James 1:5). Never has any scripture touched your heart so deeply. Having faith, you do as James directs and go to a grove of trees near your father's farm. Kneeling in prayer, you plead for guidance from your Father in Heaven. This is your first uttered prayer. With all your heart you want to know the truth. Visualize the feeling when, in answer to your prayers, a light descends from heaven, and within this light you see two glorious personages, the Father and the Son. Mr. Brown, could you ever be the same after that experience?

BROWN: Response

MISSIONARY: After receiving such a glorious manifestation, your heart is overwhelmed with the reality of your experience. You know it is true. Would you feel an obligation to share your experience with the rest of the world?

BROWN: Response

MISSIONARY: As a result of this and other similar experiences, you write this: (D&C 76:22, 23). *(Have Mr. Brown read this scripture, then testify to him that what you have said is true.)*

Mr. Brown, do you remember what Joseph Smith's question was when he went to the grove of trees to pray?

BROWN: Response

MISSIONARY: Answering his question, the Savior told Joseph Smith that he should join none of the churches and explained why. He said they had a form of godliness but taught the doctrines of men and not of God. Mr. Brown, how does this help you to understand why the churches today teach so many conflicting doctrines?

BROWN: Response

1986

JOSEPH SMITH WAS A PROPHET OF GOD

Through this and other experiences, Joseph Smith was called as a prophet. He was much like Moses and other biblical prophets. They also saw God and were called to preach his message.

JOSEPH IS A WITNESS OF CHRIST

Because he saw and talked with the resurrected Savior, Joseph Smith is a powerful witness of Jesus Christ. Through him, God revealed the truths of the plan of salvation, including the divine mission of Jesus Christ.

TESTIFY: Express your feelings about—

- Joseph Smith's vision of the Father and the Son.
- The importance of Joseph Smith's divine call as a witness of Christ.
- Joseph Smith's calling to restore the truth about the plan of salvation.

FIND OUT—

How the investigators feel about your instruction on Joseph Smith.

Key: These selections exemplify the teaching styles of the 1952, 1961, 1973, and 1986 discussions. Each selection is taken from the material that immediately follows the narration of the First Vision.

BY MAKING

salvation through Christ the focus of the first two discussions and postponing the Restoration to the third discussion, the 1986 discussions had deemphasized the Church's exclusive claims to authority and revelation (though those claims were never in danger of disappearing). In *Preach My Gospel*, the Church's exclusive claims return to the fore.

For reasons to be discussed later, the 1973 discussions proved problematic. They therefore underwent a series of revisions—in 1978, 1981, and 1982—that simplified and rearranged the material.¹¹ Finally, Church leaders ordered the creation of an entirely new set of lessons, dubbed the “improved discussions.” These were introduced to missionaries in 1985 as a kind of churchwide pilot program and were officially published in 1986 as *The Uniform System for Teaching the Gospel*.¹² This system consisted of twelve discussions: six to be taught before baptism and six after.¹³ The discussions were printed, as in 1973, in a two-column format. Integral to the 1986 discussions was a model of conversion called the commitment pattern, in which missionaries *prepared* investigators to feel the Spirit, *invited* them to make commitments (read the Book of Mormon, attend church, keep the Word of Wisdom, be baptized, etc.), then *followed up* and *resolved concerns* to help investigators keep their commitments. The commitment pattern and associated teaching methods were explained in the *Missionary Guide*, published in 1988, which missionaries were to study daily with their companions. *Preach My Gospel* replaces both the 1986 discussions and the *Missionary Guide*.

REDEFINING THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

*What stands at the center of the gospel message—
Christ, the Restoration, or both?*

KATHLEEN FLAKE HAS explained that the First Vision became fundamental to Mormonism's account of itself at the beginning of the twentieth century as part of the transition away from an identity built on plural marriage.¹⁴ It is not surprising, therefore, that all standardized discussions, from *A Systematic Program* to *Preach My Gospel*, have introduced the First Vision as part of the first discussion.¹⁵ In the 1952, 1961, and 1973 discussions, the First Vision was presented in the context of the Restoration: in 1952, the restoration of a knowledge of the true nature of God; in 1961 and 1973, the restoration of the true church.

While the 1986 discussions also began with the First

Vision, together with an introduction to the Book of Mormon, those discussions reframed the material in a perhaps subtle but important way. Unlike its predecessors, the 1986 version of the first discussion did not present the First Vision and the Book of Mormon in the context of explaining the Restoration. Instead, the First Vision and the Book of Mormon were presented as modern or additional witnesses of Jesus Christ. Investigators were told that Joseph Smith went to the grove to pray because he was confused about the competing claims of different churches; however, the first discussion did not disclose what Jesus told Joseph regarding which church to join. That was revealed in the third discussion, as part of a narrative of the Great Apostasy and the Restoration—*after* missionaries had extended the baptismal invitation during the second discussion (which taught salvation through Christ's atonement and the first principles and ordinances of the gospel).¹⁶

This revised order of teaching, i.e., delaying teaching about the Restoration until after the baptismal invitation, indicates that the creators of the 1986 discussions did not regard an understanding of the Restoration as a necessary prerequisite for an investigator's committing to be baptized into the LDS Church. In other words, in the 1986 discussions, the ideal baptismal commitment would be made not out of a desire to gain membership in the restored true church but out of a desire to follow Jesus Christ.

Preach My Gospel reverts to the pre-1986 pattern of presenting the Restoration in the first lesson. In addition, missionaries are instructed to teach the Great Apostasy during this lesson, a move reverting even further back to pre-1973 practice. (To avoid seeming to denigrate other churches, in 1973 missionaries had been encouraged to teach the restoration of the church and the priesthood without narrating the Great Apostasy.)¹⁷ Going one step further, *Preach My Gospel* represents all human history from Adam to Joseph Smith as a cycle of apostasies and restorations, a concept not present in any of the previous standardized discussions.¹⁸ Where the 1986 discussions introduced the First Vision and the Book of Mormon as witnesses of Christ, *Preach My Gospel* presents them in relation to the Restoration.¹⁹ The Book of Mormon, investigators are taught, “provides convincing evidence that Joseph Smith is a true prophet of God,” with Moroni's promise serving to “confirm the truth of the Restoration.”²⁰ The Book of Mormon's role as a witness for Christ has not disappeared—it can be found elsewhere in *Preach My Gospel*²¹—but that role is no longer the primary focus of missionary teaching about the Book of Mormon. One manifestation of this shift is that where the 1986 discussions introduced the Book of Mormon by briefly narrating its contents, climaxing with Christ's appearance in the Americas, *Preach My Gospel* introduces the book by narrating the appearance of the angel Moroni and Joseph's translation of the book from the golden plates, which were not part of the 1986 narrative.

By making salvation through Christ the focus of the first two discussions and postponing the Restoration to the third discussion, the 1986 discussions had deemphasized the Church's exclusive claims to authority and revelation (though

those claims were never in danger of disappearing). In *Preach My Gospel*, the Church's exclusive claims return to the fore. The logic which, in 1986, had imagined that investigators could commit to baptism before they understood the Great Apostasy and Restoration is gone. Instead missionaries are told, "Investigators must understand that a universal apostasy occurred following the death of Christ and His Apostles" because the "need of a Restoration" depends on that, and "your purpose is to help them understand the need for the Restoration."²²

As compared to the 1986 system of missionary teaching, *Preach My Gospel* underscores more strongly the separation between the LDS message and other faiths. *The Missionary Guide*, which accompanied the 1986 discussions, had instructed missionaries to identify "similarities between [investigators'] beliefs and the beliefs taught in the discussions." "Point out the beliefs you have in common," *the Missionary Guide* recommended, so as to "build . . . upon the truths your investigators already believe."²³ *Preach My Gospel*, however, says nothing about building on common beliefs, an omission consistent with the new manual's focus on the Church's exclusive claims. *Preach My Gospel* does soften the exclusivism of its message by acknowledging that "teachings of other religious leaders have helped many people become more civil and ethical."²⁴ On the other hand, in explaining to missionaries the dire consequences for those who do not accept the gospel, the new manual uses stark language taken from 3 Nephi 27:17—"the same is he that is also hewn down and cast into the fire."²⁵

A tone of militant urgency emerges both in *Preach My Gospel* and in the Church publicity surrounding the manual. "Satan is attacking the family on many fronts, and too many families are being destroyed by his efforts," warns an introductory chapter on the purpose of missionary work. Echoing this message, Richard G. Scott has explained that *Preach My Gospel* was needed because "the values which form the bedrock foundation of society are being assaulted by Satan and his allies. There has been an urgent need for an improved way to share the fulness of the truth that God has placed on earth again." Similarly, in a 2004 *Ensign* interview about *Preach My*

Gospel, Scott declared, "The world is getting worse, but our capacity to teach the gospel is improving."²⁶ This sense of heightened danger appears to motivate returning the Restoration to the fore of missionary teaching—thus making clear to auditors from the outset what is lacking and where it is to be found.²⁷

It is tempting to describe this renewed emphasis on the Restoration as a kind of retrenchment, using the term Armand Mauss made familiar to describe the backswing of a religious movement from assimilation toward distinctiveness.²⁸ In other words, it is tempting to read *Preach My Gospel* as retreating from a Christ-centered discourse that emphasizes what Latter-day Saints have in common with other Christians to a Restoration-centered discourse that underscores difference and uniqueness. But that is not the most illuminating way to understand what has happened. *Preach My Gospel* does not move away from Christ-centered discourse. Rather, the new manual seeks to integrate Christ-centered discourse with a proportionately greater emphasis on the Restoration. Both emphases, Christ and the Restoration, are brought together into a single formula: "center your teaching," missionaries are told, "on the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ." The manual elaborates: "We have one message: Through a modern prophet, God has restored knowledge about the plan of salvation, which is centered on Christ's Atonement and fulfilled by living the first principles and ordinances of the gospel."²⁹



"I want you to know . . . that I know with every fiber of my being that the Church employees who wrote this discussion, the MTC staff who field tested it, and the committee that correlated it, are true. . . ."

A Broader Perspective

THE EMERGENCE OF this integrated discourse should be viewed in a larger context. Several observers, including Gordon and Gary Shepherd and Jan Shippo, have noted the increasing prominence of what I would term an evangelical Mormon discourse, one which stresses that Mormons are Christian and, more specifically, which deploys a Protestant vocabulary about salvation by grace, the natural man, second birth, sanctification, and so on. This discourse began to emerge in the 1950s and became especially visible during the 1980s, continuing into the 1990s.³⁰ Evangelical Mormon discourse has been closely tied to the Book of Mormon, where evangelical themes dominate; the increased prominence of evangelical discourse during the 1980s thus coincided with the increased prominence placed on the Book of Mormon during Ezra Taft Benson's presidency. The 1986 discussions, with their focus on the First Vision and the Book of Mormon as witnesses of Christ, were one manifestation of the new evangelical discourse. Indeed, the discussions helped to disseminate that discourse in and out of the Church.³¹

Preach My Gospel's rhetoric about the Book of Mormon as "convincing evidence" of Joseph Smith's prophetic calling and the truthfulness of the restored church is hardly new. However, *Preach My Gospel* represents a reemergence of that rhetoric after a period of obscurity. During Benson's presidency, Church rhetoric about the Book of Mormon as evidence of the Restoration was eclipsed by evangelical rhetoric which held that the "major purpose of the Book of Mormon" is "to bring men to Christ and to be reconciled to him."³² Between 1985 and 1994 (the years of the Benson presidency), almost no General Authority addresses published in the *Ensign* referred to the Book of Mormon as "evidence" for the Restoration. Instead, General Authorities focused overwhelmingly on the Book of Mormon's witness (sometimes called its "evidence") for Christ and the book's teachings about the Atonement.³³ Following Benson's death, references to the Book of Mormon as "evidence" of the Restoration reappeared, at times in reprints of talks written before Benson's presidency. Such references became more frequent and more emphatic as the Church crossed into the new millennium, leading up to the publication of *Preach My Gospel*.³⁴ (See figure 2.)

This is not to say, however, that evangelical discourse about the Book of Mormon has declined. As in *Preach My Gospel*, references in recent General Authority addresses to the Book of Mormon as evidence of the Restoration typically occur *together* with allusions to the Book of Mormon's witness of Christ or to Christ's central role in LDS faith. For example, a 2004 reprint of an address James E. Faust first gave in 1983 explains that "a confirming testimony of the Book of Mormon convinces 'that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God' and also spiritually verifies the divine calling of Joseph Smith."³⁵ Again, the trend is best understood not as a retreat from evangelical discourse but as an effort to integrate that discourse with a relatively stronger focus on the Restoration.

Shippo has suggested that the "dramatic turn . . . toward

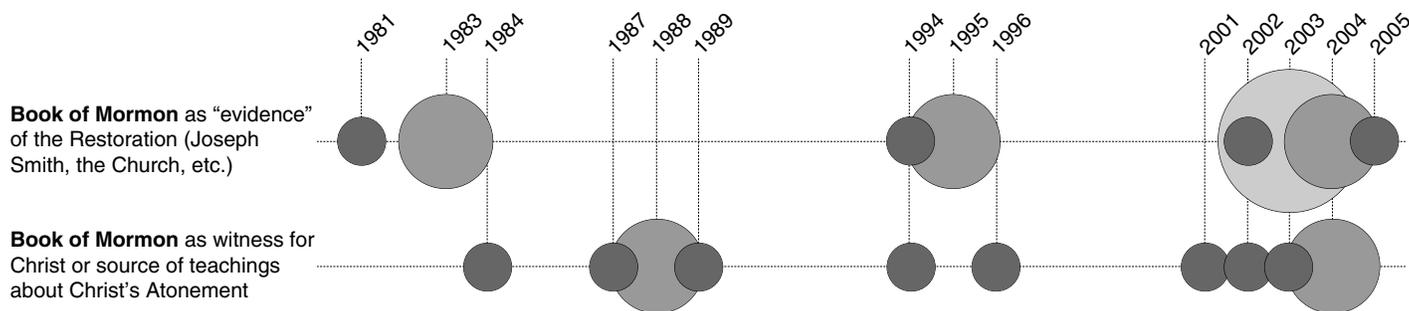
Christian rhetoric and Christian themes" during the latter half of the twentieth century is a sign that Mormons have overcome sectarianism and thus no longer need to underscore what sets them apart from other faiths.³⁶ I propose a different interpretation. The impetus toward evangelical Mormon discourse in the 1980s and 1990s began as a response to mounting opposition to Mormonism by evangelical Protestants in the late 1970s and early 1980s, as exemplified by widespread screening of *The Godmakers* and by the refusal of the Moral Majority to work with Mormons on issues that concerned both groups.³⁷ In the face of increasingly prominent claims that Mormons are cultists, evangelical Mormon discourse such as that promoted by the 1986 discussions served to assert Christian credentials.³⁸ The more recent reemergence of Restoration-centered discourse suggests that Mormons have come to feel secure enough about their Christian credentials that they can again stress the more sectarian dimension of their message. Once again, however, I want to emphasize that the new sectarianism is not a retrenchment in the sense of pulling back from Christ-centered discourse. The 1980s and 1990s have given LDS discourse an evangelical cast that is likely to remain integral to correlated Mormonism for the foreseeable future.

MAKING ROOM FOR INSPIRATION
*Missionaries now have greater flexibility to
 follow the Spirit—within limits.*

THE ASPECT OF the new lessons that has attracted most comment is that missionaries are no longer instructed to memorize them. Speaking via worldwide satellite broadcast in 2003, President Hinckley lamented that standardized missionary discussions (which, it might be noted, he had helped to make normative) had "in all too many cases . . . resulted in a memorized presentation lacking in spirit and personal conviction." "Let the missionaries shake loose from their memorized lessons," Hinckley proclaimed. "Let them speak with great conviction prompted by the Spirit of the Lord."³⁹

The very first set of standardized discussions, which Hinckley had overseen in 1952, offered similar counsel. "Never Memorize," read a boldface header in *A Systematic Program*. "A previously written presentation is apt to become a product of mind and not of heart. . . . Lose yourself in expression. Tell it from the heart."⁴⁰ But with the inauguration of the first discussions for mandatory churchwide use in 1961, the dialogues became not merely suggestions, as in 1952, but scripts to be memorized.⁴¹ Giving missionaries a text to memorize is, of course, an attempt to ensure that their teaching is orthodox and that it emphasizes what Church leaders currently prefer to have emphasized. Expectations about memorizing the discussions created an especially heavy burden for missionaries using the 1973 discussions, which contained, by one count, some 18,000 words in 125 pages. Memorization techniques were therefore an important part of missionary training during the 1970s.⁴² Realizing that the discussions were difficult to memorize, especially for missionaries learning

Figure 2. This graph plots instances of evangelical discourse about the Book of Mormon versus references to the Book of Mormon as “evidence” of the Restoration in General Authority addresses published in the *Ensign* between 1981 and 2005. Note the eclipsing of “evidence” rhetoric during the Benson presidency (1985–1994) and the increased occurrence of both evangelical and “evidence” rhetoric in the years leading up to the publication of *Preach My Gospel* (2004).



other languages, and concerned that missionaries’ presentations sounded “canned,” Church leaders approved revisions to the 1973 discussions. The language of the discussions was first simplified, then drastically cut. Instead of memorizing paragraphs, missionaries memorized sentences, interspersed with extemporaneous explanations, testimony, and questions to gauge investigator response.⁴³

The “improved discussions” of 1985–1986 sought to push this trend one step further. Written in outline form, these discussions contained very little text: a mere two or three sentences under every bold heading. This text was to be “mastered,” not “memorized.” Missionaries would present the material in “their own words,” consulting the discussion booklet during their presentations as needed. This new approach was touted as freeing missionaries to “concentrat[e] on spirituality and teaching skills.”⁴⁴ However, the distinction between “mastering” and “memorizing” the discussions was not obvious, nor was the distinction necessarily translatable out of English.⁴⁵ Judging from Hinckley’s 2003 complaints about “memorized presentation[s] lacking in spirit,” it would appear that many missionaries continued to memorize the discussions.

Unambiguously abandoning memorization and authorizing missionaries to create their own lesson plans, *Preach My Gospel* grants missionaries a degree of flexibility in how to teach the gospel that they have not officially enjoyed (but may have exercised anyway) since the introduction of the first discussions for mandatory use in 1961. This fact should not be overstated, though. Even when missionaries were expected to memorize the discussions, the instructions they received acknowledged that the Spirit might inspire them to vary from the standard plan.⁴⁶ Conversely, while *Preach My Gospel* instructs mission-

aries to present the lessons in their own words, the manual takes nearly sixty pages to specify the doctrinal material they are to cover, with a strongly preferred order for teaching that material.⁴⁷ To ensure that all requisite teachings have been given, missionaries fill out a newly designed Teaching Record containing more than sixty checkboxes to keep track of the doctrines taught and commitments extended to each investigator or family.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, the new manual stresses flexibility and adaptation in missionary teaching, as well as in certain other aspects of missionary life, in a way that has not been seen since the 1950s—that is to say, since before the beginning of correlation. *Preach My Gospel* gives missionaries the “flexibility” to “study what you need when you need it.” Missionaries are urged to exercise “personal agency” and are cautioned against relying overmuch in their study on structured programs.⁴⁹ As for their teaching, they are told that they “have the flexibility to teach the lessons in whatever way best helps people fully prepare for their baptism and confirmation. . . . Adjust the order, length, and pace of the lessons to meet the needs of those you teach. . . . Continually refine your lesson plans and modify them. . . . Try new explanations, approaches, experiences, questions, and ways to invite others to make commitments.”⁵⁰ *Preach My Gospel* provides suggested outlines for short, medium, and full versions of each of the first three lessons, thus equipping missionaries to present the contents of a lesson in anywhere from three to forty-five minutes. One advantage of this type of flexibility is that it allows missionaries to actually teach—rather than making appointments to teach later—in settings that would not have permitted an entire discussion as these were supposed to be presented under previous systems.

AS IT PLACES

greater stress on the agency of the Spirit, *Preach My Gospel* likewise places greater stress on the agency of investigators. Investigators' agency is invoked to explain why missionaries should not measure their success by "outward results" such as baptisms but rather by the quality of their commitment to the work.

This new emphasis on flexibility is represented as openness to the inspiration of the Spirit. Introducing *Preach My Gospel* to missionaries via worldwide satellite broadcast, Gordon B. Hinckley explained the new manual's flexibility as an application of the statement in D&C 46:2 that "notwithstanding those things which are written, it always has been given to the elders of my church from the beginning, and ever shall be, to conduct all meetings as they are directed and guided by the Holy Spirit." A conviction that missionaries need to be led by the Spirit was one motivation for the "raising of the bar" for missionary service, which M. Russell Ballard announced during the October 2002 General Conference, three years before the publication of *Preach My Gospel*. "We need vibrant, thinking, passionate missionaries who know how to listen to and respond to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit," Ballard explained. "This isn't a time for spiritual weaklings."⁵¹

Here another important shift in the history of missionary discussions becomes apparent, one which allows *Preach My Gospel* to be typed as a return to an earlier pattern of missionary teaching. In the first standardized discussions of 1952, the Spirit's role in missionary teaching was presented primarily in terms of the Spirit's influence on *missionaries*, inspiring them to know what to say and how to adapt their teaching to a particular investigator's needs or interests. The same is also true of *The Missionary's Hand Book*, the 1937 churchwide missionary guide that preceded the 1952 discussions.⁵² As compared to later systems, the first standardized discussions paid little attention to the Spirit's influence on *investigators*. For instance, the 1952 discussions presented Moroni's promise to investigators as evidence that the Book of Mormon is inspired (since "only an inspired man would include" such a promise in a book), but the investigator was not urged to try the promise in order to seek the witness of the Spirit himself, a glaring omission by the standard of subsequent missionary practice.⁵³

Correlation, with its emphasis on following the authorized program, set in motion what would, after some vacillation, become a pronounced shift in how "teaching by the Spirit" was understood.⁵⁴ Where the 1937 *Missionary's Hand Book* and the

1952 discussions had described teaching by the Spirit as inspired "flexibility" and "adaptation" on the part of the missionary, the 1961 discussions instructed missionaries to "follow the [prescribed] dialogues." As a corollary to this move, the 1961 discussions describe the Spirit's role in missionary teaching in terms of the Spirit's influence not on missionaries but on *investigators*, who would feel the Spirit as a result of missionary testimony.⁵⁵ Subsequent sets of discussions defined teaching by the Spirit in different ways. The 1973 discussions explained teaching by the Spirit in terms of the Spirit's influence on *both* missionaries and investigators. The 1981 revision of the 1973 discussions briefly reverted to a primary focus on the Spirit's guidance of missionaries, but a 1984 missionary training booklet called *Proselyting* resumed the dual explanation that the Spirit must influence missionary and investigator alike.⁵⁶

In the early 1980s, researchers for the Missionary Department developed a schematic model of conversion that came to be known as the commitment pattern. Introduced to missionaries in the 1984 manual *Proselyting*, the commitment pattern was the organizing framework of the 1986 discussions and the 1988 *Missionary Guide*.⁵⁷ While inspiration to missionaries was implicit in the commitment pattern (missionaries needed to be sensitive to the Spirit's promptings in applying commitment pattern principles to specific situations), the pattern had the effect of making the Spirit's influence on investigators the central preoccupation of missionary teaching. "Your goal," the 1986 discussions told missionaries, "is to help investigators become converted by the Spirit. . . . To do this, you must help them feel and recognize the influence of the Spirit." The *Missionary Guide* added that "the most important process in conversion is for people to feel the Spirit of the Lord. . . . The only way you can help people return to live with God is by helping them feel the Spirit and inviting them to change."⁵⁸

Spiritual feelings on the part of investigators were the engine of the commitment pattern's theory of conversion: feeling the Spirit would motivate investigators to accept gospel commitments, the fulfillment of which would produce further spiritual feelings, motivating further commitments. While it might be unfair to type this as a "mechanistic" approach to conversion, it was certainly "schematic" inasmuch as it presented an ostensibly universal conversion process operating in step-by-step fashion: missionaries prepared investigators to feel the Spirit, then invited them to make commitments and followed up on those commitments, resolving concerns as necessary along the way to keep the process moving.⁵⁹ The commitment pattern could also be called a "technology" of conversion in the sense that missionaries were trained to execute a series of techniques ("principles," "skills," or "methods," in the language of the *Missionary Guide*). Teaching by the Spirit meant effective application of these techniques: expressing empathy, bearing testimony in particular ways, asking "find out" questions, extending invitations as direct "will you?" questions, and so on.

Language from the commitment pattern continues in *Preach My Gospel*: the manual speaks of commitments,

inviting, following up, resolving concerns. But the commitment pattern itself, as a schema or technology of conversion, is gone: the term “commitment pattern” is never used, and the familiar schematic from the *Missionary Guide* is nowhere to be found. Missionaries are still taught that conversion occurs as investigators feel the Spirit in response to missionary teaching and testimony and as a result of keeping commitments. But missionaries are no longer taught methods to “help investigators feel the Spirit”; that phrase, fundamental to the 1986 discussions, is conspicuously absent in *Preach My Gospel*.⁶⁰ Together with *Preach My Gospel*’s recurring emphasis on the need for missionaries to be guided by the Spirit, the shift away from rhetoric about helping investigators feel the Spirit places relatively greater stress on the Spirit’s agency—that is, on a conception of the Spirit as a personality acting according to its own will—than did the *Missionary Guide*, which tended toward a conception of the Spirit as a feeling produced by missionary teaching.⁶¹ An entire chapter of the *Missionary Guide* had been dedicated to methods for helping investigators feel the Spirit: bear testimony, share experiences, identify the influence of the Holy Ghost. By contrast, a single paragraph in *Preach My Gospel* encourages missionaries to create a “climate” where the Spirit can be present. This is to be accomplished not through specific teaching methods but by teaching the designated doctrines (the “message of the Restoration”) and following the Spirit’s promptings.⁶²

As it places greater stress on the agency of the Spirit, *Preach My Gospel* likewise places greater stress on the agency of investigators. Investigators’ agency is invoked to explain why missionaries should not measure their success by “outward results” such as baptisms but rather by the quality of their commitment to the work.⁶³ Stress on investigators’ agency leads *Preach My Gospel* to insist that goals should be an expression of missionaries’ hopes for the particular individuals with whom they are working, not a target imposed on missionaries by leaders nor a device for measuring missionaries’ success. Indeed, according to *Preach My Gospel*, leaders are not even supposed to ask missionaries to report their goals.⁶⁴ If actually put into practice, *Preach My Gospel*’s guidelines for the use of goals could

do much to reduce unrealistic expectations, feelings of failure, and a salesmanship mentality among missionaries. However, while *Preach My Gospel* forbids leaders to set goals for missionaries, it does allow leaders to set “standards of excellence,” which sound like they may be subject to the same liabilities as leader-imposed goals.

The abandonment of the commitment pattern as schema and the greater stress on the agency of the Spirit and of investigators suggest that the creators of *Preach My Gospel* wanted to steer well away from a mechanistic sense of conversion as the outcome of missionary method. A schematic or technological model of conversion such as that provided by the *Missionary Guide* would be incompatible with *Preach My Gospel*’s focus on flexibility under inspiration. This is to say that compared to the *Missionary Guide* and the 1986 discussions, *Preach My Gospel* redefines teaching by the Spirit. For *Preach My Gospel*, teaching by the Spirit means inspired adaptation, not effectively executed technique.⁶⁵ Like the 1937 *Missionary’s Handbook* and the 1952 discussions, *Preach My Gospel* represents teaching by the Spirit primarily in terms of the inspiration received by missionaries, not primarily in terms of spiritual feelings produced in investigators.

Instead of a schema or technology of conversion, *Preach My Gospel* aims to present universal principles which missionaries must then adapt across cultures and for individual circumstances as prompted by the Spirit. An illustration of the “universal principles, local adaptation” pattern is *Preach My Gospel*’s explanation that the manual contains “guidelines” or “suggestions that you can apply throughout your mission. However,” the manual quickly continues, “do not feel that you



JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY JOHN CHARLES DUFFY AND HUGO OLAIZ

must use every guideline in every situation. Instead, apply these guidelines to meet your needs and as you are guided by the Spirit.”⁶⁶ Another example of this pattern occurs in *Preach My Gospel*'s discussion of finding people to teach. “The principles for finding are universal,” the manual states; at the same time, though, “finding is different in different parts of the world” and therefore “missionaries and mission presidents need to adapt to circumstances.” Contrast that last statement with the instruction on the same subject in the 1986 *Missionary Handbook* (the so-called “white bible” of missionary rules). The handbook provided a list of “proven methods” for finding, ranked in order of effectiveness, with no indication that the relative merit of these methods might vary by local circumstance.⁶⁷

A Broader Perspective

THE PATTERN OF universal principles and inspired local adaptation is not only the new model for missionary teaching. This pattern has come to be one of the LDS hierarchy's major strategies for administering the international church. The development of *Preach My Gospel* is related to a wide-reaching, years-long correlation project undertaken by the Quorum of the Twelve in the 1990s to “revitalize and improve teaching in the Church.” This project encompassed teaching in sacrament meeting, Sunday School, priesthood quorums, and auxiliaries; home and visiting teaching; interviews and training meetings; instruction of children by their parents at home—in theory,

any setting in which LDS beliefs, standards, or policies are communicated. The fruits of this correlation effort have included the new schedule for priesthood quorums and Relief Society (first-Sunday meetings, fourth-Sunday meetings, etc.); the new “Teachings of Presidents of the Church” series; quotations plus minimalist manuals for Sunday School and other church courses, consisting merely of scriptures or other readings and open-ended discussion questions; a new guide for local leaders titled *Improving Gospel Teaching*; and a new version of *Teaching: No Greater Call*.⁶⁸

A guiding principle behind these new materials has been to simplify—to pare the content of the manuals down to basic gospel principles and doctrines. As Dallin H. Oaks has explained, the new philosophy is to “forgo teaching specific rules or applications” on the grounds that applying principles is “generally the responsibility of individuals and families” under the guidance of the Spirit. In language foreshadowing *Preach My Gospel*, local leaders have been encouraged to “be flexible in adapting” suggested subjects for first-Sunday meetings “to meet the needs and circumstances of their members.”⁶⁹

James Allen and Glen Leonard have remarked that the “new genre” of short, simplified Church manuals (which were already in the making in the 1980s though they had not yet become as minimalist as some manuals used today) is a strategy to avoid transmitting the gospel “in American terms.” That is, since the same manuals are to be used by Latter-day Saints worldwide, stripping the manuals of specific applications, illustrations, or anecdotes reduces the likelihood of culture-specific content. The simplified materials thus attempt to transcend cultural difference by focusing on scriptures and basic principles—understood to be universal—and leaving it to “local teachers to expand according to their own concerns and inspiration.”⁷⁰

The Worldwide Leadership Training Meetings that the Church has been conducting semiannually via satellite broadcast since 2003 are likewise understood by Church leaders as a way to disseminate universal principles for local adaptation. As the First Presidency explained in the letter announcing the first broadcast, “We see this as an important opportunity to teach foundation doctrines and principles and their application in local circumstances.”⁷¹ As part of this



“... The good news is the missionaries are no longer reporting new converts named George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Abraham Lincoln.”

strategy for Church administration, *principle* is replacing *program* as a preeminent term in correlated discourse. Of course, Church leaders have long insisted, as James E. Faust recently has, that “principles are more important than programs.” But under the new pattern of correlation, it is becoming true to a degree it has not been previously that Church leaders “are trying to teach principles and guidelines more than to promote programs, as [they] seek to strengthen the inner person with the Spirit of God.”⁷² *Preach My Gospel’s* movement from schema and technique toward adaptation and inspiration is one enactment of this effort.

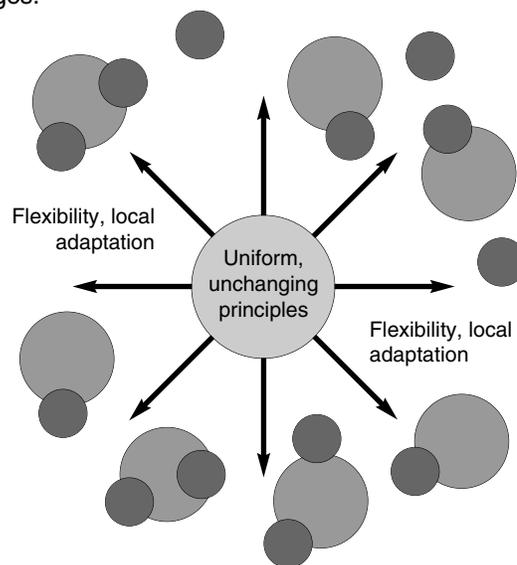
THE FUTURE OF CORRELATION:
PROSPECTS AND CONCERNS

Is “principles-oriented” correlation enough to move
the Church beyond its Americanism?

I HAVE ANALYZED *Preach My Gospel* in the context of the historical development of the Church’s standardized missionary discussions and against the background of trends apparent elsewhere in Church discourse. My analysis reveals that the new missionary manual is an extension of recent developments in both the content and the mechanism of Church correlation. In terms of content, correlation currently promotes as the essence of the LDS message a discourse that integrates the evangelical Mormonism of the 1980s and 1990s with a proportionately greater emphasis on the Restoration and thus on the Church’s exclusive claims to truth and authority. One sign of this shift in the content of correlation is the reemergence of rhetoric about the Book of Mormon as “evidence” of the prophetic claims of Joseph Smith, which had been eclipsed during the 1980s by evangelical rhetoric about the Book of Mormon as a witness for Jesus Christ. As for the mechanism of correlation, *Preach My Gospel* typifies Church leaders’ preferred pattern for negotiating uniformity and diversity in Church teaching and administration: to broadcast foundational, universal principles with the expectation that members will adapt these according to their cultural, local, and personal situations under the inspiration of the Spirit. The increased application of this pattern of correlation has resulted in a relatively greater frequency of rhetoric about flexibility and about valuing principles over programs. These two trends—proportionately greater stress on the Restoration and on adapting principles under inspiration—appear to be the future of correlation.

In a church that values hierarchical authority as much as the LDS Church does, a greater emphasis on flexibility, adaptation, and personal inspiration might be risky. *Preach My Gospel* confronts the potential threat to hierarchical authority when it cautions missionaries, “As you pray for inspiration, you should also confirm your feelings. . . . [C]ompare your decisions with the scriptures and the teachings of the living prophets.”⁷³ There is little risk, however, that the new, relatively greater emphasis on adaptation will produce antinomianism or agitation for local autonomy. Any risk of that sort is offset by the simultaneous emphasis on the Restoration—that is, on the divine

FIGURE 3. In the “universal principles, local adaptation” model, uniform principles are broadcast from Church headquarters out to the members, where the principles can then be adapted. Uniformity and immutability are thus the Church’s central governing values; flexibility and adaptation occur “at the edges.”



authority of the Church and its prophetic leaders. “Those who listen to and follow the counsel of living prophets and apostles will not go astray,” *Preach My Gospel* has missionaries promise investigators. “We are to prepare ourselves so that when the prophets and apostles speak, the Holy Ghost can confirm the truths they teach, and we can then determine to follow the counsel they give us.” *Preach My Gospel* further reinforces prophetic authority by introducing into missionary teaching an innovative description of a prophet “as a steward to oversee the household of God here on earth.”⁷⁴

This is to say that as *Preach My Gospel*, or the principles-oriented approach to correlation more generally, calls for greater flexibility and inspired initiative on the part of members in applying gospel principles, it simultaneously moves to contain such initiative. I already noted that the long-rehearsed call to place principles over programs is now being enacted to a degree not seen previously. Comparatively speaking, however, that isn’t saying very much. Notwithstanding recent developments, the basic premise of correlation—that centralized authority must ensure uniformity in the Church for the sake of efficiency and doctrinal purity—remains unchanged. Rhetoric about flexibility and adaptation only softens the impulse to uniformity at the edges. That statement is true both in the general idiomatic sense of the expression “soften at the edges” and in the more specific sense that flexibility and adaptation are lo-

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SUNSTONE GALLERY

MARATHON MAN

NO MATTER THE TRACK, NO MATTER ITS SURPRISES, William D. Russell—“Bill” to everyone he knows—is accustomed to staying the course, going the distance.

Bill was born sixty-seven years ago and raised in America’s heartland, the youngest of four children. His parents are Robert Melvin Russell, a career minister in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now the Community of Christ), and Eleanor Williams, also a well-pedigreed RLDS church member. Many who know Bill’s wonderful humor and mischievous smile today may be surprised at his description of his early self as a “churchy kid, not too wild.” He was shy, he claims, quite comfortable within a world deeply immersed in mid-western Protestant values that forbade dancing and other frivolities.

A natural athlete, Bill excelled in all sports including his favorite, baseball, but eventually focused on cross-country and track. Following a strong high school running career, he continued his track superiority at Graceland University, the Community of Christ-sponsored college in Lamoni, Iowa. By the time he graduated, he held seven school records. All but one were broken the next year, but the remaining one, a relay mark, stayed on the books until erased by a team led by Graceland student and future Olympic decathlon champion, Bruce Jenner.

Bill continued to enjoy running long past his 1960 Graceland graduation, eventually challenging himself with marathons. Again, he met this course with determination, completing twenty-five marathons, including Boston in 1979, which he ran in under three hours.

BILL’S HIGH SCHOOL years gave rise to many changes, including the first hints of a sense of citizenship in a world far larger than he had imagined during his circumscribed childhood. Though the student body of his Flint, Michigan, high school was approximately 40 percent black, he estimates the percentage of black track members at about 90 percent. His friendships with these teammates coincided with his being drawn powerfully to the images of the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott and other civil rights actions unfolding on the television screen.

Bill’s sense of connection to this larger world of human concern increased during his days at Graceland. He took to heart beloved teacher Roy Cheville’s axiom, “An unexamined faith is not worth having.” And, as he embraced the challenge to examine his faith, he was drawn to a study of

the Bible, especially of Jesus and the Hebrew prophets. Upon graduation, Bill became editor of *Stride* magazine, the RLDS equivalent of the *New Era*, while also serving as an assistant editor for the *Saints Herald*. In 1966, he returned to Graceland as a faculty member, where he has taught everything from Bible and history of Christianity to American history and government. Before he began his Graceland teaching career, Bill earned a master’s of divinity from Saint Paul School of Theology and, starting in 1967, attended the University of Iowa for the next ten summers, where he studied with prominent historian Sidney Mead before switching to the College of Law, where he earned his degree in 1976.

IN MANY WAYS, Bill’s transformative journey mirrors that of his beloved faith tradition. As the Community of Christ worked to face up to challenging aspects of its history and to rethink its mission, so did Bill. For both of them, the life and ministry of Jesus ultimately became the first source of authority, and a Christ-centered theology of peace, their overriding concern.

As a mantra of sorts for his own sense of calling, Bill chooses Jesus’s announcement in the synagogue at Nazareth at the beginning of his ministry: “to heal the broken-hearted, . . . to set at liberty them that are bruised” (Luke 4:18). Yet while Jesus’s earthly ministry was brief—a sprint, if you will—Bill’s has taken a form closer to his marathoning. Bill’s call to Christian social action has led him to be an active and outspoken advocate for the past four decades for civil rights, women’s issues, and, most recently, gay rights, for which he’s a strong voice in today’s Community of Christ. He’s also been very active in Iowa Democratic politics, “running” and winning four terms on the school board and nearly pulling an upset in the 1972 race for a seat in the Iowa House of Representatives.

A member of the Mormon History Association since 1971, including a term as president in 1982–83, Bill attended his first Sunstone symposium in 1984. He’s missed very few since, giving passionate presentations on matters close to his heart as well as others that help us better understand the Community of Christ. “I really like the critical thinking that goes on at Sunstone symposiums,” Bill explains. “While I enjoy the MHA, the more important questions are being asked at Sunstone.”

Bill is currently preparing several books and plans to teach several more years at Graceland. Of course he is. He’s a marathon man, and the course still holds many more joys before the finish line. ☺



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL SCHOENFELD

THE CHURCH

is in an administration mode that, despite good intentions on the part of the leadership, keeps Americans, their values, and their language in a privileged position at the center of the Church.

cated “out there,” in the field, ergo at the edges, not at the center, from which unchanging, foundational principles emanate. (See figure 3.)

The essentially unchanging character of the Church and its teachings has been a recurring theme in the presidency of Gordon B. Hinckley, who calls the Church “a constant in a world of change” and “an anchor in a world of shifting values.”⁷⁵ Reproducing President Hinckley’s language, *Preach My Gospel* declares that “the teachings of living prophets provide an anchor of eternal truth in a world of shifting values.” In this rhetoric, living prophets figure as emissaries of a fixed truth, not of a progressively unfolding revelation.⁷⁶

Thus, despite a relatively greater emphasis on local adaptation of principles in recent years, uniformity and immutability remain the Church’s central governing values. Flexibility and adaptation are subordinate. Adaptation occurs at the will of the hierarchy—that is, because the hierarchy so instructs and within limits the hierarchy sets.⁷⁷ A space has been created for local and individual initiative that is not perceived as threatening the authority of the center. To recast that in doctrinal language: A space has been created for revelation to individual members that is not perceived as threatening the prophetic authority of Church leaders. For Mormons with a theologically liberal orientation, this may sound dismayingly familiar.

Church leaders appear to believe that principles-oriented correlation solves the problem (if not actually, then at least potentially) of transmitting culture-specific content in the name of gospel verities. The 1986 discussions and the *Missionary Guide* had to be revised in translation to eliminate inapplicable American or First World cultural references or to add material addressing concerns arising in other cultural contexts.⁷⁸ The writers of *Preach My Gospel* seem to have aspired to create a culturally non-descript and thus universal manual that would not require such revision when translated. As noted above, the same aspiration has recently guided the writing of other Church manuals. Church leaders see correlation as promoting a “gospel culture” that, because it is revealed, transcends the particularities of any human culture.

Armand Mauss has cautioned that the “gospel culture” project is susceptible to ethnocentrism, especially given the tendency to recruit Church leaders from among those members “who already seem most amenable and receptive to American

ideas.”⁷⁹ I would underscore that warning even more emphatically, perhaps, than Mauss does. There can be no “gospel culture” transcending human particularity. What Church leaders regard as transcendent principles or teachings in fact represent particular ways of engaging with the texts and traditions that contemporary Latter-day Saints have inherited from their forebears. Official assertions about what constitutes the transcendent essence (the “foundation doctrines and principles”) of the restored gospel reflect the interpretations, experiences, and judgments of the mostly white, American, middle-aged-to-elderly men who form the upper levels of the LDS hierarchy. Indeed, Church leaders’ concerns about separating culture from the gospel arise out of a particular historical era and the particular social and ideological trends that have influenced Church leaders’ thinking (e.g., the multicultural awareness that has permeated American society since the 1960s).

The General Authorities clearly do not want this to be an American church—and they are confident that it is not. The latter point is explicitly made in *Preach My Gospel*. “Help people recognize,” missionaries are instructed, “that the Church is not just another religion, nor is it an American church. Rather, it is a restoration of the ‘fulness of [the] gospel’ (D&C 1:23), the same as was revealed and taught from the beginning.”⁸⁰ Yet in significant respects, the LDS Church is an American church, and *Preach My Gospel* itself bears signs of that. The manual was developed by Church leaders and employees headquartered in the United States within an institution that has been heavily shaped by the patterns and values of American business; the manual was unveiled via a global satellite broadcast originating in the United States, in English; and every missionary worldwide received a copy of the new manual in English because it hadn’t been translated into other languages before it was unveiled.⁸¹ These are all symptoms of a mode of Church administration that, despite good intentions on the part of the leadership, keeps Americans, their values, and their language in a privileged position at the center of the Church.⁸²

If Church leaders want to avoid broadcasting American culture worldwide in the name of the gospel, principles-oriented correlation will not suffice. I would propose a more daring vision: a decentralizing of Church administration that would allow Saints in other parts of the world to engage with the texts and traditions we call the Restoration as freely as American Saints have. In this vision of the future, Latter-day Saints organized at the levels of region, language group, culture, or nation would arrive at more localized understandings of what messages the Restoration has for their particular contexts. They would develop their own ways of organizing in response to the call to proclaim the gospel—and thus their own guides to missionary service, not translations, or even adaptations, of an ostensibly universal English original. But enacting this vision, or something like it, would require a greater trust in the Spirit’s revelations to members, as distinct from the authority of prophets, and a greater dismantling of correlation than Church leaders seem currently prepared to imagine. Whether the long-term future may hold something different for the Church remains to be seen. 

NOTES

1. Adam C. Olson, "News of the Church," *Ensign*, January 2005, retrieved from <http://www.lds.org>; "Preach My Gospel," *Church News*, 6 November 2004, 8.
2. Olson, "News of the Church"; "Teaching from the Heart," *Ensign*, June 2004; Richard G. Scott, "The Power of *Preach My Gospel*," *Ensign*, May 2005. (*Ensign* articles retrieved from <http://www.lds.org>.)
3. The most detailed history to date of the inauguration of the Correlation Committee, including negative reactions by Church and auxiliary leaders to the Committee's growing power, is Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), ch. 7. For earlier (and farther reaching) histories of correlation, see Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America's Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1984), 58–63; Richard O. Cowan, *The Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), ch. 17; James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), ch. 20; Frank O. May, Jr., "Correlation of the Church, Administration," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 323–25. One consequence of correlation has been a loss of autonomy for Church auxiliaries and missions in areas such as publishing and finances.
4. Russell M. Nelson, "Divine Love," *Ensign*, Feb. 2003, retrieved from <http://www.lds.org>; "Update," *SUNSTONE*, March 2003, 72–73.
5. Scott, "The Power of *Preach My Gospel*," 29.
6. Jay E. Jensen, "Proselyting Techniques of Mormon Missionaries," master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974, 75–80; available online at <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cgi-bin/docviewer.exe?CISOROOT=/MormonThesesIK&CISOPTR=4277>, 80. For a useful overview of teaching plans created by missionaries and mission presidents prior to the first standardized discussions, see Lewis Clark Christian, "A Study of the Development of the Missionary Plan of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1950," unpublished paper, 1975, available at the LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. Jay Jensen's thesis offers a history of missionary teaching plans from the 1930s to the 1970s, while a dissertation by George Taylor extends that history up to the creation of the first field version of *The Uniform System for Teaching the Gospel*, in the mid-1980s. See George T. Taylor, "Effects of Coaching on the Development of Proselyting Skills Used by the Missionary Training Center, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Provo, Utah, 1986," dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1987, 18–31.
7. Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 568.
8. This manipulative quality followed from a tradition of missionaries being instructed to secure the investigator's "agreement" to the doctrines taught. This had been the driving principle of the Anderson Plan and was an explicit element of the philosophy behind *A Systematic Program*. Jensen, "Proselyting Techniques of Mormon Missionaries," 79–80; *A Systematic Program*, 26–27. *A Systematic Program* and its 1961 successor sought to secure investigators' agreement by posing leading questions that had one desirable answer. *A Systematic Program* was blatant in this regard: the dialogues have the elders feeding the investigator answers—e.g., by having him fill in the blank or by pointing to the correct answer on a piece of paper—then proffering compliments such as, "You really know the correct answers, Mr. Brady. It is refreshing to talk to someone who thinks ahead of me" (48, 62, 65). The 1973 discussions repudiated such tactics, instructing missionaries not to "force [investigators] to say what you want them to say." *The Uniform System for Teaching Families* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973), A1.
9. Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 568, 609–610; R. Lanier Britsch, "Missions and Missionary Work," in *Encyclopedia of Latter-Day Saint History*, ed. Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q. Cannon, and Richard O. Cowan (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 764.
10. "News of the Church," *Ensign*, September 1973, retrieved from <http://www.lds.org>; Cowan, *Church in the Twentieth Century*, 282–83.
11. Taylor, "Effects of Coaching," 21–25. Taylor calls the 1981 and 1982 revisions the Modified Version and the Simplified Version, respectively. As near as I can tell, these are the same as the *Uniform System for Teaching Families* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981) and the *Uniform System for Teaching Families, February 1983* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1983), available at the LDS Church History Library in Salt Lake City.
12. Taylor, "Effects of Coaching," 27–28.
13. The six post-baptismal discussions were generally to be taught by stake missionaries, to facilitate new converts being fellowshipped into the local church unit (as opposed to their interacting primarily with full-time missionaries).
14. Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), ch. 5.
15. There is one exception to this statement: In October 1982, Church leaders altered the order of the 1973 discussions so that the discussion which included the First Vision was pushed to third place in the series. Consequently, from 1983 to 1985, the discussions began with an exposition of the Atonement and the first principles and ordinances of the gospel, followed (in the second discussion) with the plan of salvation from premortality to the three degrees of glory. This re-arranging of the order of the discussions appears to be an early effort at making missionary teaching more Christ-centered.
16. The instructions accompanying the pilot version of the 1986 discussions reveal that the discussions' creators sensed it might seem odd to postpone the rest of the First Vision story to the third discussion. They therefore counsel missionaries teaching the first discussion to "mention that you will give more detail about [Joseph Smith's] mission during your third visit." *Uniform System for Teaching the Gospel* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), 1–2.
17. The 1973 discussions instructed missionaries to "emphasize the beautiful, positive aspects of the restoration" and "avoid debate about the other churches." Only "if absolutely necessary," should they jump ahead to the Great Apostasy, which in 1973 was taught as part of the fourth discussion. *Uniform System for Teaching Families* (1973), C10, C12.
18. *Preach My Gospel* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 32–33. The term "cycle" does not actually appear in *Preach My Gospel* but was used by Richard G. Scott when he introduced the new lessons to *Ensign* readers ("Teaching from the Heart," note 2, above). Situating the latter-day restoration in a cycle of apostasies and restorations is apparently important to Charles Didier, a member of the Missionary Executive Council, which oversaw the creation of *Preach My Gospel*. Didier had earlier promoted the concept in a special missionary discussion he created sometime in the late 1970s or early 1980s. A version of this discussion, in Spanish, can be found as "Charla de Elder Didier," in *Misión Paraguay Asunción* (Asunción: Paraguay Asunción Mission, 1983), 83–87.
19. The shift in emphasis can be seen from the very titles under which each discussion presents the First Vision. This section in the 1986 discussion is titled, "The Prophet Joseph Smith: A Modern Witness of Jesus Christ," while the equivalent section in *Preach My Gospel* is titled, "The Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ through Joseph Smith." *The Plan of our Heavenly Father, Discussion 1* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986), 1–10; *Preach My Gospel*, 36.
20. *Preach My Gospel*, 38–39. See also page 103, where the Book of Mormon is called "proof of the Restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith."
21. *Ibid.*, 105. By the same token, it should be noted that the conception of the Book of Mormon as evidence that Joseph is a prophet is not new to *Preach My Gospel*. In the 1986 discussions, that concept was communicated to investigators as part of the explanation of Moroni's promise: the right column of the discussion, containing teaching aids, encouraged missionaries to testify of the power of the Book of Mormon to serve as evidence of Joseph Smith's prophetic calling (*Plan of our Heavenly Father*, 1–19). The difference lies in how Joseph's prophetic calling was explained in the 1986 version of the first discussion as compared to *Preach My Gospel*. In 1986, to say that the Book of Mormon is evidence of Joseph's prophetic calling was to say that the book provides evidence that Joseph was called by God to bear witness of Christ, since that is what the first discussion taught investigators is the calling of a prophet. In *Preach My Gospel*, the Book of Mormon functions as evidence of the Great Apostasy and the Restoration.
22. *Preach My Gospel*, 36.
23. *Missionary Guide: Training for Missionaries* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1988), 64, 66.
24. *Preach My Gospel*, 46. Also, *Preach My Gospel* acknowledges that sincere people living during times of apostasy "have worshiped according to the light they possessed and have received answers to their prayers" (36).
25. *Ibid.*, 5.
26. *Preach My Gospel*, 3; Scott, "The Power of *Preach My Gospel*"; "Teaching from the Heart" (note 2, above). M. Russell Ballard likewise used urgent, militant rhetoric when he announced the "raising of the bar" to improve the spiritual preparedness of missionaries: "These are 'perilous times.' We battle literally for the souls of men. The enemy is unforgiving and relentless. He is taking eternal prisoners at an alarming rate. And he shows no sign of letting up." M. Russell Ballard, "The Greatest Generation of Missionaries," *Ensign*, November 2002, 47.
27. In response to an earlier version of this paper, I have twice been asked if I

think the new emphasis on apostasy and restoration is a reaction to declining baptismal rates, as publicized recently by Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Keeping Members a Challenge for LDS Church," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 July 2005, accessed from http://www.sltrib.com/ci_2890645. While it's not hard to imagine that Church leaders *might* have decided to promote a more urgent or militant message out of concern for declining conversions, I cannot document that they *did*. What I can document is that Church leadership characterizes the innovations in *Preach My Gospel* as a response to growing spiritual danger in today's world.

28. Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1994).

29. *Preach My Gospel*, 6. Compare page 103, where the Book of Mormon is said to be both "powerful evidence of the divinity of Christ" and "proof of the Restoration through the Prophet Joseph Smith." Like most of the 1986 discussions, *Preach My Gospel* has a painting of Christ on the cover; the cover also features a citation from 3 Nephi about coming to Christ through baptism. The effect of this cover design—as opposed to, say, a picture of the First Vision and a text about the restoration of the gospel—is to preserve a readily discernible evangelical dimension in *Preach My Gospel's* representation of missionary teaching.

30. Writing in 1984, the Shepherds observed that in the "last 30 years . . . attention to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ was the single most salient subject at general conference," while talks about Joseph Smith declined during the same period. In 1993, Shipps wrote that "in the past thirty years" there had appeared "everywhere within Mormonism—in the *Church News* and the *Ensign*, in the public statements of LDS officials, in Sunday School lessons, and in talks the Saints give in ward sacrament meetings, as well as in private conversations—an escalating emphasis on the suffering of the Savior, the atonement of Christ, personal salvation, and so on." Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd, *A Kingdom Transformed: Themes in the Development of Mormonism* (University of Utah Press, 1984), 101; Jan Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 341. Craig Blomberg presumably has this same discursive trend in mind when he writes that "Mormons widely perceive a movement over the last fifteen years or so, beginning with the presidency of Ezra Taft Benson, to call their church back to its roots, that is, to the Bible and the Book of Mormon." Craig L. Blomberg, "Is Mormonism Christian?" in *The New Mormon Challenge: Responding to the Latest Defenses of a Fast-Growing Movement*, ed. Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owens (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 326. Other commentators who have alluded, as if it were a given, to Mormonism's "new emphasis on Jesus" or to its "late twentieth-century Protestantism" include Kenneth L. Woodward, "A Mormon Moment," *Newsweek*, 10 September 2001, 48; and Kenneth Anderson, "The Magi of the Great Salt Lake," review of *The Refiner's Fire*, by John L. Brooke, *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 March 1995, 11. The ascendancy of what Kendall White calls Mormon neo-orthodoxy is an analogous development, though White focuses largely on non-correlated discourse. O. Kendall White, Jr., *Mormon Neo-Orthodoxy: A Crisis Theology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987). Signs of what I dub correlation's evangelical turn include the subtitled of the Book of Mormon (1982); the addition of many Christ-centered hymns to the new hymnal (1985); the summation of the three-fold mission of the Church as inviting all to come to Christ (1987–1988); the redesigned Church logo (1995); the joint statement by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, "The Living Christ" (2000); and the request that journalists refer to the Church as the Church of Jesus Christ (2001).

31. The evangelical tenor of the 1986 discussions had been foreshadowed by the 1982 revision to *The Uniform System for Teaching Families*. That revision rearranged the discussions so that what had been the sixth discussion, "Our Relationship to Christ," became the first. Retitled "Our Acceptance of Christ," this discussion covered the following principles: the true church bears Christ's name; Christ is creator, redeemer, and judge; all people must repent and be baptized to make Christ's atonement operative in their lives. The retitling of the discussion (from "Relationship" to "Acceptance") may have been a response to Bruce R. McConkie's public condemnations, in 1981 and early 1982, of what he perceived as George W. Pace's overly evangelical *What It Means to Know Christ*. Fearing a drift toward "sectarian" Christianity, McConkie declared that Latter-day Saints "should not strive for a special and personal relationship with Christ." Lavina Fielding Anderson, "Context and Analysis: 'You Have Heard True Doctrine Taught': Elder Bruce R. McConkie's 1981–82 Addresses," in *Case Reports of the Mormon Alliance, Volume 2, 1996*, ed. Lavina Fielding Anderson and Janice Merrill Allred (Salt Lake City: Mormon Alliance, 1997), retrieved from <http://www.mormonalliance.org/casereports/volume2/part2/v2p2c06.htm>. I interpret the Pace-McConkie controversy as symptomatic of tensions produced within the LDS community by the mounting shift toward evangelical discourse.

32. Ezra Taft Benson, "A New Witness for Christ," *Ensign*, November 1984, retrieved from <http://www.lds.org>.

33. Ezra Taft Benson, "Come unto Christ," *Ensign*, November 1987; Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon Is the Word of God," *Ensign*, January 1988; Boyd K. Packer, "Atonement, Agency, Accountability," *Ensign*, May 1988; Dallin H. Oaks, "What Think Ye of Christ?" *Ensign*, November 1988; Gordon B. Hinckley, "Be Not Faithless," *Ensign*, April 1989; Dallin H. Oaks, "Another Testament of Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, March 1994. A fairly well-known, anomalous reference to the Book of Mormon as evidence of the Restoration—though the word "evidence" is not actually used—occurs in Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion," *Ensign*, November 1986. Even here, though, this function of the Book of Mormon was subordinated to the book's witness of Christ and his saving doctrines. (All *Ensign* articles retrieved from <http://www.lds.org>.)

34. Using the online archive of Church magazines at [lds.org](http://www.lds.org), I searched all *Ensign* issues for the keyword combination "evidence" and "Book of Mormon." The last General Authority address in the *Ensign* prior to the Benson presidency that spoke of the Book of Mormon as "evidence" of Joseph Smith's prophetic claims was Gordon B. Hinckley, "Praise to the Man," *Ensign*, August 1983. The next General Authority address to use that rhetoric came eleven years later, just two months before Benson's death, when the *Ensign* reprinted an address Benson had given in 1981 (before his presidency). In 1995, the year following Benson's death, two Seventies referred in general conference addresses to the Book of Mormon as evidence of Joseph Smith or the Church: Robert K. Dellenbach, "The Translation Miracle of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, May 1995; Ted E. Brewerton, "The Book of Mormon: A Sacred Ancient Record," *Ensign*, November 1995. Subsequent addresses that used this rhetoric are: Joseph B. Wirthlin, "The Book of Mormon: The Heart of Missionary Proselyting," *Ensign*, September 2002 (the published version of an address Wirthlin gave to new mission presidents in 1999); James E. Faust, "Lord, I Believe; Help Thou Mine Unbelief," *Ensign*, November 2003; Charles Didier, "The Message of the Restoration," *Ensign*, November 2003 (Didier here uses the phrase "convincing evidence," which will reappear in *Preach My Gospel*, which Didier helped create); Henry B. Eyring, "An Enduring Testimony of the Mission of the Prophet Joseph," *Ensign*, November 2003; James E. Faust, "The Keystone of Our Religion," *Ensign*, January 2004 (a reprint of an address Faust gave in 1983, before the Benson presidency); M. Russell Ballard, "Pure Testimony," *Ensign*, November 2004; Richard C. Edgley, "A Still, Small Voice and a Throbbing Heart," *Ensign*, May 2005. Edgley makes the point that the Book of Mormon is "evidence" of Joseph Smith and the Restoration three times in his talk, which was delivered following the publication of *Preach My Gospel*. (All *Ensign* articles retrieved from <http://www.lds.org>.)

35. Faust, "The Keystone of Our Religion," note 34, above. Richard C. Edgley, who refers three times in one talk ("A Still, Small Voice") to the Book of Mormon as evidence of the Restoration, also deploys evangelical Mormon rhetoric when he writes that the Book of Mormon "testifies of the divinity of Jesus Christ" and expands his understanding of Christ's doctrine. For additional examples of recent General Authority addresses that integrate evangelical discourse with references to the Book of Mormon as evidence of the Restoration, see Wirthlin, "The Book of Mormon"; Faust, "Lord, I Believe"; Gordon B. Hinckley, "Four Cornerstones of Faith," *Ensign*, February 2004. Evangelical discourse *not* integrated to the renewed emphasis on the Restoration endured as well in General Authority addresses through the 1990s and to the present, though I am curious to see whether such discourse will now be eclipsed. See F. Melvin Hammond, "The Power of the Book of Mormon," *Ensign*, October 1996; Jeffrey R. Holland, "Missionary Work and the Atonement," *Ensign*, March 2001; W. Rolfe Kerr, "The Words of Christ—Our Spiritual Liahona," *Ensign*, May 2004. (All *Ensign* articles retrieved from <http://www.lds.org>.)

36. Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land*, 346.

37. Shipps attributes the mounting anti-Mormon opposition from the 1970s on to (1) the increased visibility of Mormonism outside the Intermountain West and (2) a "sense of danger" felt when evangelical Protestants in the Moral Majority discovered they "shared with the Saints a common social and political agenda," requiring "strenuous measures to define the Saints as Other." (Reverend Jerry Falwell had invited Mormons into the Moral Majority only to discover that his fellow Baptists refused to be "yoked together with unbelievers.") Though Shipps describes the Saints' "escalating emphasis" on Christ as occurring during the same period as the escalation of anti-Mormon opposition, she does not seem to believe (as I do) that the former is a reaction to the latter prompted by a perceived need to bolster Mormonism's Christian credentials. On the contrary, Shipps types Christ-centered discourse as a sign of Mormon "self-confidence." Shipps, *Sojourner in the Promised Land*, 341, 346–347, 350–351. My reading is essentially the opposite of

Shipp's: evangelical discourse grew out of a desire to avert criticism; self-confidence is betokened by Church leaders' more recent willingness to bring the Restoration back to the fore of their teaching.

38. The disappearance of General Authority statements about the Book of Mormon as "evidence" for the Restoration, beginning in 1984, coincides with the period of the Salamander Letter scandal. One might speculate that the scandal gave Church leaders additional motivation to develop a discourse about the Book of Mormon that did not focus on the evidentiary nature of the book (so as to not seem defensive or to avoid calling to mind the current controversies over questions of evidence in relation to Mormon origins).

39. Quoted in Olson, "News of the Church" (note 1, above).

40. *A Systematic Program*, 37.

41. *A Systematic Program* had insisted, "That which is given here is by way of suggestion. It should not be memorized" (6). By contrast, the 1961 discussions instructed missionaries to "follow the handbook dialogues" and "stick to the logic and scriptures given." Step-by-step instructions for memorizing the 1961 discussions were provided. *A Uniform System for Teaching Investigators* ([Salt Lake City]: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1961), 3–4.

42. The word count for the 1973 discussions comes from Taylor, "Effects of Coaching," 20 (note 6, above). On memorization techniques, see "Memorization Method," following the title page of *The Uniform System for Teaching Families* (1973); *Large Print Discussions with Mnemonic and Flipchart Aids* ([Provo, UT]: Missionary Training Center, 1979), 96–103.

43. In addition to helping control the orthodoxy of missionaries' presentations, memorizing the discussions could also, in theory, have aided missionaries who were learning to teach in a new language. In actuality, though, the 1973 discussions were written in such an eloquent style that the translations were that much more difficult to memorize, and they were not very useful for helping missionaries master everyday speech. This concern was part of what fueled the attempts to simplify the 1973 discussions. Taylor, "Effects of Coaching," 21.

44. "Improved Discussions 'Teach from the Heart,'" *Church News*, 6 July 1986, 5.

45. The instructions for the 1986 discussions told missionaries to "master the information" in the left hand column (the doctrinal content of the discussions). But the instructions did not tell missionaries that they were free to present that material in their own words, although this had been the intent of the discussion's creators according to both the *Church News* coverage of the inauguration of the 1986 discussions and George Taylor's doctoral dissertation on proselyting skills. *Instructions for the Discussions* ([Salt Lake City]: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986), 1; "Improved Discussions," 5; Taylor, "Effects of Coaching," 28. While I cannot attest to how this was handled in other languages, I know that the Spanish translation of the instructions rendered "master the information" as "aprenderla de memoria" [learn it by memory]. *Instrucciones para el uso de las charlas* ([Salt Lake City]: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986), 2. When I served my mission, I became aware that one of the mission presidents preceding me had expected missionaries to memorize the 1986 discussions, which is not surprising given that memorizing discussions had probably been a major pre-occupation for him during his own missionary service. It is also not surprising that missionaries learning a second language should be inclined to memorize the discussions.

46. An errata sheet in my 1977 printing of the 1973 discussions reminds missionaries "that the discussions were designed to be adapted to the individual needs of your investigators. After memorizing them verbatim, please feel free to adapt them as dictated by the Spirit." "Missionary Discussions—Errata Sheet," in the front matter of *The Uniform System for Teaching Families* (1973).

47. *Preach My Gospel* tells missionaries that "unless directed by the Spirit, you should give the full content of each of the first three lessons in the order in which they are written" (30). Missionaries should therefore "commit to memory the sequence of doctrinal principles" (20). The fourth and fifth lessons in *Preach My Gospel* are designed for greater flexibility: missionaries can decide in what order to teach the material contained in these lessons, and they can take as few or as many visits as they deem necessary to teach the material.

48. *Preach My Gospel*, 141.

49. *Ibid.*, vii, 17.

50. *Ibid.*, vii, 19–21.

51. Hinckley, as quoted in Olson, "News of the Church" (note 1, above); Ballard, "The Greatest Generation," (note 26, above).

52. See *The Missionary's Hand Book* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1937), ch. 4, which discusses the need for missionaries to be guided by inspiration so they can know how to attract a particular individual's interest in the gospel. Likewise, the 1952 discussions told missionaries, "There is no

"ELDER! I THINK
WE'RE IN
QUICKSAND!"

"AND SINKING
FAST!"



"SAY A PRAYER,
ELDER!"

"SING A HYMN,
FRIEND!"



"THIS IS IT!"

"OPEN THE
GATES,
LORD!"



"QUIT MESSING AROUND, ELDERS!
AND UNPLUG THE FONT!"



MACAOE

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infallible formula for teaching the gospel to all men. Character and environment demand great flexibility on the part of the missionary. Each presentation must be suited to the needs and interests of the individual you are teaching. . . . Without the spirit [sic] of the Lord you have no way of knowing the needs of your investigator. . . . [P]ray for the Spirit to direct you. Then strive to keep yourself sensitive to its promptings" (*A Systematic Program*, 20).

53. *A Systematic Program*, 105.

54. My discussion of the shift in how the standardized discussions understand "teaching by the Spirit" is a refinement of material I first presented in "Whatever Happened to that Other Spirit? A Poststructuralist Analysis of the Standardized Missionary Discussions," Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, UT, 14–17 August 1996.

55. *A Systematic Program*, 6, 20; *A Uniform System for Teaching Investigators*, 3.

56. "Instructions," *The Uniform System for Teaching Families* (1973), A1–A3; "Introduction," *Uniform System for Teaching Families* (1981), no page number; *Proselyting* ([Salt Lake City]: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1984), 2. In presenting the dual explanation of teaching by the Spirit, the 1973 discussions cited D&C 50:17–22, a passage which would loom large in the 1986 discussions and the 1988 *Missionary Guide* as well. Refocusing attention on the Spirit's influence on missionaries, the 1981 revision of the 1973 discussions cited D&C 84:85 and D&C 100:5–6.

57. See *Proselyting*, 7 for an early schematic of the commitment pattern with its four components: prepare, invite, follow up, and resolve concerns, represented as a linear, though somewhat complex, process of upward spiritual movement. The *Missionary Guide's* schematic of the commitment pattern looked less like a scientific graph, perhaps in an attempt to make the pattern seem less mechanistic.

58. *Instructions for the Discussions*, 1; *Missionary Guide*, 9–10;

59. The writers of the *Missionary Guide* acknowledge that "it is impossible" to summarize the conversion process in a way that will apply "specifically for every person," but they also insist that "some general changes occur . . . with most people" (9). Not long thereafter the *Missionary Guide* uses universalizing rhetoric, calling the commitment pattern "the tool you will use to help others feel the Spirit and obey gospel principles" (42, emphasis mine) and instructing missionaries to "follow" the pattern "in all you do" (44). The definition of the commitment pattern which recurs throughout the *Missionary Guide* at the opening of each chapter on teaching skills (beginning on page 61) calls the pattern a "process" and numbers its components (1), (2), (3), reinforcing a schematic, step-by-step understanding of the pattern.

60. *Preach My Gospel*, 92–93.

61. Inasmuch as it aimed to "promote spiritual feelings" in investigators (*Instructions for the Discussions*, 2), the commitment pattern was liable to become an attempt at emotional manipulation. The 1984 manual *Proselyting* recognized this risk when it cautioned missionaries that "the influence of the Holy Ghost is a sacred gift and is manifested in very personal ways. . . . [D]o not try to force such experiences or expressions upon people" (2). No such warning appeared in the 1986 discussions or the *Missionary Guide*. *Preach My Gospel* does not explicitly repudiate attempts at emotional manipulation. However, abandoning rhetoric about "helping investigators feel the Spirit" or "promoting spiritual feelings" is probably the new manual's attempt to bend missionary teaching in a different direction.

62. *Missionary Guide*, 72–85; *Preach My Gospel*, 92.

63. *Preach My Gospel*, 10–11.

64. *Ibid.*, ix, 146.

65. Demonstrating "effective" versus "less effective" teaching methods had been a ubiquitous pedagogical device in the *Missionary Guide*. That device, together with the terms "effective" and "less effective," has virtually disappeared from *Preach My Gospel* (see pages 183–184 of the new manual for an exception), consistent with the shift from effective technique to inspired adaptation. Again, this shift should not be overstated. Previous standardized discussions acknowledged the need for missionaries to be inspired by the Spirit, and, conversely, *Preach My Gospel* reproduces techniques taught in the *Missionary Guide* (e.g., phrasing commitments as "will you?" questions). Nevertheless, a shift in emphasis has occurred. One striking demonstration of the shift from technique to inspired adaptation is to contrast the instruction about resolving investigators' concerns from *Preach My Gospel* to that from the *Missionary Guide*. The *Missionary Guide* provided an entire unit on the subject (121–140). *Preach My Gospel* contains a single page on the same topic, foregoing specific methods in favor of observing that "how you approach an investigator's concern will depend on the nature of that concern" and counseling missionaries to "pray for the gift of discernment and follow your impressions" (187).

66. *Preach My Gospel*, 20. The point about not having to use every guideline in every situation must be clarified precisely because missionaries—and perhaps

even more importantly, mission presidents—have been accustomed to working with schemas composed of methods to be applied in systematic, step-by-step fashion.

67. *Preach My Gospel*, 155; *Missionary Handbook* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986), 6–7.

68. Dallin H. Oaks, "Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," *Ensign*, March 1997; Don L. Searle, "Major Curriculum Changes in Priesthood and Relief Society," *Ensign*, December 1997; Dallin H. Oaks, "Gospel Teaching," *Ensign*, November 1999. (All *Ensign* articles retrieved from <http://www.lds.org>.)

69. Oaks, "Gospel Teaching"; Searle, "Major Curriculum Changes."

70. Allen and Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 646–647.

71. Quoted in Don L. Searle, "News of the Church," *Ensign*, April 2003, retrieved from <http://www.lds.org>.

72. James E. Faust, "Strengthening the Inner Self," *Ensign*, February 2003. A prominent earlier example of rhetoric about valuing unchanging principles over changeable programs is Boyd K. Packer, "Principles," *Ensign*, March 1985. (*Ensign* articles retrieved from <http://www.lds.org>.)

73. *Preach My Gospel*, 98. Note how the reference to "living" prophets, rather than "modern" prophets, gives the teachings of the current leaders priority over those of their predecessors.

74. *Ibid.*, 33, 75.

75. "Excerpts from Recent Addresses of President Gordon B. Hinckley," *Ensign*, August 1996. Hinckley made a similar remark during his first press conference as Church president, in response to a question about whether the Church was likely to change some of its theological positions: Jay M. Todd, "President Gordon B. Hinckley: Fifteenth President of the Church," *Ensign*, April 1995. Hinckley frequently uses the polar star as a metaphor for the constancy the gospel affords in the midst of change. See Gordon B. Hinckley, "Let Love Be the Lodestar of Your Life," *Ensign*, May 1989; Jeffrey R. Holland, "President Gordon B. Hinckley: Stalwart and Brave He Stands," *Ensign*, June 1995; Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Miracle of Faith," *Ensign*, May 2001; Gordon B. Hinckley, "Till We Meet Again," *Ensign*, November 2001; Gordon B. Hinckley, "We Look to Christ," *Ensign*, May 2002; Gordon B. Hinckley, "Stay on the High Road," *Ensign*, May 2004. (*Ensign* articles retrieved from <http://www.lds.org>.)

76. *Preach My Gospel*, 75.

77. I am summarizing here the official vision of how adaptation is supposed to occur in the Church. Clearly, in reality, members adapt Church teachings and norms independent of the hierarchy's preferences—no doubt to the hierarchy's chagrin. See, for instance, Dallin H. Oaks's complaint about teachers who use materials or topics other than those designated in the Church's lesson manuals ("Gospel Teaching," note 67, above).

78. For example, the Spanish translation of the fifth 1986 discussion included a section on the Ten Commandments, not found in the English original, to facilitate teaching investigators not to pray to images or saints. *Una vida como la de Cristo, Charla 5* ([Salt Lake City]: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1986), 5–7. Revisions to eliminate inapplicable cultural references are comparatively trivial, but one example can be found in the Spanish translation of the *Missionary Guide*. The English version included an anecdote about missionaries having to take the bus to a teaching appointment because their car has broken down; the Spanish translation changed that scenario to missionaries having to walk to their appointment because of a bus strike. *Missionary Guide*, 32–33; *Guía Misional: Capacitación para misioneros* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1988), 36.

79. Mauss, *Angel and the Beehive*, 207–208. Mauss accurately predicted that Church leaders would cope with internationalization by reducing Mormonism "to a small number of basic and indispensable doctrines and principles" which would constitute a "spiritual core [linking] Mormon communities around the world into one universal religion" while allowing "each cultural community [to] adapt and embroider the core in accordance with its own needs" (209).

80. *Preach My Gospel*, 7.

81. Scott, "The Power of *Preach My Gospel*" (note 2, above). Translations into Korean, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish were released early in 2005. Scott forecast that translations into most other missionary languages would be ready by the end of 2005.

82. Hugo Olaiz and I have elsewhere critiqued ways that correlation privileges American values and language: John-Charles Duffy and Hugo Olaiz, "Correlated Praise: The Development of the Spanish Hymnal," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 89–113; Hugo Olaiz, "Lost in the Translation: Mormon Culture and the Myth of the Perfect Language," paper presented at the Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, UT, 8–11 August 2001.

2001 Brookie & D. K. Brown Fiction Contest Sunstone Winner

THE APOSTLE'S DAUGHTER

By Dian Saderup Monson

HELEN CANNON EVANS WAS the daughter of an apostle.* Her husband Robert Evans had been a mission president in England and now served as first counselor in a stake presidency. On her mother's side, Helen descended from Hyrum Smith, on her father's side from Brigham Young's counselor George Q. Cannon. Three of Helen's great-grandparents had personally known the Prophet Joseph Smith in Nauvoo. The Robert Evans home stood on Michigan Avenue between 18th and 19th East Streets. Today, they had witnessed their youngest daughter, Lorraine, married to Tom Shaw in the Salt Lake Temple. Tom was a returned missionary, two months from completion of a chemistry major at the University of Utah. He had been accepted to medical school in Illinois for the coming fall. He was a fine young man and Lorraine had made a beautiful bride. Following the ceremony, the Evanses had hosted a luncheon for 150 guests at The Lion House. An evening reception had been held in the Shaw's home above the Boulevard.

It was nearly 11:00 p.m. when Helen and Robert pulled into the garage on Michigan Avenue. The house was dark as they entered it, and entirely quiet.

"Bushed?" Robert asked, switching on the hallway light.

"Oh yes. Exhausted," Helen replied. "It's a long day, isn't it? But everything went so well. I'm so pleased." She paused as Robert took her coat, as if she might say more, but then she started up the stairs. She had wondered what it would feel like to come home on this night, wondered it for many years; the girls all gone; just she and Robert now, alone. At this moment, though, she had no overwhelming feeling—just a mild and not unpleasant sense of detachment, as if the stairs she climbed, with their blue carpeting, belonged in the home of a casual acquaintance or a distant relative, not unfamiliar, but altered somehow, so that her feet must attend to the depth and contour of the steps.

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She entered the bedroom and sat down on the king-sized bed, slipping her pumps off. Thirty-eight years ago she had married Robert in the Salt Lake Temple, their wedding photos taken on the temple stairs just as Lorraine's and Tom's had been today. Lorraine was her baby, born seven years after Sharon. They had lived on Roosevelt Avenue then, in a small brick home. Linda was two years older than Sharon. Marianne was eleven. Helen and Robert's only son, Steven, had died as a toddler three years before Marianne was born. It was all such a long time ago, yet thinking of those days when the children were small, Helen drew a breath as if startled, for she felt with a quick tightening in her chest the largeness and uncertainty of the future that Lorraine had today cast herself so joyfully toward.

Helen lay suddenly on her side, her knees dropping from the edge of the bed. She cradled her head upon one elbow. She was tired, her body full of the day's sweet tensions. As she had stood behind Lorraine in the bride's room at the temple, adjusting her daughter's veil and temple robes over the great circle of the bridal gown, smoothing one last hair into place, how she had wanted to crush the girl and her artfully arranged clothing against her, and weep into her honey-colored hair, hold her and touch her as she might a lover: *I wish you everything*, she had wanted to say, *everything*.

"You look beautiful, darling," she had said. "Perfect." And she had taken Lorraine's hand and kissed the palm of it.

HELEN'S own wedding had been an event, with more than five hundred guests invited to the reception held at the Hotel Utah, among those guests the prophet and his wife and many apostles and their families. She was twenty-years old, fair-skinned and blonde. She held a bouquet of white roses. Robert was twenty-three, the nephew of the Church's presiding bishop and son of a well-to-do businessman in Salt Lake. He stood tall and lean and his teeth were perfectly even and white,

* All characters and situations described in this story are entirely fictional.



CHELSEA BUSH

*They entered marriage already
estranged in a way Robert
could not know...*

his skin still faintly tanned in December from summer work out-of-doors. A perfect couple, a couple to envy and admire. Every community had them, couples who sprang from the right families, whose paths appeared foreordained to cross and seamlessly connect. Even as a child, Helen had been aware that people watched her, both enjoying and covertly resenting her health and beauty and success. In Salt Lake City, such blessings attended righteous bloodlines. Within Salt Lake's spiritual hierarchy, Helen and her father and mother, brothers and sister were aristocrats. Yet if she belonged to an aristocracy, it was an aristocracy not without humility and genuine compassion and love for those outside its borders. The priesthood brethren who had visited her parent's home on Thirteenth South so many times in her youth were honorable men, decent, faithful husbands and fathers, committed to their callings, devoted to God. They had not chosen power; they had been called to it.

The day of her wedding, what had her mother said to her in the temple? In the bride's room as she prepared to face Robert across the altar? "Everything is going to be fine, Helen. You're lovely."

"Yes, isn't she?" a temple matron had said, stopping to look at Helen in the mirror. And Helen had looked at her own unblemished face, and had felt herself someplace to the side of her gorgeously robed body, watching as if through a stranger's eyes the beautiful apostle's daughter who was to become Mrs. Robert Evans.

"HELEN," Robert said now, entering their bedroom as he loosened his tie. He stooped beside the bed and took her hand. "Are you well?" He pushed the hair from her cheek and tucked it behind her ear.

"Oh, I'm fine, Bob. Just tired. And thinking."

"About?"

"Oh, Lorraine. You know. Everything." She sat up and Robert put his hands on her shoulders and ran them down her upper arms.

"The wedding was a lot of work for you."

"Nice work, though. Tom seems like a good boy."

"Lucky," Robert said, standing and beginning to undress. He flashed Helen the smile that had not changed in nearly forty years, "To get Lorraine." Robert adored his four daughters, and, like Helen, seemed to hold for Lorraine a special extravagance of affection. It was an understanding that they shared but had never—could never have—spoken: that this particular daughter, among all their treasures, shone brightest.

Helen's feeling for Lorraine had come as a surprise to her, for in Lorraine's infancy Helen had regained—experienced almost as if for the first time—the devouring joy of motherhood. She had felt it with none of the other girls; she had loved them and cared for them, exercised perfect devotion, yet in her heart had remained a puzzling and sometimes painful step removed, as if these beautiful children she nurtured day to day belonged not to another person but to another self, a self she animated but never fully inhabited.

For years she had presumed it was the loss of Steven that had stanchd her emotions. Steven had died at twenty-one months of a sudden, overwhelming infection. One day he was up toddling and jabbering, and the next he was listless,

roasting with fever. Helen had called the doctor. "Can you get him to smile?" the nurse had asked. "There's a lot of influenza going around. Give him some aspirin to bring his fever down. If you can get him to smile, I wouldn't worry too much. I'll have the doctor call you, if you like." Thirty minutes later, Helen phoned Robert at the office, bundled the baby into the car, and drove to the emergency room. Her father and Robert administered to Steven, with Robert anointing Steven with the consecrated oil and her father sealing the anointing and pronouncing a blessing. They laid their large, comforting hands on his tiny burning head, and Helen had wept at the sight of God's priesthood blessing her boy. "Steven, the Lord loves you and is mindful of your distress. Your discomfort shall shortly be relieved," her father had said. Afterward, he looked at Helen, then came to her and embraced her, something he had never done since she had been an adult. Forty-five minutes later the baby lapsed from consciousness.

"WHAT?" Robert said.

Helen looked up from the bed, questioningly.

"The look on your face just now—what were you thinking?"

"Nothing," she answered. "Nothing, really." She stood and turned her back to him. "Unzip me?" As they undressed sudden, irrepressible tears sprang to Helen's eyes, and before she could prevent it Robert had seen them.

"Sweetheart, Helen, what is it?"

She laughed and put her hand to her mouth and shook her head. "It's just—it's silly. It's just I was thinking about Steven." And her laugh became a gasp and a shuddering sob.

Robert came to her and held her and pressed her head against his chest. He held her tightly and stroked her hair. After a moment he said, "It's been thirty-six years next March, hasn't it?" The death of their son was something Helen and Robert rarely spoke about to one another. Months, even years, it seemed, could go by without a mention of his ever having been theirs. Every pain Helen had ever endured had been nothing compared to the loss of her baby boy, and for several years afterward family and close friends had wondered if she would come through the trial whole. She could not share her grief with Robert, nor take her pain to God.

For weeks and weeks she closed the curtains of the house on Roosevelt Avenue and turned out the lights and refused to answer the telephone or the door. She lay in bed but rarely slept; she went without bathing sometimes for days. Robert brought her food and insisted she eat it, sometimes spooning soup into her mouth, buttering and breaking her bread, holding a cup to her lips. He was full of sorrow himself, but was terrified, she could see, of her overwhelming despair. The breadth and depth of space separating them could not have appeared more vast, and even though she could not respond to his anguished attempts to reach her, she registered his persistent efforts. Much later, those pitiful, puny lifelines he tossed again and again in her direction took on a significance in her mind that made her, for the first time, realize she loved

him. He had endured with her what he could not comprehend. For Robert, Steven's death had brought sorrow, but not without solace. His testimony of the gospel was irrepressible and his belief in the eternal nature of family ties a genuine comfort. God had taken their boy because it was Steven's time. All would be well.

What Robert could not know was that for Helen, Steven's death was retribution. And in her heart she felt her punishment both just and unutterably cruel. She believed in God and in eternal life; but her belief became her nightmare, for it seemed clear that God, who in the days of Steven's infancy had showered her with such unearned and unexpected joy, had done so to render her present pain more exquisite. There grew in the heart of the apostle's daughter a dark place that set itself against the Lord. For surely even she could not deserve such vengeance. And then in her mind would rise the horrifying thought, *If only I had loved him less, if only I had loved him less*—would God have let her keep her baby if only she had loved the child less? A different torment could have been hers, and her boy might have lived. Her thoughts in those days were a round of guilt and grief and a rage so bitter it shrunk upon itself like a black hole within her chest.

After a series of priesthood blessings and months of patient striving, her husband and parents and siblings had begun to talk of doctors and therapies and the possibility of a hospital stay, which surely would be brief but might help her rest and get back on her feet. Then one day Helen got into the car and drove straight through to California, neither leaving a note about where she'd gone nor phoning to explain. She drove to the coast, parked the car, and fell immediately asleep upon the unseasonably warm sand. When she woke, it was dark and cold, the beach deserted. She got back into her car and checked into a motel and slept again, deeply, until morning. She wandered the small town in which she found herself and came upon a Catholic church. Confession: 11:00 a.m., a sign informed her. She had never confessed her sin; without words, her mother had led her to understand she should not do so. Would confession make a difference? Would God forgive her and forget her if she simply confessed? Could she confess her sin to a Catholic priest?

At 11:00 she entered the church and found the confessional. She knocked on the outer door of the cubicle and a man's voice said somewhat gruffly, "Yes, I'm here. Come inside. Sit down." She pulled aside a curtain and found a small seat. She spoke into a box on the wall of the compartment. "I'm not a Catholic," she said. "Do you wish to make a confession?" the man's voice answered. "I don't know," Helen said. "Well perhaps you should come back when you do." Helen began to cry. The flustered voice of the priest said, "There now, what have you done, daughter? I can't absolve you because I'm not your priest. But I can hear you if you like." "My baby died, my baby died."

Thirty-five years later, she could not remember, beyond that, what she had said to the anonymous priest. But she must have released a burden to him, for later that day she went back to the motel and bathed and called Robert and told him where she was. He had taken the next flight to San Francisco and

within five hours of her call met her in her room at the motel. He had asked no questions but had held her while she wept. "Come back to me," he had said. "Wherever you are, come back, Helen. I don't know what to do. Come back."

They never talked about those days; the thought of her uncontrolled bereavement still filled Helen with shame. Latter-day Saint mothers who lost children might grieve, but not without hope. A breakdown such as she had experienced was something best forgotten, an unfortunate circumstance which might come to anyone, but which genuine righteousness, it seemed, should nonetheless preclude. Helen Evans went home with her husband to Salt Lake City and the house on Roosevelt Avenue. The next morning, her mother came and threw open the curtains. "That's all, Helen," she said, and looked her daughter steadily in the face.

And Helen had understood and nodded her assent and that day had washed her face and combed her hair and worn fresh clothes and a jacket out into the back yard where she sat for an hour in the cool sunlight. Helen's body and mind gradually regained their strength. She set herself to small tasks each day. A stack of condolence letters nearly a year old required answers. During a week she might compose so many as ten or fifteen. *Thank you so much for your kind note on the passing of our son.* In spring, she planted flowers; a trip to the nursery might take two hours, but always she found at least two or three annuals to put in the backyard. She might spend an hour deciding between pink or red geraniums, but once the choice was made, she placed the box containing the plants in the back seat of the car and drove forward and did not think again whether she should not have chosen pink after all. By careful, deliberate steps, she willed herself back into her life, for she understood, as her mother understood, that there was no place else for her to go, no one else for her to be.

Two years and one month after the death of their first child, Helen Evans walked into church with her husband for the first time since their loss. Members of the congregation tried hard not to stare; they had seen Helen about town occasionally or in her yard; they understood that she had had a difficult time. And then the ward, as if by silent consensus, rallied round to draw her in, unobtrusively circling Helen Evans as a herd of animals might circle its young or enfeebled in the presence of predators. They enclosed her with their mild greetings; it was as if she had never left their midst or had been away for a brief vacation. Even the daughter of an apostle could suffer in unmentionable ways, and their knowing this made her secretly dear to them in a way she could not have been before. They cherished their knowledge of her frailty, she who had once seemed so set apart. Yet they understood the secret nature of such knowledge and held it close, and as Helen slipped back into the ordinary routines of Mormon life, they relinquished her secret to the silence of the past, and talked of it no more than did she or Robert or any of the other members of her family. Her daughters would never know what their mother's life had been in those years between Steven's death and the birth of Marianne.

"A WEDDING is an emotional time," Robert said finally, patting Helen's hair and holding her from him to look into her tear-streaked face. He touched a single tear that ran down her cheek and wiped it away with his thumb. "It calls to mind a lot. In the sealing room today, watching Lorraine, I suddenly remembered the time she lost those brand-new patent leather shoes, leaving the box on top of the car when she'd first learned to drive, and how we made her wear a pair of Marianne's old Sunday flats to the junior prom to teach her a lesson. Isn't that a thought to be having during your daughter's temple marriage?" He laughed and Helen laughed through her tears and Robert wiped her cheek again. "I sat there wishing we'd spent the sixty dollars and let her wear the shoes she wanted. And the next thing I knew she and Tom were saying yes to each other across the altar."

Helen laughed and the two of them sat down on the bed, Robert's arm around her shoulder. He kissed her cheek, then kissed it again. She looked at him and he took her face in his hands and kissed her mouth. "It's been a long time since we've had the house to ourselves," he said, and she knew that he wanted, for the first time in nearly a month, to make love.

"We've got a lot of time ahead of us—" she said, standing, "to be alone. I'm so tired, Sweetheart." She bent and kissed his forehead and pressed his face briefly against her abdomen. Then she went into the bathroom to wash her face and prepare for bed.

When she came out ten minutes later Robert was in his pajamas on top of the bedspread, flat on his back, asleep. It was an ability of his that never failed to amaze her: he could fall asleep anywhere, in an instant. She sometimes thought it a talent bordering on narcolepsy; he had once fallen asleep while speaking to her, mid-sentence. She stared at him a long while, listening to his gentle snore. Robert Evans was a good man. He'd been called as a mission president to England when he was only forty-three years old. He'd been bishop of their Michigan Avenue neighborhood for six years and now served in the stake presidency of the student stake up at the University. But he wasn't just devoted to the Church. He was devoted to her and to their children, and Helen could never doubt that. Once during a particularly stressful period for his family's business, when it appeared their material comfort which she had learned to take for granted might be threatened, he had struck Helen, quite hard, in the face. She had made some critical comment that had triggered this instant of violence in him. Immediately he had put his hands to his head and sobbed out loud as she had never before nor since heard him do. "Oh, God! Oh, Jesus, Helen! Oh, God!" For several days thereafter he could not look at her without tears welling in his eyes. Robert Evans was a gentle man. He had always treated his wife with great courtesy. To have deviated from such conduct even once, in such a way as this, was more crushing to him than it had been to her. For Helen forgiveness of human error was not difficult.

She sat down on the bed and cupped her face in the palms of her hands. She felt vaguely guilty for denying his desire so abruptly earlier and pondered waking him, but she did not

*Excited, nervous, guilty,
Helen had answered Larry,
“I guess I don’t mind.”*

want to. Her mind felt unsettled and restless, while her body cried for sleep. She had been up since 5:00 a.m. She had managed over the years with Robert to share her body with him as marriage required. She had even come to find that dimension of their relationship satisfying, enjoyable, but she was not unaware of a certain withholding within herself, as if in their physical union some portion of her soul lay deeply recessed, beyond reach, beyond touch. “Do I please you?” he sometimes asked as they lay together, and his vulnerability saddened her. “Of course,” she would answer. “Yes.” But she understood the source of his question. It was this part of her, so inaccessible, that he sensed but could not name, could not even be sure he had correctly apprehended.

He had given himself to her wholly in marriage, of this she felt sure. There was an openness in Robert, a simplicity, that both touched and astonished her. He was everything he appeared to be—frank and generous. Robert believed all problems had solutions, even if one must suffer before discovering them. And he believed in marriage as a contract not just to abide with another, but to love that other without reservation. When Steven had died and Helen had become so remote and frightening in her pain, so foreign to anything Robert could possibly have experienced, he persevered with her and loved her—genuinely loved her—simply because she was his wife and he could not comprehend not loving his wife, even if she had become a person unrecognizable to him. All their years together Helen had possessed this simple and profound security.

Yet in turn she had kept back this secret portion, this self that had been possessed by someone else, this self that had carried her sin for so many years. She could not have revealed it to him before their marriage, and afterward it would have seemed she had been intentionally duplicitous. And so they entered marriage already estranged in a way Robert could not know. This estrangement, as the years passed, came to be bound up in her mind with her estrangement from God, the estrangement that had culminated with Steven’s death and which, despite all outward appearances, remained like a dark kernel of distrust buried in the loam of her secret heart. She believed in God, but she withheld herself from Him in a way no observer could detect. At once, she lived her life with God, praying daily and witnessing his abounding grace, and lived a second life removed from God, this second self secreted like Jonah in the belly of the whale, intent upon evading the uncompromising eye of the Lord, every cell of this self embittered and awestruck at the perfection and cruelty of God’s righteousness.

With time, she herself could scarcely detect the presence of this darkened, compact seed, lodged so silently and deeply within her—or rather there were times it seemed so distant from the life she lived that she could believe the bitter kernel



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had been somehow removed, leaving her finally free of its isolating poison. Helen Evans was an energetic, efficient, and thoughtful homemaker and Church member. She had served as president of the Relief Society in the two years just prior to their move from Roosevelt Avenue. And after returning from Robert’s mission presidency in England, she had been called to the general board of the young women’s organization of the Church, on which she served for nearly ten years. Marianne had wed Scott Jacobson soon after Helen’s call, and Linda had graduated from high school. Sharon was a junior at East, while Lorraine still attended Bonneville Elementary. It was understood among the Church hierarchy and the officers of the auxiliary organizations that the late Apostle Cannon’s daughter knew the needs of young women and related to girls effectively. But sometimes—not often—during the meetings of the general board, a near crippling disorientation would come upon Helen. Frequently, the board discussed the eroding moral standards of society and proposed strategies for protecting the young women of the Church from immodesty and sexual transgression. Helen agreed that safeguarding the virtue of young people was essential to ushering them into worthy and productive adulthood, adulthood crowned by the blessings and safety of temple marriage.

But even temple marriage was not necessarily a safe haven.

Linda, her second daughter, had married in the Washington, D.C. temple. Two years later, with one child already and another coming, she had left her husband; Clane had been arrested for solicitation, and Linda later discovered he had already transmitted to her a venereal disease. Yet Linda, as it turned out, was fortunate, for within three years, she had met and married a wonderful man, a young widower with a six-year-old daughter, an M.D., to whom she was later sealed in the Salt Lake Temple.

Helen longed for the safety of her daughters and wondered during board meetings whether the lesson guides the board produced for the Church's local young women leaders might not do more harm than good. She had been raised on such teachings herself, and it had been years before she understood what had happened to her at age sixteen; she felt even now she did not fully comprehend the burden she had carried since. When Marianne had begun to date, for the first time a shock of awareness passed through Helen's entire body. The night of Preference, as the girl's choice dance at East was called, Kyle Tate had come to the door to pick her up. He was short and stocky, not good looking, but confident enough that it didn't matter; he played quarterback for the school football team. He'd brought her a corsage of red roses. "Don't be too late!" Helen had called after them. "Please don't be too late!" "They'll be fine," Robert reassured her, smiling and waving. "Have a good time!"

Helen had gone to her sewing room and begun cutting and stitching a dress for Lorraine with almost frantic speed. Then, accidentally, she stuck herself deeply while replacing the needle on the sewing machine. The needle punctured her index finger, and compressing the nearly invisible wound for five minutes still did not stop a steady pool of blood from forming on her fingertip whenever she released the pressure. Blood dripped onto the cloth she had cut for Lorraine's new dress.

She held her finger and lay her forehead upon the sewing table. Kyle Tate reminded her of someone. He reminded her of Lawrence Pratt, Larry, the boy she had dated twice her junior year in high school. Larry had played football; he played on every school team, it seemed. He had been taller than Kyle, but husky and confident in a similar way, popular. Their first date they had doubled, with whom she now forgot. A week later he had asked her to a show and afterward had suggested they take a drive up City Creek canyon. Helen knew girls who parked with boys. Her best friend, Cynthia Olsen, parked all the time with Dave Welch, her steady. And Cynthia told her about it, all the details, what she would and wouldn't do. "Never let him put a hand in your underpants," she had said. "I just don't let it happen. When he goes for my bra, well, I tell him to be careful. I let him touch my skin, but not, you know, my nipples." Excited, nervous, guilty, Helen had answered Larry, "I guess I don't mind."

They had driven up the darkened canyon, and Larry had pulled off the narrow road into the shelter of some trees. Already, Helen wished she had said no. She hardly knew Larry; she didn't know if she wanted to kiss him. She had only kissed

one other boy in her life, but when Larry slid across the seat of his father's car and put his arm around her, she did not resist. His mouth had been hard against hers and his tongue insistent. Awkwardly, she kissed him back, but when his hand fumbled inside her blouse, she pushed at it and said no. She attempted a smile. "Really, Larry," she said as his hand found the flesh beneath her bra, "No."

She could not recall how many no's she had uttered, how desperately or passively she had pled with him. She hadn't screamed—or had she? No one would have heard her. She remembered a pain that had taken her breath, and she remembered finding, finally, the handle of the car door and opening it and falling from the car to the ground, gasping, sobbing, and then vomiting in the dirt next to the car. And he had gotten from the car and helped her up, and because there was nobody else she had cried into his broad and brutal chest and begged him, "Please don't tell anybody. Please don't tell anybody." He had held his hand against her head and said, "No, never. I would never."

HELEN RAISED HERSELF from the bed where Robert lay sleeping. Perhaps a cup of tea would help her relax. She spread an afghan over Robert, turned out the light and walked downstairs to the kitchen. She turned on the light above the sink; it was a pleasant light that filled the kitchen with a soft, warm glow. She filled the teapot and lit the stove, then found a bag of chamomile tea and placed it in one of her mother's china teacups. She stood at the counter waiting for the water to heat. Today, she knew, a young man who had done what Lawrence Pratt had done to her could be prosecuted, put in jail. Girls on daytime talk shows told the whole world of such experiences. But in Salt Lake City, in 1954, Helen Cannon knew nothing but shame so searing it could at any moment render her mind blind with pain. It was a girl's responsibility to keep a young man pure. That is what she had always been taught. A girl could control her passions, but a young man could not always do so, even though immorality was a grave sin for a boy as well as for a girl. And no boy would want to marry a girl whose body had already been handled by another. Hers was the greater sin, for she had said I guess I don't mind. With those five words, she had consented to her own degradation.

After that evening, Helen could hardly bear to bathe, could hardly bear the sight of her own nakedness, but she had come home that night and bathed immediately. The house had been quiet, her father out of town, her siblings asleep. "Did you turn out the porch light, Helen?" her mother had called from the darkened master bedroom. "Yes, Mom." "Good night, then. I hope you had a good time." Helen went into the bathroom and filled the tub. She washed the dirt from her hands and legs where she had fallen, and the brown blood from her thighs. Then she drained the tub and rinsed it and filled it again and lay in the clean water. Afterward, she covered herself completely in a winter nightgown, although the night was warm, Indian summer. She huddled on her bed in the dark, feeling as

*A woman will meet you
when you knock at the
side door. Very soon
this will be over.*

though she might suffocate, as if there could never again be enough pure air to fill her lungs. Her sobs came sporadically and she choked them into silence.

The night Marianne went with Kyle Tate to preference Helen came to understand the evil Lawrence Pratt had done her, for when she imagined Marianne saying to Kyle *I guess I don't mind* and Kyle's muscular body forcing her as Lawrence had forced Helen, Helen felt murder rise in her blood, for she knew the unviolated beauty of her daughter's innocence, and she perceived for the first time what she herself had not given away that Indian summer night so long ago; it had been taken from her. She knew she could kill a boy, without remorse, let God be her judge, who raped her daughter.

The kettle on the stove whistled, and Helen poured the boiling water into her mother's china cup. She sat down in the dim light of the breakfast nook to let the tea bag steep. Lorraine had looked so beautiful today, she thought suddenly. She smiled as if at a distant memory. In her heart a prayer formed, wordlessly, its substance not specific, simply *bless her*. Tonight, for the first time Lorraine would lie with a man. "Mom?" her daughter had asked just a few days before, "This is kind of an embarrassing question. But does it hurt?" Helen took a sip of the tea. She had given Lorraine advice and reassurance, and then they had gone off together to the florist's to make sure the flowers were ordered exactly as they had specified and to add a request for boutonnieres for two of Tom's cousins who had no official function in the wedding party but to whom he felt close.

Two weeks after their drive up City Creek Canyon, Larry Pratt had called again. At the sound of his voice on the telephone panic had seized her. "Helen? Helen?" he asked, and finally he hung up. "Who was that?" her mother said, watching her from the kitchen sink. Helen carefully placed the phone on its hook. "Nobody. A prank call, I guess." "Helen, are you all right? You know you've been awfully quiet lately. I haven't seen Cindy or the other girls around here all week. It's not like you to keep to yourself like that." "Oh, Mom, I've just got a lot of schoolwork. You know. I'm fine." She glanced at her mother briefly, then left the room and went upstairs.

In the two weeks since she had been immoral with Larry Pratt her shame began to yield to something more frightening, a fear appearing like a small black cloud within an already slate gray sky. Each passing day, she watched and waited for the fear to be dispelled, but with each day it grew larger until finally she could think of nothing else. For six weeks her terror grew until she could neither eat nor drink without effort and she could not face her friends for fear that in weakness she would



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let her terror be known. And then the fear became certainty, as her breasts grew unbearably tender and in the morning she woke to nausea and by afternoon was overcome with fatigue. One day she stayed home from school because she had vomited twice during the night. As she lay on her bed that day, the other children gone, her mother came to her. "I want you to tell me what's wrong, Helen."

Girls got in trouble in 1954, the same as they did today, as they did during the years Helen served on the young women's general board not so long ago. Today, she knew of two girls in her ward, one fifteen, the other seventeen, who had gotten pregnant during the past year. Neither of them had married, and each of them had borne the child, one giving hers up to LDS Social Services for adoption, the other essentially giving the baby to her parents, who still had young children themselves to raise. Both girls had gone back to school, and their parents had gone about their lives, heartbroken no doubt, but not devastated.

Helen's mother had been a proud woman. When she died three years ago at the age of eighty-six, she had been eulogized at her funeral by a member of the Twelve. It was only fitting; she had been the wife of an apostle and a woman known for her excellent works throughout the community. Helen did not fault her mother for what she had done forty-two years ago.

She knew her mother's great strengths and her deep flaws. She blamed the times more than anything, but, holding the china cup in her hand, still she wondered at the steel in her mother's heart. Elinor Smith Cannon had been a practical woman, pragmatic and forceful. She loved her position in the Salt Lake community. She came from a righteous lineage, and she had borne and raised five righteous children. Her descendants now numbered forty-seven, nearly all of them active in the Church and a credit to their parents and forebears.

Helen could now understand, at least understand better than she once had, why, when she had gotten pregnant at age sixteen, her mother had perceived this as a catastrophe that must not be allowed to reach fruition. If Helen had been an ordinary girl, from an ordinary family, perhaps the stigma could have been borne; perhaps the repercussions could have been minimized. But as it was, for Helen to bear a child out of wedlock would have meant the worst possible scandal. Not only would she have shamed a worthy family; she would have nullified the possibilities and promises that were her birthright. Certainly she could have married, but would a man such as Robert Evans have turned his gaze toward her? It was hard to imagine that just forty years ago an illegitimate pregnancy could have meant such irreparable damage for a girl. Yet even though Helen knew her mother had been determined to protect her interests, as coldly and shrewdly as she might a financial investment, Helen also knew Elinor's own interests had figured heavily in her handling of the situation. Elinor could not bear public exposure. "We mustn't tell your father," she had said to Helen. "It would kill him." After years of reflection Helen knew that was not true, and sometimes, even decades later, she wished it had been her father to whom she had relinquished her secret. Her father would have been embarrassed perhaps, even ashamed, given his position, but she could never imagine his pride taking precedence over Helen's spiritual well-being. Helen's father had been a man of God, and he would have borne whatever cross necessary, and helped Helen bear hers too, to shield her from grave sin.

As it was, her mother told Helen what she must do. She listened to Helen's apologies and tears: "I didn't want to do it. I didn't want to. I'm sorry. . . . No, no I don't I love him. I don't like him. . . . It's Larry Pratt. I didn't want to, mother, I didn't want to." Then her mother said, "Stay in your room today, Helen. You have the flu. You may be ill for several days. Don't talk to anyone. Do you understand? Have you told any of your friends? Tell me the truth, Helen. Have you talked to anybody?" "No one, mother. I haven't talked to anyone. No one." Her mother brought her meals in bed and forbid the other children to be near her. Her father was away on Church business. He would not be home until the end of the week.

Two days later her mother came to her bedside at night and told her to get up and dressed. She drove Helen on the highway north, to the town of Layton; she handed Helen a piece of paper with an address on it. Then she stopped on the corner of the street named on the paper and said to Helen. "Go to this address. Don't be afraid. A woman will meet you when you knock at the side door. There's a doctor who will take care

of you. And the woman will stay with you. You will be all right. Everything will be all right. And very soon this will be over." She reached across Helen and opened the passenger door. "I'll come for you." Helen did not resist her mother. She was too frightened to speak. Her mother's voice is what moved her, as if her body were somehow connected to the words that came out of her mother's mouth. She stood aside, as if watching herself, as her body did what her mother told it to do. And so once again she assented to iniquity, only this sin was evil in a way the other had not been. This sin was evil beyond anything, in her sheltered life, Helen could possibly have imagined.

Helen covered her mouth with her hands at the memory, and silent tears came down her cheeks for the girl she had been. It was unthinkable, what Elinor Cannon had required of her. In the years afterward, when she had finally realized her mother's accountability for that act, when she had had teenaged daughters of her own and had tried to imagine such unyielding, such hardened resolve in relation to any one of them, such implacable unfeeling, she could not do it. Her mother was a mystery to her, the strength of her mother's pride like the strength of a mountain, pride more powerful than love or hate or any passion. And yet her mother had not been without love, and perhaps not even without a kind of terrible wisdom. That night, when Helen was home again in her own bed, the dawn just barely turning the curtains at her window gray, her mother had come into her room and knelt beside her, and she had taken Helen's hand. "Do you have pain?" she asked. Helen nodded yes. "It will pass. If it worsens, tell me." And she stayed there for a moment quietly holding Helen's hand. "You will see this was for the best, Helen. I'm sorry you have pain." The following Monday, Helen Cannon returned to school; she was thin and pale, but she had had a terrible case of flu. It always took a while to get back on your feet after such an illness.

HELEN finished her tea, which was cool now, its flavor strong. She stood and emptied the tea bag into the garbage pail under the sink and washed the teacup and dried it carefully and placed it in a cupboard. She turned out the light and walked from the kitchen through the dining room. A full moon shone white light on the paving in the backyard. She stood for a moment looking through the paned window into the moonlit darkness. Her husband lay asleep upstairs, the man she had spent two-thirds of her lifetime with. That was a choice she did not regret, although when she married Robert she had hardly felt anything at all for him. He was a very nice boy. He had pursued her ardently. Her parents heartily approved the match. Marriage was the natural step, inevitable really. He gave her a diamond, which she accepted, and then he kissed her for the first time. Her mother had planned the wedding with the kind of boisterous enthusiasm that sometimes came upon her and greatly amused her family and friends. And Helen had been swept up in the preparations, smiling quite gaily as she tried on bridal gowns at ZCMI and

Auerbach's. She'd been given three bridal showers, one by two aunts who invited only extended family, another by her mother's friends, and still another from the girls she had gone to school with. After the announcements had been sent out, gifts had begun to arrive in the mail. Every day there were packages to open with Robert when he got off from school or work, and during the mornings she and her mother ran it seemed hundreds of errands.

There was only one moment of genuine distress for Helen during this time, two weeks before the wedding, in the car with Robert. They were parked in front of her parents' house and she had wanted somehow to bring up the subject in an easy, natural way. Finally, she said, not hearing even what Robert had been speaking of, "I went to the doctor yesterday." "Oh?" he said. "Aren't you feeling well, Darling?" "No, no, it's nothing like that. I just, well, you know, before a girl gets married she sometimes goes to the doctor, just to be sure everything is all right. In that way, you know." She could feel herself blushing to the roots of her hair and wondered if he could see her blush in the darkness of the car. Robert, the dear man, even then, though she didn't know it, a dear man, had tried to ease her discomfort by answering with just the right lightness of tone, "And is everything—all right?" He squeezed her shoulder playfully. "Oh yes," she said, then quickly added, "but he was kind of rough. I mean, I'm kind of sore today. It kind of hurts to sit down." She tried to smile, as if she had shared a personal secret with him, as if she were practicing for when they would be married. And immediately Robert's expression changed to one of thoughtful concern. "Well I hope he didn't hurt you too much." Then he smiled and said, "Or he'll have me to deal with." At that time, that was the only lie Helen had ever told Robert, and now it was said and she could stop worrying that when they were married and were together the first time he would wonder—what would he wonder? What did a boy expect in that way? Had he ever talked with other boys? Did he know how it was for a girl the first time? But now it was said.

For thirty-eight years Helen had shared her life with Robert Evans, begotten five children and raised four to adulthood with him. And still, after thirty-eight years, that lie lay between them in their bed and everything that lie represented to her then, and later what it had hidden when Steven died, and through the years, even until now, its meaning changing over time for her, but the lie never dissolving, always a barrier Robert sensed but could not name. *Do I please you? Yes, she longed to tell him, yes, you please me.* Robert was not a perfect man; he could and did make mistakes in judgment and in behavior, but he was an entirely decent man, entirely straightforward, and she longed to be united with him, truly, withholding nothing, as he had withheld nothing from her. With God, she had come to an ambiguous peace, and with her husband, an incomplete communion. And again in her heart a prayer formed, wordlessly, its substance simply *heal us*. She unlatched the window and opened it outward. The night air blew cool upon her face. She reached her hand into the Indian summer darkness. The air smelled like burnt leaves. She raised her face

toward the full moon, which hung directly above the walnut tree in the yard, the walnut tree that shed so many blackened shells over the lawn each year as the nuts ripened and she failed to pick them, shells that stained everything they touched, and she closed her eyes and she sensed the moonlight upon her eyelids.

"Helen?" Robert's voice came softly behind her.

She turned slowly toward him.

"Something woke me, and you weren't there. Are you all right?"

She nodded in the darkness. He approached her, looking deeply into the darkened puzzle of her face. He reached out his hand toward her and she stopped it, placing her palm against his, their two palms pressing lightly against one another.

"Bobby," she said.

"You've never called me that. I like it."

"Bobby. There's something I have wanted to tell you." And their eyes met and held steadfastly in the darkness. And she could see in his eyes, in the gravity and pure concentration with which he focused his gaze upon her, that he was ready to hear her story. 



PIPER'S CALL

The Great White Heron posed in the camera lens
as I lay in tall grass, draped in camouflage.
When I tried to focus, he disappeared.
I looked up. Pines and oak trees exploded
with robins and jays and a red-tailed hawk
flew into the sun. A man appeared
in a red plaid kilt, cape, and knee-socks,
dwarfed by a Great Highland Pipe.

The piper walked along the bank,
and the forest filled with sweet sounds
I'd heard before—
the Lament for Donald Duaghal Mackay,
policeman who died in the line of duty.
Britain once hanged Highlanders who dared play this hymn.
Listening, I understood why birds bolted,
why it was a battle call to war.
A secret ancient music, every note and movement
its own oral sound, like tall grass and trees
rustling in a mountain wind. I hunkered down.

Then in the distance, above the hum of the waning piper,
white feathers stroked to penetrate the harmony
ascending into a cobalt sky.

—GERALD R. WHEELER

ANXIOUSLY ENGAGED

FOR THE LOVE OF READING

By Jana Riess



"What are you up to?" I asked a friend on the phone.

"Oh, the usual," she replied airily. "Sitting here at my desk, eating bon bons and reading a juicy novel."

"Really?" I responded.

"Noooo." I could almost see her eyes rolling. "I've got work to do!"

THIS CONVERSATION, WHICH took place a couple of years ago, made me realize anew that I'm an amazingly lucky person. I'm lucky because there are some days when reading novels at my desk is my job. For the last six years, I've been working as a professional reviewer and editor for a magazine about the publishing industry. And while I've gotten cynical about some aspects of the business, I never stop feeling like a kid in a candy store when I attend a trade show and publishers thrust free books in my arms. It always feels new and exciting, this love affair I have with literature.

Love at First Sight

ACCORDING to my mother, I learned to read when I was three and my brother was five, and he patiently sat me down night after night at the kitchen table to walk me through the basics. My brother was the certified, off-the-charts, smarty-pants genius in the family, but I'm the

one who got to skip a grade—precisely because he had taught me so well. After my first morning of kindergarten, I was helping my mom mimeograph some PTA flyers in the school office when the principal overheard me reading the memo aloud. I went to first grade the very next day, and I've been reading ever since with the desperate knowledge that I'll never be able to read everything I want to in this lifetime.

Some of my best memories revolve around reading. I remember as a child making a nest for myself under the dining room table and reading Laura Ingalls Wilder's *On the Banks of Plum Creek*. Then there was the Friday afternoon in high school that I checked out Madeleine L'Engle's *The Small Rain* from our local library and brought it home. Even though I was supposed to meet my friends at a football game, I bagged the outing entirely because I was so engrossed in the book. I stayed up until 4 a.m. to finish it then felt too keyed up and excited to sleep. Somehow, I look back on that act of willfully abandoning my peers and doing what I loved most as a defining moment in my adolescence: I would be who I wanted to be, all others be damned. It was just the first of many sleepless nights I would spend jacked up on my drug of choice, the written word.

Since I'm surrounded in my job by other rapacious readers who can steer me toward what is worthwhile, people often imagine

that I read only the cream of the crop. To a certain extent, that's true. But it's also true that in my job, I have to read a boatload of utter dreck, week in and week out. Actually, doing this is tremendously helpful to me as a critic, because reading books that don't work is essential to understanding the ones that do. But even on my own time, I'll read almost anything, whether it be highbrow (I've recently finished *Doctor Zhivago*, which I confess to reading more for the verboten love story than the revolution), middlebrow (this past winter I tore through all of The #1 Ladies' Detective Agency series), and decidedly lowbrow (I'll tell you if you'll tell me). I read Pulitzer prizewinners and Oprah picks, classics and contemporary novels, history and biography, plays and self-help and humor, summer thrillers and YA fantasy. I don't typically read true crime, sci-fi, genre romance, or political non-fiction, though I make exceptions for political biography (David McCullough's *John Adams* and *Truman* being the standards by which I have come to judge all others) and autobiography (I've just finished listening to Bill Clinton's memoir—required reading if I wish to remain a member of my extended family).

You'll have no trouble guessing what my afterlife is going to be like as I catch up on everything I wanted to read but missed. You know you're a biblioholic when one of the reasons you are most looking forward to the spirit world is that you may have the opportunity to read all the books you couldn't get to here. Possible catch: Can spirits read physical books? Or will we have to hover over the shoulders of people with physical bodies, becoming quietly irritated that they read too slowly or too hastily? For me, this is a pressing theological question.

Book Chemistry

WHY do we read what we read? In *So Many Books, So Little Time*, Sara Nelson sets out to spend a year reading one book a week and then writing about the experience. Like me, Nelson usually reads far more than a book a week, but something about the intentionality of chronicling the experiment teaches her—and us, her readers and bibliophilic voyeurs—that what makes books resonate is always intensely personal. On Amazon.com, the reviews of Nelson's book are all over the map, with some readers complaining that the book was too much about her and not enough about reading. What they are really saying, though, is that it's not enough about



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them; her choices—which she explains in almost memoir-like detail—would not necessarily be their choices. The kismet of reading simply can't be reduced to a formula or a list.

Many of us feel deep connections with the authors whose work has graced our lives. I'll never forget seeing my husband Phil's rapture when we found Roald Dahl's grave in the village of Great Missenden, England, where we were visiting a friend who, by coincidence, used to be Dahl's neighbor. He took us by Dahl's house, which features a caravan (Brit-speak for trailer or mobile home) that Phil excitedly told me was just like the one in *Danny, the Champion of the World*. Or there's the night when I was twenty-one and I found out that Madeleine L'Engle had been chosen to be the commencement speaker for my graduating class in college. I sat right down and wrote her a letter, explaining what her stories had meant to me and inviting her to dinner with some of my friends who were also fans. She accepted, skipping dinner with the college president in order to spend time with us. It was an indescribable honor to pepper her with questions and be among the first to learn about her latest work in progress.

How we read is also an issue. Some folks are dedicated monogamists, reading each book from cover to cover and entertaining no others at the same time. And then there's my mom, a voracious reader who is my favorite person in all the world to talk with about books. She's lovely but has one infuriating book-related habit: she's not even faithful within the *same* book, let alone monogamous about reading only one thing at a time. Once she gets to the middle of a novel, she skips to the end to see if (a) she picked the right killer; (b) the jerk/anti-hero gets his just desserts (as in Olivia Goldsmith's dishy tell-all *The Bestseller*, which I slipped her at Christmas); or (c) a bad book gets any better and is actually worth finishing.

Now, I'm not one of those dedicated monogamist types. I am what Nelson calls a "triple-booker"; I always have a book in every port. There's the one that goes in my purse (which is super-sized for just this purpose), the two or three that are on my bedside table for night reading, another two or three work-related books that are on my desk, and the audio book I've checked out of the library to listen to in fits and starts in my car. Oh, and I usually have an "airport book": one that I don't buy but will read in snatches of twenty minutes or so when I am passing time in an airport bookstore. Now that I think about it, I suppose I am more like a 'septuple-booker." I will certainly do almost anything to avoid

the horrifying possibility of being stranded somewhere with nothing to read. But I would never stoop to my mother's level of promiscuity: once I've made a commitment to read a book, I trust the author's going to see me through to the last page. And for better or for worse, I typically stick with my end of the bargain till coda do us part.

My fidelity extends to habitual re-reading. I'm a chronic re-reader, pulling favorite

invariably reduce me to a puddle of blubbery incoherence. If it's a friend I know well, I at least have some idea of what she'll like, but if it's just an acquaintance, I'm often at a complete loss. To recommend a book to a mere acquaintance feels as risky as sending one of my closest friends out on a blind date with a stranger: it could spell disaster.

For the last four years, I've been involved with a phenomenal book club called the

Can spirits read physical books? Or will we have to hover over the shoulders of people with physical bodies, becoming quietly irritated that they read too slowly or too hastily? For me, this is a pressing theological question.

books down off the shelf when I'm in a particular mood. Some of these are the comforting, beach-read British women's novels I favor for relaxation, since I can don them like a set of old tweeds. Editors call these books "the Agas," not only because Aga rhymes with saga and these usually feature complex stories of multi-generational families, but also because the tales often highlight some character's Irish or English kitchen, with its humming Aga stove and a pine table that the writer will inevitably describe as "well-scrubbed." Or I re-read childhood classics, especially now that I have a first grader who is beginning, saints be praised, to discover the glories of those books. There are also certain books that I seem to read every year or two, almost like clockwork. It's not something that I plan; it's just something that seems to happen. At some point every winter, I turn to passages from Cheryl Mendelson's *Home Comforts*, an acerbic guide to housekeeping that functions as a kind of moral and hygienic compass. And every other spring or so, I check in with Annie Clark Tanner's *A Mormon Mother* to assess how I'm now seeing its issues of feminism, Mormonism, and motherhood. In the ten years I've been reading it, her autobiography has become a kind of checkpoint for my own spiritual evolution.

The Community of Readers

IF it's difficult to explain why we're drawn to a particular book, it's nearly impossible to advise others on what they ought to read. Because I'm in publishing, people often ask me what they should be reading or what I would recommend—questions that

Bourbon County Bookworms. We are a dozen women, about half of whom are Mormon. We've read the usual book club favorites: contemporary fare such as *The Lovely Bones*, *Gap Creek*, *The Lake of Dead Languages*, and *The Prizewinner of Defiance, Ohio*. We've dipped into classics by Pearl S. Buck, Willa Cather, Charles Dickens, Kate Chopin, and Jack London. (No Jane Austen as yet, though.) We do fiction and non-fiction, and what I like most about book club is that I read things I would probably never pick up otherwise. This is how I became a fan of Kentucky author James Alexander Thom, whose novel *Follow the River*, based on the true story of an eighteenth-century woman who was kidnapped by the Shawnee, ranks as some of the best historical fiction I've encountered.

Being in a book club reminds me of the importance of reading as a communal activity, with all the sacramental imagery that the word "communal" implies. We feast together, this body of readers, on the written word, giving of ourselves and our stories as we try to make sense not just of books, but of life itself. The flip side of this communal sharing is that there's always an element of danger in recommending a book. When I suggested the group try Lee Smith's *Oral History*, one of those dog-eared paperbacks I'd read and re-read since college, I thought it would be a no-brainer: surely Kentucky women would love a story about several generations of an Appalachian family. Boy howdy, was I wrong. The ladies found it stereotyped and unnecessarily graphic. I was crushed. Still, they made me see aspects of the novel I had not noticed myself. Such communal encounters are a neglected and

incredibly important aspect of the otherwise solitary activity of reading.

So Many Books . . .

BETWEEN the books I buy for entertainment or book club, the books I take home from work, and the books other members of my family accumulate, we're pushing the outer limits of known shelf space. As of this writing, my husband/resident calculator estimates that we own about 4,000 books, but the scary thing is we're just getting started. We feel like we're being so prudent, too; since we've run out of book-shelf space for the time being, we try to donate one book to the library for every new book we bring into our home. But that often feels like an adulterous betrayal. I have no problem getting rid of clothes that don't fit, or tchotchkes that someone gave us for Christmas, or magazines and newspapers that I've already read. But books are friends—lovers, even—and I cannot march them out the door so lightly.

And so we organize them. I've always done my non-fiction topically, sometimes in creative ways. (Since my early twenties, for example, Mary Lefkowitz's *Women's Lives in Greece and Rome* has been the transitional book between my sections on women's studies and ancient mythology.) However, our book collection is getting out of hand. We are thinking that when we move next year, we might put all of our books into the Library of Congress classification system. That way, we'll always know how to find what we need.

In the end, reading isn't just about entertainment; it's a spiritual discipline for me. President Hinckley has spoken often and affectionately about his childhood, which was infused with a love of literature. His parents made it a priority to fill their house with marvelous books, and he has repeatedly encouraged Latter-day Saints to do the same. Now, I don't know that the prophet would approve of my taking his counsel so much to heart. For example, I suspect that he might frown on what I did on a certain Sunday in July, when I skipped sacrament meeting in order to finish the latest Harry Potter book in the parking lot. (Yes, I know there is a special hell for people like me.) But in general, the gospel's exhortation to "seek ye out of the best books" is one of the few obligations of Mormon life that I feel certain I'm keeping to the letter. And I'm grateful that we have a prophet who recognizes the foundational importance of literature.

Now if you'll excuse me, I have books to read. ☺



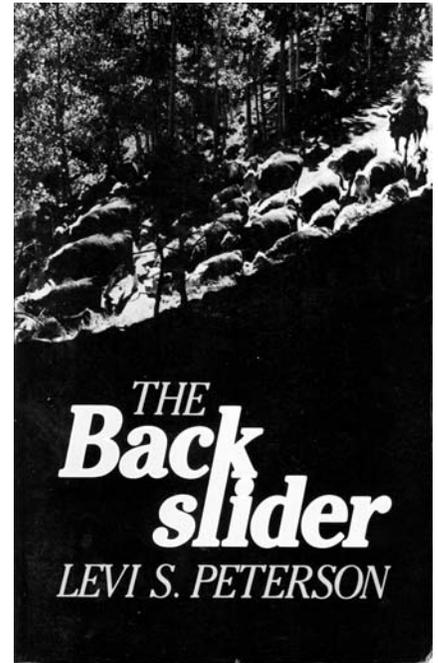
CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

IN 1986, SIGNATURE BOOKS PUBLISHED *THE BACKSLIDER*, BY LEVI S. PETERSON.

A comic novel with the depths of tragedy, a cowboy novel with profound theological resonance, a coming-of-age novel which gets better read in middle age, a "Mormon" novel and an un-Mormon novel, a novel of lust whose consumption is a moving affirmation of monogamous love—*The Backslider* is a book with many readings and many meanings.

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If you have ideas, suggestions, submissions, or questions, please send them to Cherie Woodworth, executive editor of the Festschrift project, at cherie.woodworth@aya.yale.edu.

Preliminary deadline for submissions, for priority consideration, is MAY 1, 2006. Final deadline for all submissions is JULY 1, 2006.



NONSTANDARD DEVIATIONS

COUNTERING CYNICISM

By Michael Nielsen

“Acynic is a man who, when he smells flowers, looks around for a coffin.”¹

ARE YOU SOMEONE who looks for coffins when you smell flowers? Or are you someone who doesn't really even notice the coffin because the flowers are overwhelmingly beautiful? I'm usually found somewhere between these two extremes.

As I understand the concept of cynicism, trust—or the lack of it—is one of its core elements. The cynic, whether due to past experiences or simply as a matter of temperament, distrusts people's sincerity and goodness. A moderate dose of skepticism can be a healthy thing, but when skepticism crosses into cynicism, it harms us as individuals and is also antithetical to Mormonism.

Why is cynicism harmful? Erik Erikson suggests that the first task we undertake in our psychological development is learning to trust people. If we learn to trust others at the beginning of our lives, we may go on to become well-adjusted adults. If we instead learn mistrust, our relationships are hampered unless we can later learn to trust.²

Perhaps because they don't feel they can put their trust in others, some people adopt a faith in materialism—a trust in things rather than in beings. Materialism pervades our culture; economists even talk of “goods and services,” flatly suggesting that things to be sold are good. I am neither an economist, nor an etymologist, so I may have a fundamental misunderstanding about this word here. But I long have wondered why something more neutral, such as “products and services” rather than “goods and services,” is not the phrase we hear economists use. Whether or not economic analysts intend it, “goods and services” suggests that materialism and “things” are assumed to be at least potentially good. Should we assume that things and objects can be good and virtuous?

Among the basic statements of Latter-day

Saint belief is the Thirteenth Article of Faith:

We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

This statement mentions “good” twice. In the first instance, the good is “doing good,” presenting goodness as what we do. We can characterize our actions as good; we believe in doing good. The second occurrence of “good” is in reference to things which are “of good report.” Though “anything” does not explicitly direct our focus to “things,” it does suggest that perhaps objects can be good or bad. Certainly we do talk of things this way: “What a good car,” or computer, or whatever the object of our desire may be.

We encounter a problem if we trust in things, however, because even good things do us good only temporarily. Having a good thing gives us only passing happiness. We all have had the experience of wanting something—a new car, home, clothes, or some other good thing. Once we obtain that good thing, we feel happier than we were before we got it. But after a while, it wears out, or the novelty and excitement of owning it subsides. The goodness of *things* is only temporary.³

Ultimately, of course, good things are also limited because “you can't take them with you.” We take with us our life's work, our actions, the things that we have done, and the experiences we've had in the process of living life. In other words, we take only ourselves, our character, the person we've become. We take something much less tangible, but far more important, than items or things. The

first kind of goodness mentioned in the Article of Faith, then, is more critical than the second. Good actions are far more important than good things.

One of my favorite cartoons was published in the *New Yorker* several years ago, and was reprinted in the March-April 1999 SUNSTONE. The cartoon shows Satan and one of his devils looking out over hell at all of the people there. The people are talking, wailing, and working amid the fire and brimstone. Satan says to his helper, “We do pretty well when you stop to think that people are basically good.” This makes me grin because it pokes fun at the traditional Christian view that people are born inherently evil. One of the things that makes Mormonism revolutionary, and one of the things about the religion that appeals to me deeply, is that we believe that human nature is basically good.

Yes, I recognize that there are scriptures that imply otherwise (e.g., “The natural man is an enemy to God . . .”), but those ideas and beliefs don't lead me through the chapel doors.

An example of the Mormon sense about the inherent goodness of people is found in the LDS stance on infant baptism. The traditional Christian practice of baptizing infants comes from the view that people are born into the world in a state of sin, and baptism cleanses them from their inherited sin. Mormon counters the idea of original sin when he teaches:

Listen to the words of Christ your Redeemer, your Lord and your God. Behold, I came into the world not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance; the whole need no physician, but they that are sick; wherefore, little children are whole, for they are not capable of committing sin. . . [and] awful is the wickedness to suppose that God saveth one child because of baptism, and the other must perish because he hath no baptism. . . [H]e that saith that little children need baptism denieth the mercies of Christ, and setteth at naught the atonement of him and the power of his redemption. (Moroni 8: 8, 15, 20)

Indeed, LDS belief is that before coming to earth, we were with God. Here on earth, we are temporarily separated from God, but we look forward to returning to live with God once again. To me, this is symbolic of the apostasy and restoration, only on a personal, rather than institutional, level. Like the story of apostasy and restoration, this is a



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story of faith and hope—a faith and hope that we share with God—that we can travel life’s journey and return safely “home,” better for having made the trip. So, in this context, cynicism seems to be the antithesis of faith.

Consider the idea of agency. If God believed we are motivated by cynicism, by self-interest only, would we have agency? Would God expect us to choose well? I don’t think so.

This makes me think that God isn’t cynical, either. Would God put us in a situation where we were almost certain to fail? Who would want to worship a God like that?

So why do we experience cynicism? Why might we be pessimistic? One event that typifies why many people might opt for cynicism and despair occurred in 1999, when two teens in Colorado killed thirteen other people, apparently intending to kill many more as they destroyed their school. Why did they do this? The reports pointed to a perverse attempt to recognize Hitler’s birthday as the teens sought revenge on people and on a setting that were unfriendly. Clearly, those two young men were motivated by self-interest and selfishness.



Do we conclude too quickly that someone is lying when, in fact, it may be a matter of unconscious bias? I have become persuaded, as Joseph Smith stated, that “there is no salvation in believing an evil report against our neighbor.”

But this is only part of the story. We also should recognize that self-interest likely guided the actions of others at the school. If it is true that the two boys were outcasts, they likely had been ridiculed by the “in-group” simply because they were different. If so, then the “in-group” acted in self-interest, building themselves up at the expense of someone else. At any rate, after hearing news like this, it is very tempting to view people cynically.

But in the same scene, we see many other instances of kindness and service, selflessness, and love. For example, we learn that one of the slain students had spent the pre-

vious summer building a house for an impoverished family in Mexico. We learn of a teacher at the school who lost his life as he directed some of his students to safety. Untold numbers of others helped out: medical personnel, police, neighbors, friends, and strangers. All came together, offering service to others in the midst of the tragedy.

World War II was spawned by selfishness, yet amid all its horror are many stories of people who did not fall prey to cynicism. One vivid example is President Harry Truman’s favorite story of a Congressional Medal of Honor winner. The story features Bob Bush, a man eighteen years old at the time, the same age as the perpetrators of the Colorado shooting. Bush enlisted in the marines as a medic, telling his mother that he “wanted to help people.” On Okinawa, Bush rushed to help a fallen soldier. Expending his own ammunition, he grabbed another gun and fired more rounds point blank at the charging enemy. All this time he held a bottle of plasma high so that his comrade might survive, but in doing so he was seriously injured and lost sight in one eye. He refused treatment for himself, eventually collapsing

from his own wounds but determined to get his fellow soldier the treatment he needed.⁴

The cynic might suggest that Bush was merely preserving his own life, but this hardly accounts for his efforts in saving the other man’s life. Why did Bush focus his efforts on the other man while he, himself, was seriously wounded and under attack? Not because of cynicism. Not because of cynicism or self-interest.

I use this example not to glorify war but to point out that even in the midst of the horrible selfishness and cynicism that brought on World War II, we can see actions that counter cynicism’s harsh negativity.

Our challenge is to notice the positive. It’s far easier to focus on the negative things that happen around us. On a very basic level, we seem “programmed” to be vigilant for negatives. People who take an evolutionary perspective believe that our talent for seeing the worst is part of an alert system that we use to prepare for possible danger. By focusing on the things that may prove harmful, the thinking goes, we are better able to avoid the potential harm. Maybe so. But for whatever reason, news media have figured this out. Media observers have even developed the phrase, “If it bleeds, it leads,” suggesting that the media are aware that they are more likely to capture and keep viewers’ attention if they begin the newscast with graphic and disturbing stories and images.

HERE likely are many different ways that people become cynical. Certainly some individuals are more cynical than others, but recent research offers an important insight. Young children cannot distinguish intentionally misleading statements from unintentional bias, and therefore are more likely to conclude that a speaker is lying. In other words, unintentional bias is a more difficult concept to grasp and characterizes a more mature way of explaining someone’s behavior.⁵

This seems to have important implications for how we deal with others, including other Church members. It suggests that one natural reaction to incongruities is to assume that the speaker is deliberately misleading others. The more mature reaction is to regard the person as biased in some way, or at least to hold open the possibility that they are making an honest, sincere mistake.

In my conversations with people cynical toward religion, this sense of being deliberately misled has been a common theme. Their cynicism can be intense, accompanied by anger at feeling betrayed by a church leader or by the institutional church over historical incongruities. To be sure, the issues involved are not trivial ones. During the past few years, I’ve talked with people about such topics as race and the priesthood, Native Americans and DNA, polygamy, and others. These topics can generate passionate feelings among people who feel as though they have been duped. Perhaps a more forgiving judgment would have avoided the anger and

pain. Do we conclude too quickly that someone is lying when in fact, it may be a matter of unconscious bias?

At the same time, it can be hard to reserve judgment. To cite one example, anyone who has encountered the history of Church leaders “lying for the Lord” regarding polygamy must face the fact that those individuals indeed did one thing while saying another.⁶ The rationale behind such actions may be complex, even unconscious, but the facts can lead one to conclude that some Church leaders did not speak the truth, even under oath. In the face of such dissonance, it is understandable why some would become cynical.

For me, the issue becomes more difficult when Church members and leaders present issues as black or white, or right or wrong, without nuance or subtlety that allows for shades of gray. “Either the church is true, or it is a fraud. There is no middle ground. It is the Church and kingdom of God, or it is nothing.”⁷

I recognize that many people feel uplifted by statements such as these, seeing them as bold assertions of faith. But these types of statements don’t resonate with me. Maybe it is my experience with science that makes this so difficult. In science, useful theories are ones that can be falsified. In fact, we try to disprove our theories, and revise them as the data warrant. This approach to finding truth, deeply ingrained in me through years of research, is not helped by all-or-nothing thinking. If put to an all-or-nothing test, the scientist in me rejects all and is left with nothing.

Such black-and-white thinking regarding religion also implies for many that all other religions are either right or wrong, truthful or fraudulent. I have encountered too many good people, engaged in righteous work sponsored by other religions, to think of them in such a bifurcated way. Instead, I am more persuaded, as Joseph Smith stated, that “there is no salvation in believing an evil report against our neighbor.”⁸ Remaining cynical toward others does not uplift me nor help my spirituality.

HOW do we counter the negative and the cynical? I have three simple suggestions for doing this.

First, we must notice the everyday occurrences of kindness. We must be aware when someone offers assistance. Tell them, “Thank you.” We also must cultivate an interest in other people. Doing good for others brings its own reward. The hymn “Have I Done Any Good?” reminds us that “doing good is a

pleasure, a joy beyond measure.” Use the opportunities around us to do good.

Second, we must develop a habit of optimism. We can “learn” to be optimistic just as we learn to be pessimistic. By starting with an expectation of negativity, we set ourselves up to experience things that way. The universe is wonderful in always allowing us to be right! By meeting the world in a certain way, we create powerful “self-fulfilling prophecies” that act to virtually assure us that the world is the way we think it is. We must begin with the expectation that people are good, which, from my perspective, is God’s expectation.

Finally, we must consider our motives when we make choices. When we act, what prompts our actions? Do we act out of self-interest, out of cynicism? Consider these excerpts from the Sermon on the Mount:

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. . . . Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (Matthew 6: 5, 16)

Here we are warned about acting in our self-interest. We also read why this is important:

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Matthew 6:19–21)

The treasures spoken of here are long lasting.

I like the way that Gandhi said it: “You must be the change you want to see in the world.”⁹ Begin today, with ourselves, and see how much better we can make the world. 🙏

NOTES

1. H. L. Mencken, quoted at [http:// www.quotationspage.com/subjects/cynicism](http://www.quotationspage.com/subjects/cynicism).
2. Erik H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (New York: Norton, 1994).
3. David Myers, *The Pursuit of Happiness* (New York: Avon Books, 1993).
4. Tom Brokaw, *The Greatest Generation* (New York: Random House, 1998), 106–08.
5. Candice M. Mills and Frank C. Keil, “The

Development of Cynicism,” *Psychological Science* 16, no. 5 (2005): 385–90.

6. A good discussion of this can be found in B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

7. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Loyalty,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 60.

8. Joseph Smith, Jr., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Joseph Fielding Smith, comp. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 364.

9. Mahatma Gandhi, quoted at <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/27184.html>.



CLEAN CANVAS

Keep pale, Jody,
keep featureless.
Keep rouge from face,
keep glitter from hair.
Trim breasts close to torso.
Hold hips from cauliflower bulbing.
Lay shirts plain over shoulders.
Drape skirts that flow unnoticed.

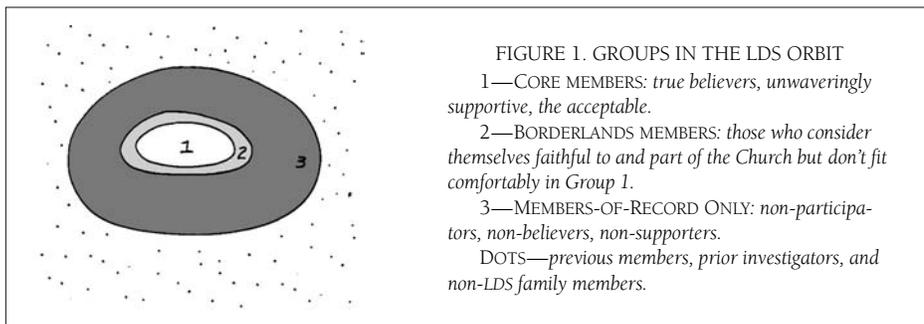
Here now can play
the sweet power of change,
the climates within the woman flesh:
the brilliant flash of the saber word,
the ecstasy scream of motherhood,
the flirtatious snap of a bold head,
the hurt-fawn gap in the eye of pain,
these and these and these
and many, many more
ready to spring into instant art,
needing a clean canvas, though,
for the splashes, flashes, lines,
bolts, bullets, bombs
of color, texture, form:
the whips of life in its flux,
its fluid joy of creation.

—LORRAINE TOLLIVER

BRAVING THE BORDERLANDS . . .

NEWS AND MAIL

By D. Jeff Burton



THIS COLUMN EXPLORES the stories of Borderlanders in order to share how others have successfully (or unsuccessfully) dealt with problems and challenges.¹ Below, I describe a recent experience of my own and then share several items from my correspondence with other Borderlanders.

ON SUNDAY, 9 JULY, my bishop announced in sacrament meeting, “D. Jeff Burton has been called on a service mission.” Many turned to look at me, some in pleasant amazement, a few wondering, “How could *he* be getting a mission call?” Some of my fellow high priests were probably thinking, “He doesn’t even have a testimony!”

It is true that I don’t profess a “knowing” testimony of some important facets of our religion. And I’m open about it. For example, I can’t say that I *know* that Christ is the Savior of the world, but I acknowledge that it is certainly possible. I’m willing to accept that wonderful idea through faith, and I hope it is true. I *can* say that I know the principles of living that Jesus taught us are certainly true and, when followed, can save us daily from guilt, sorrow, and pain. It doesn’t take much experience to learn that being honest, for example, certainly makes our lives easier and is the right thing to do.

I can’t say that I *know* the Book of Mormon was translated from golden plates, but it is not unthinkable, and I’m willing to accept that possibility on faith. I *can* say that I know the Book of Mormon contains some valuable and worthwhile Christian precepts that can help us.

I can’t say that I *know* “the Church is true,” but it is possible, and I’m willing to accept that it is literally true for those who believe it is. I *can* say that I know the Church is worthwhile and important. It’s been a positive influence in the lives of millions, including my own. I’m happy to accept a mission call because I know it is worth lending my time and expertise.²

So you see my testimony is multifaceted but based mostly on faith and acceptance. It lacks the certainty many active members are blessed with. It contains many questions and doubts. Where I can test a proposition, such as, “Is honesty the best policy?” I have often come to “know” the truth of it. When a proposition it is not testable, such as, “Did the Book of Mormon come from gold plates? I am left with some uncertainty and must rely on faith.

Am I unusual? Is the lack of a knowing testimony wrong or a sign of weakness, sin, or worse?

I’ve mentioned D&C 46:13–14 before—the section on spiritual gifts—which says that some are given to *know* that Jesus is the Son of God and that others are given to *believe* on their words, and if they “continue faithful” will have eternal life. Note that “to know” is a gift from God. One of many gifts. Not all members get every gift. But to be able to live by faith—“to believe on their words”—is also a gift.³ In fact, it seems to be the gift granted to many faithful Borderlanders.

Is one the better gift? Who knows. Both have benefits. We can explore that question in another column.

When I went to see my stake president about the mission call, he asked me the regular temple recommend “Do-you-have-a-testimony-of. . .” questions, and I responded, “My testimony is mostly faith-based rather than knowledge-based.” He said, “Well, in the end, isn’t that all any of us have?” We got along great, and the call went forward without a hitch.

Is a solely faith-based testimony acceptable to receive all the blessings of the gospel? My bishop and I explored this question in a letter I sent to the First Presidency. President Packer actually called my bishop and told him “yes.” My bishop also received a letter from the First Presidency’s office that says, “You may assure Brother Burton that faithful members like him are acceptable to the Church.”⁴

Of course, my receiving a call to serve a mission is another evidence of acceptance. You might consider my experience the next time you wonder about (or someone else wonders about) your worthiness to go to the temple, serve a mission, or be active.

How open and honest should we be with other members if we have questions or doubts, or haven’t yet received the gift of “knowing”?

Honesty is one of the cornerstones of our religion. It is my testimony that when we are honest with ourselves and tactfully honest with others, we can minimize the conflicts, guilt, and stress that come with practicing a subtle deceit.

FROM THE MAILBOX

“Jared” (whom I quoted in my most recent column on “divorce”) sent another thought about how to deal with regular members after they know you’re a Borderlander.

My point is, you should not slink off feeling rejected and ostracized even if, in a sense, you really are at first. People respond to an upbeat, friendly, optimistic demeanor and an outward demonstration that you *do* love the Church and the people by, for example, continuing to volunteer for service projects, helping with picnics, putting up chairs and tables, etc. Pretty soon they treat you like nothing has changed. But you have to *act* as if nothing has changed.

And when asked about my testimony (by anyone who might understand), I now respond with something like, “Yes, I do still have

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a testimony, but it is not the same as it used to be. I used to see things in black and white and had a 100 percent soft, unexamined testimony of everything, thinking it either has to all be true or the whole thing is bogus (as we have often heard from some leaders). Now I have a hard and firm, excruciatingly examined testimony (pick your percentage—15, 50, or 75) of some seminal eternal principles found only in this church, which has been tried by fire which I ‘know’ as much as one can know anything in this life. The rest of it? I don’t know. I will not say anything is not true, I just do not know for sure what is and what is not. I don’t rule anything out, and I am working on it.”

“Ted” (not his real name) wrote:

My oldest son, who lives in Denver, married a mother of three about two years ago. Now they want to be sealed in the temple, and he wants my wife and me to attend. My wife is very worthy and has started, with my blessing, getting her recommend, garments, etc. in order. I, on the other hand, do not feel “worthy.” (Actually, as one who has never smoked, drunk nor drugged, served a mission long ago, and was a virgin at my own wedding, etc., I find the word “worthy” too narrow in this case.) So I told my son and my wife that I would love to be with them but would not lie in response to any interview question in order to get a recommend.

So what do I do? Disappoint my son and wife by being “true” to myself or lie and stretch the truth in order to serve the higher calling of my family’s happiness and bonding? What’s the difference in “lying for the Lord” during

polygamy and lying for a good cause now?

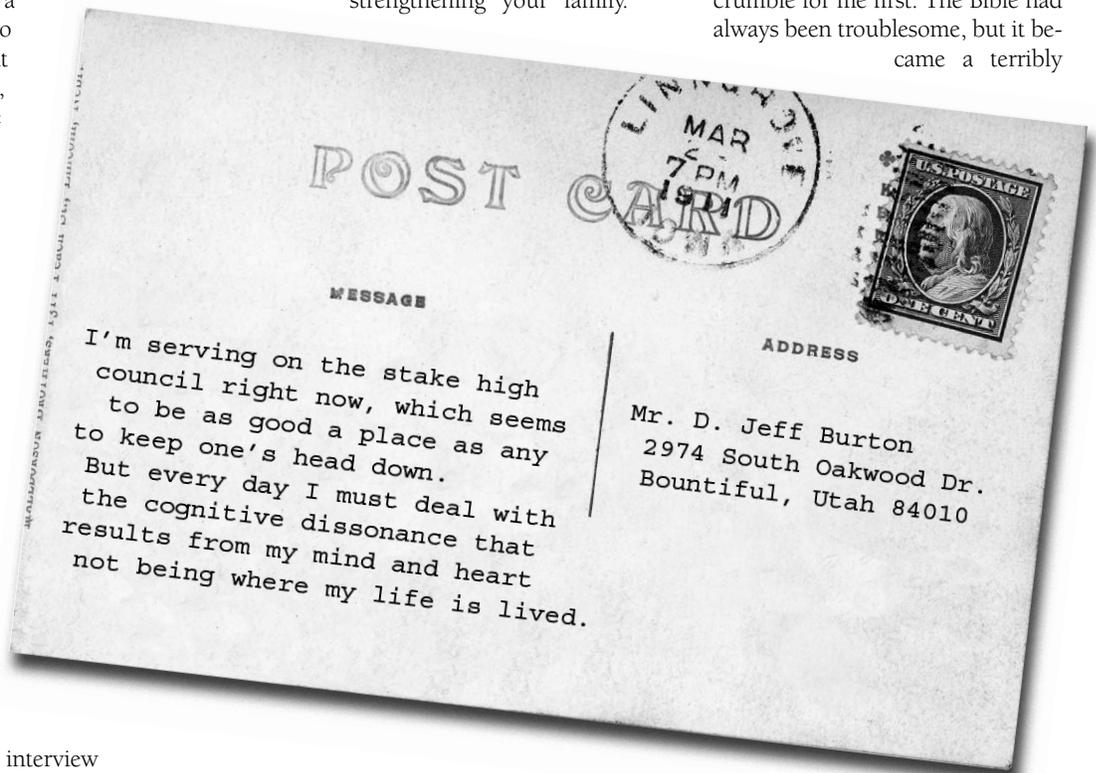
My response to Ted: Yours is a familiar dilemma. Having recently re-obtained a temple recommend myself, I know the quandary, but it isn’t really that big of a deal. And it doesn’t require any lying. In fact, honesty is the best policy.

When asked, “Do you have a testimony of . . .,” you can respond, “Well, I may not know everything completely, but . . .” then choose what fits you best: “I’m willing to accept that it is true through faith,” “I’m willing to behave as if it is true,” “I don’t really ‘know’ anything, but I accept that it could be true,” “I hope and pray it is true,” and so forth. It helps to divide what you know from what you are willing to accept on faith.

I strongly urge you to go with your son and his new family to the temple to show your support, to strengthen your family and your relationships with your wife, son, daughter-in-law, and grandkids. Nothing is more important in this life than serving and strengthening your family.

ously adhered to the scriptures and manuals, feeling that any doubts or other trains of thought I’ve harbored belong only to me [and were to be minimized]. I had no business using Sunday classes as a forum for my own wondering, for example.

So what happened? I’m afraid I violated my agreement with myself not to think too much about the Church, the gospel, its history, etc. I was supposed to just be active and not think about it. I sort of knew if I did think and inquire, there would be difficulties. But I forgot many years ago and began “reading around,” at first mostly about the history of religion and the popular books about mythology by Joseph Campbell. I confirmed things that had nagged at the back of my mind for a long time, and the foundations of the Judeo-Christian beliefs began to crumble for me first. The Bible had always been troublesome, but it became a terribly



Here’s “Mark’s” personal story:

I once had a pretty firm conviction of the “truths” of the restored gospel and lived my life in solid activity. I served a mission and graduated from BYU. I have always held callings, including Gospel Doctrine teacher. During those lessons, I rig-

flawed document, not what it was presented to be, and a darned sight more interesting. I believe it is a crucial document in the development of our society, but I believe we have missed the power embodied in the myths preserved

for us. We no longer “know” as a people nor as individuals how to read and use myths as scripts for our lives and as ways of talking about how things happened in the past. We lost that when we decided and accepted that the myths were history. They are bad history, sort of like little time bombs that go off from time to time when something else can’t be reconciled with recent objective findings.

And the same could be said for the Church. Without making specific arguments, suffice it to say that I began to discover irreconcilables in our history and present happenings, and without much left of the usual basis of Christian belief, I had little difficulty doubting the way things have always been presented to us in the Church. I understand the institutional motivations for what is left out or distorted, but as with the myths that become history, the history that becomes sanitized and fitted to an agenda eventually bumps painfully up against “facts” as they are uncovered. I believe Joseph Smith was a genius who indeed could have been inspired to write the Book of Mormon. It just isn’t handy for the Church to have the Book of Mormon portrayed as something other than the literal history of events that occurred in the Americas. I believe it is an important document that does indeed change lives.

I have my sweet, stalwart wife who teaches early morning seminary and has done so for seven years now, and I have the kids and the rest of the family in Utah and California, and for them and the friends I’ve had for years here in the Church, I keep at it. I’m serving on the stake high council right now, which seems to be as good a place as any to keep one’s head down.

But every day I must deal with the cognitive dissonance that results from my mind and heart not being where my life is lived. And I don’t really have the time or opportunity to fully understand where my mind and heart belong. I guess that is my sacrifice for those I love, and it does seem possible to carry on living “Mormon” for the dura-

tion. At this point in life (I’m getting on in years), it is what I know how to do, and I do it pretty well. I don’t know how much more at this point it is appropriate to share, but sharing at least makes me feel like at least one other person has heard some of what is festering inside.

My response to Mark: You’ve carved out a nice niche for yourself, one that seems to have worked okay so far and is a worthwhile sacrifice. I wouldn’t hurry into changing what you’re doing unless the dissonance begins to “fester” too much and you see a clear path that doesn’t knock your loved ones over.

My ultimate goals are to help Borderlanders survive the trauma, and then move into a comfortable and an acceptable honesty with themselves and others. (That also requires true believers to accept the “faith-based” member as an equal. So I’m working on that front, too.) The important thing for members like us isn’t the question, “Is the Church true?” but rather “Is the Church good?”

I believe it is for me, for you, and for many others like you.

“John” sent this email:

You recently touched on the subject of divorced Borderlanders (SUNSTONE, May 2005). Perhaps the most difficult issue for me as a divorced man in the Church was our local leaders rigidly adhering to a ward boundary policy. When I first divorced and moved out of my children’s stake, I was urged to attend my new ward. I tried that and felt sick over it. After praying earnestly, I felt the Spirit directed me with unmistakable clarity to attend and be active in the ward my children were attending.

After meeting with my “home” stake president, he indicated that I could attend my children’s ward, but on a voluntary basis. This I did. I went to my children’s stake president and asked for a calling. He told me that what I was doing was “contrary to the organization which the Lord had established on earth,” and said that “they did not issue callings to people whose records they do not have.” I went back to my home stake president and asked for a transfer of records. He indicated that he could not offi-

cially sanction my being in the other ward.

My “visitor” status in my children’s ward has led to problems and embarrassment. When my son went on a mission, I was not invited to speak at his farewell, for example, but his mother was. Not having any calling pushes me into the borderlands and makes maintaining healthy relationships difficult.

If the Church is to support families, divorced or not, both the mother and father should be seen as important in the spiritual lives of their children. Any father earnestly striving to be with his children and to do what is right should be recognized. Part of this recognition is for local leaders to allow full participation with his children in church and all the peripheral activities which are so important in the church lives of young people. ☺

NOTES

1. In my first column (this is number 17), I introduced the Borderland member as one who may have an unusual but LDS-compatible outlook on life, a distinctive way of thinking about faith, belief and testimony, a different view of LDS history, some open questions about a particular aspect of the Church, reduced or modified activity, or feelings of not meeting Group 1 acceptability criteria. See the figure. Copies of former columns are available on the Sunstone website, www.sunstoneonline.com.

2. My calling is a part-time service mission with the Church’s Risk Management group and involves all kinds of environmental activities, e.g., control of mold in ward buildings located in hot and humid climates. I have a small office on the sixteenth floor of the Church Office Building.

3. There is no verb form for “faith.” In many cases, when one wants to make faith active, the verb “to believe” is used in its place. This is common usage in the King James Version and in many LDS books and writings.

4. I have a copy of the letter. If you would like to discuss it, please contact me.

Please send me any of your experiences or tales from life in the Borderlands.

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BOOK REVIEW

A BOOK OF REVELATIONS

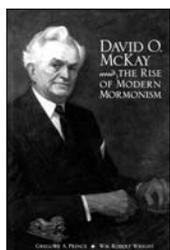
DAVID O. MCKAY AND THE RISE OF
MODERN MORMONISM

by Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright

University of Utah Press, 2005

512 pages, illustrations, index, \$29.95

Reviewed by Gary James Bergera



This book tracks in considerable and fascinating detail the sometimes tumultuous trajectory of a relatively young church standing nervously on the threshold of a modern world. Prince's David O. McKay is an intensely human, complex, and contradictory Church administrator.

GREG PRINCE'S HISTORY of the Church during the middle decades of the twentieth century is a revelation.¹ Relying in large measure on the life and experiences of ninth Church president David O. McKay (1873–1970), Prince carefully tracks in considerable, but always fascinating, detail the sometimes tumultuous trajectory of a relatively young church standing nervously on the threshold of a modern world. Where other LDS leaders may have hesitantly tested the turbulent waters of growth and expansionism, McKay jumped in headfirst. Recalling D. Michael Quinn's superb biography of McKay's stately counselor J. Reuben Clark (for me, the book to which Prince's most readily compares),² Prince lovingly portrays McKay as an intensely human, complex, contradictory Church administrator, seemingly motivated at times as much by his own vanity and dislike of confrontation as by his sincere estimation of God's mysterious will.

Though in the introduction Prince refers

to his book not as history but as biography, it reads as a hybrid of both in which the venerable McKay serves as catalyst and foil. After a first chapter offering some helpful biographical background on McKay (including an intriguing report of McKay's apparent early religious skepticism), Prince structures the remainder of his treatment around a generous handful of singularly engrossing topics, presented as chapters, including race relations, the development of priesthood correlation, the Church's educational and building programs, and politics (which merits two chapters). Cautious, yet fearless, Prince describes his methodology as "scientific," meaning that he first gathered as much information as possible—including copies of McKay's voluminous diaries kept by his loyal personal secretary, Clare Middlemiss, as well as some two hundred equally revealing contemporary interviews he and Wright conducted during the research process—analyzed and arranged the data, collated and grouped like topics, then more or less allowed the sources and

subjects to speak for themselves with a minimum of authorial intervention. Of course, the process of researching and writing such a massive work is never so simple, and while Prince—trained as a dentist and medical researcher—may seem to disdain speculation, his meticulous presentation is logically organized and clear-headed; his writing, smooth and easy to follow; his observations and conclusions, compelling; the overall approach, deferential and generous to a fault. Other readers may long for more analysis and judgment (and I don't know that I'd disagree with them), but as it stands, the book is a pleasure to read and a major contribution to Mormon history, "new" and "old."³

In many ways, Prince—again, like Quinn—is a "perfect" LDS historian. While stressing his admiration for and love of his subject, he nonetheless does not shy away from pointing out and scrutinizing McKay's many "warts." From my reading of the book, these include, among others, McKay's cultivation of an attractive, charismatic persona that encouraged near cult-like adoration; his tendency to succumb to the fawning appeals of sycophants; his sometimes basing decisions more on personal relationships than on the informed advice of his own counselors; his tacit encouragement of administrative end-runs; his racial (and occasionally religious) bigotry; and his reluctance to publicly and explicitly condemn—or at least temper—the anti-science rhetoric of Joseph Fielding Smith, the religious dogmatism of Bruce R. McConkie, and the political extremism of Ezra Taft Benson. (While I wish Prince did not seem to feel obligated to explain the need, and especially to apologize, for such long-overdue discussions of McKay's less appealing characteristics, I understand his inclination to want to contextualize, if not minimize, them.)

On the other hand, Prince is equally quick to applaud McKay's advocacy of personal freedom and willingness to defend and protect the free agency of Latter-day mavericks such as Sterling McMurrin; McKay's quiet and apparently persistent push for greater Church involvement (including possible priesthood ordination) by blacks of African descent; his selective ecumenical outreaches, including his blessing by an Episcopalian bishop; his lifelong celebration of education and the humanities; his emphasis on marriage and family life; and his call for a truly international gospel.

If several of these shortcomings and strengths appear contradictory, or even mutually exclusive, Prince explains that it is primarily because McKay was such a complex,

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inconsistent, contradictory man. This is undoubtedly true, but I also wonder if Prince's organizing his book thematically rather than chronologically—a decision I completely understand—might not sometimes obscure possible relationships between McKay's strengths and weaknesses. For example, how might McKay's championing of free agency relate to his racism?

Most readers will probably find something new on nearly every page. For me, such discoveries include, but are not limited to: Harold B. Lee's end-runs to garner McKay's support for Lee's reorganization of Church programs in line with his revolutionary philosophy of priesthood correlation (in fact, the book makes it seem as though almost every Church official at one time or another engaged in end-runs to McKay); McKay's opposition to fair-housing laws and other proposed anti-discrimination legislation; N. Eldon Tanner's confrontation with McKay

Staff" (Prince's term) much to the chagrin of other Church officials (his own counselors sometimes found it easier to approach McKay through his sons than through Middlemiss); Ezra Taft Benson's tortuous reasoning in deciding whose counsel to obey regarding his involvement in the John Birch Society and other anti-Communist activities; Hugh B. Brown's public relations gambles—and fumbles—in pushing for the priesthood ordination of blacks; and McKay's apparent change of heart in regards to his black-sheep niece, Fawn M. Brodie, though I wish the latter development were supported by more persuasive documentation.⁴

As mentioned above, Prince calls his book a biography. However, its focus and ambition are much broader. As a result, Prince treats some details of McKay's life only superficially, if at all, a concession to the economics of publishing and his own scholarly interests that Prince freely acknowl-

fects more of Middlemiss, and of her own "construction" of McKay, than of McKay himself. I also question that oral histories are always as factually reliable as Prince's use of them may imply. Prince includes some brief, but useful, treatment of Middlemiss; her faithful, but not always welcome, influence; and, following McKay's death, her final years alone as the president's *de facto* *relict*.⁶ Given that Prince's co-author is Middlemiss's nephew and executor, perhaps a more probing discussion of the dynamics of her relationship to the McKays, and vice versa, was not feasible. After the opening to the public in September 2005 of Middlemiss's copy of McKay's diaries, now housed—thanks to Wm. Robert Wright—in the Marriott Library's Special Collections department at the University of Utah, attempts to address these and similar questions may be a little less complicated.

Prince's own extensive research materials, comprising the Gregory A. Prince Papers, are



over McKay's not seeking his counselors' guidance (so intense was the encounter that Tanner worried afterwards that McKay might release him as counselor); the extent of the so-called baseball baptism program and McKay's initial brushing aside of reports by journalists as Mormon bashing; McKay's turning a blind eye to the bribing of low-level South American functionaries; McKay's not anticipating and planning better for the challenges posed by his own physical and mental decline; the rampant racism among a majority of the Church's general authorities; the extent to which secretary Middlemiss functioned as McKay's domineering "Chief of

WHILE STRESSING HIS ADMIRATION FOR AND LOVE OF HIS SUBJECT, PRINCE NONETHELESS DOES NOT SHY AWAY FROM POINTING OUT AND SCRUTINIZING MCKAY'S MANY "WARTS."



edges. For example, except for a page or two, there is almost no mention of McKay's private, or intimate, life—no detailed discussion of his relationship to his wife, Emma Riggs, nor to his children. Given his consuming involvement in the Church, if I were to base my judgment on Prince's account alone, I would conclude (perhaps incorrectly) that McKay was largely an absentee husband and father. In view of McKay's well-known, oft-repeated dictum, "No success can compensate for failure in the home," I wonder how the McKay marriage and family operated on a daily basis. Assuming that Emma McKay acted as the primary parent and caregiver, I wonder what role(s) David O. McKay actually played in his own marriage and family.⁵

I also wish that more discussion had been possible of McKay's, his wife's, and his children's relationship(s) to Clare Middlemiss. As keeper of McKay's diaries, Middlemiss looms large in the book, her ghostly presence a constant reminder of our debt to her contribution to Prince's reconstruction. In fact, Middlemiss as creator of McKay's remarkable diaries causes one to wonder to what extent any introspection contained in the diaries re-

now at the Marriott Library as well, and will be open as soon as they are catalogued. Likewise, Harvard S. Heath's annotated editions of McKay's diaries, which include both a one-volume edition of his presidential diaries (Signature Books, forthcoming) and a projected multi-volume edition of nearly all of McKay's diaries (Greg Kofford Books, forthcoming), should also facilitate our understanding of McKay and his times.⁷

As an additional brief aside, while I admire Arnold Friberg's evocative full-color portraits of McKay and his counselors featured in the book, I believe the money used to procure and reproduce them could have been better spent on the publication of three or more times as many black-and-white photographs.

Finally, for me, at least, Prince's book repeatedly begs a fundamental question—one, I suspect, Prince would prefer that readers answer for themselves. In view of the many missteps attending McKay's years as Church president, how are we most satisfyingly to account for the affirmation of continuing revelation and prophetic guidance in the daily governance of the Church? While possibly convincing arguments may be made for the

role of revelation in the Church's many successes, what role, if any, did revelation play in its failures and missed opportunities? If it played no role, why did God choose to stay His hand? How did Church leaders explain, even if only to themselves, God's apparent whimsy? Prince has waded waist-deep through the sources, has carefully considered the issues and controversies at play, and I would have appreciated, and no doubt been benefited by, his thoughts on such questions. Despite the omission (which, granted, may be of interest only to readers like me), I thoroughly enjoyed, and was both moved and enriched by, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*. Those who are interested in the LDS Church and its place in the modern world owe it to themselves not only to own the book but, more importantly, to read it.

On a concluding note, the following incident, which occurred too early in McKay's life for inclusion in Prince's biography, may shed some light on McKay's sense of humor, his commitment to the Church, and his private view of dissent—attributes that may be of interest to McKay's future biographers. In late November 1944, Benjamin L. Rich (1878–1968), a Salt Lake City lawyer and son of early twentieth-century Church leader Ben E. Rich, wrote to Morrill Farr, his cousin, in Los Angeles. Farr (1885–1949), grandson of early LDS convert and pioneer Lorin Farr, had asked Rich's advice on how best to go about formally leaving the Church. Rich responded:

Get a piece of heavy bond paper or parchment, legal size and indite a communication to your bishop, advising him that you desire to have your name removed from the rolls of the church and asking that you be excommunicated therefrom on the grounds of apostasy. This letter you should sign in your full name as Morrill Newton Farr in durable ink and have it acknowledged before a Notary Public who should affix his seal and the expiration of his commission. Then take the letter and stick it up your ass. That is the only way I know by which a grandson of Lorin Farr and a son of Newton Farr can get out of the Mormon Church. If I can advise you further on any ecclesiastical procedure, do not hesitate to ask me because I know most of the answers.

Some four months later, McKay, seventy-one years old and second counselor in the

First Presidency, was sent a copy of Rich's letter and rushed to congratulate Rich: "Your directions on the procedure he is to follow are so direct, and to my mind so appropriate, that I am considering the advisability of sending a copy of it to each Bishop in the Church. I think every descendant of our Mormon Pioneers who contemplates withdrawal from the Church should be given a copy of your 'procedure.'"⁸

NOTES

1. Throughout this review, I treat Prince as sole author of the book bearing his and Wm. Robert Wright's names. I do this because, as he explains in his introduction, Prince wrote the book and Wright acted as sounding-board and critic, as well as conducted several of the interviews. Thus, I believe that Prince deserves more than partial credit as author.

2. In his review of Quinn's *Elder Statesman: A Biography of J. Reuben Clark* (Signature Books, 2002) published in the *Journal of Mormon History* (Fall 2002), Prince disputes Quinn's interpretation of Clark's and McKay's ecumenism, McKay's "demotion" of Clark in the First Presidency, McKay's making decisions independently of Clark, and Clark's position on blacks and the priesthood. After reading Quinn's biography, Prince's review, and now Prince's biography, I believe that any disagreements are largely ones of emphasis and differing points of view (i.e., Clark's versus McKay's), that the two biographies have considerably more in common than not, and that both reinforce each author's portraits of the two men rather than contradict, or even seriously qualify, them.

3. Francis M. Gibbons's uniquely informed study of McKay, *David O. McKay: Apostle to the World, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City, Deseret Book, 1986), is an important, if under-appreciated, contribution to Mormon biography and should not be overlooked. Other biographical treatments include Keith Terry, *David O. McKay: Prophet of Love* (Santa Barbara, California: Butterfly Publishing, Inc., 1980), and Mary Jane Woodger, *David O. McKay, Beloved Prophet* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications,

2004). See also Woodger's compilation, *The Teachings of David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004).

4. Not quite six months after the publication of Brodie's controversial biography of Joseph Smith, *No Man Knows My History* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), McKay, making no attempt to conceal his anger, wrote: "Her attack on the Prophet Joseph [Smith] is really the result of an inflated egotism. Conceit and a tendency to arrogate to herself an intellectual superiority are traits that began to assert themselves early in her youth. To be a conformist in religion, or in politics, was to her an indication of mental lethargy. Her intellectual pride led her to disregard her parents' wishes with respect to her marriage [to Bernard Brodie, a Jew], influenced her to apostatize from the Church and prompted her to write this book of 'great swelling works of vanity,' having in mind the display of her own self-conceit[ed] greatness rather than a desire to state the unblemished truth. . . . Even if she were honest in her unfounded disbelief in the divinity of the mission of the Prophet Joseph Smith, she would think that respect and consideration for her father [i.e., Thomas E. McKay, David O. McKay's brother] would have restrained her hand from writing such a vicious attack on one in whose inspiration her gra[n]dparents believed, and to whose belief Brodie owes her very existence" (letter to Hugh Nibley, 16 May 1946, typescript in my possession). Given the depth and severity of McKay's antipathy, it would be instructive to know how he reportedly overcame, according to Prince, his considerable dislike of his niece.

5. One son's fond, understandably partisan, reminiscences may be found in David Lawrence McKay, *My Father, David O. McKay*, edited by Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989).

6. One wonders if Middlemiss, who never married, in life or death, was ever sealed to McKay.

7. For the published version of some of McKay's pre-general authority diaries, see Stan Larson and Patricia Larson, eds., *Whate'er Thou Art Act Well Thy Part: The Missionary Diaries of David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Blue Ribbon Books, 1999).

8. The letters are dated 27 November 1944 and 9 April 1945 respectively; copies in my possession.

THE FLOCK

BY JETT ATWOOD



BOOK REVIEW

NIPPLES: EXPLORING
MORMONISM'S "NEGATIVE SPACE"ICED AT THE WARD, BURNED AT THE STAKE
AND OTHER POEMS

by Paul Swenson

Signature Books, 2003

96 pages, \$14.95

Reviewed by Stephen Carter



The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was started by a fellow who wasn't willing to follow the status quo. Paul Swenson's poems seem to revel in that original sense of exploration that launched Mormonism.

*We are emigrants
emerging from
a dark island . . .*

SO WRITES PAUL Swenson in his debut book of poems, *Iced at the Ward, Burned at the Stake*. In many ways, the imagery of this poem, steeped in amorphous shapes and somnambulist twilight, evokes the blasted landscape of Lehi's dream. However, in Lehi's dream, there is a sure way—an iron rod—that leads to a bright, distinct region. In Swenson's poem "Another Country,"

*We are treading
the sod of a new
country, now forming*

*step by step
beneath our feet . . .*

*we are all lost,
all free. We see*

*the space
that opens . . .*

In many ways, Mormonism is the religion of an explorer. It was started, after all, by a fellow who wasn't willing to follow the status quo. And many of his followers are famous for stabbing into the wilderness, seeking their own new country. But, as is the way with organized religion, Mormonism can also be unimaginative and resistant to change.

Swenson's poems seem to revel in the original sense of exploration that launched Mormonism. They set off to find that unknown country despite the fact that

*. . . Fear
still bloats offshore.*

Swenson, it seems, goes on mental and theological safaris almost as a matter of habit. And it's interesting to see what he's found. If I were to describe Swenson's findings in one word, especially if it were a word that would

really add some zing to a book review title, I'd choose "nipples." He writes in his poem "Negative Space":

*It's hard being Mormon
and having nipples. . .
Poor Tarzan's not-so
-comic strip at the
hands of an air-
brush censor at
the Desnews
left the Jungle
King nippleless,
defenseless, and yes,
strangely emasculated . . .*

ONE of the major themes of this collection of poems is that Mormonism's negative space—its nipples, if you will—needs to be explored; otherwise, Mormonism runs the risk of being defenseless and weak. The two negative spaces Swenson seems most interested in are the role of the human body and the idea of a female deity.

Let's take on the body first. If you gathered the inhabitants of Hieronymus Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, including the frolicking nudes, the nightmares with beaks, and Jesus himself, poured them into a churchhouse and shook it up like an ant farm, I imagine you'd come out with something like *Iced at the Ward*.

Enter the chapel in "At the Church of the Generic Seagull," and you'll find that "Each chandelier's / a chocolate-tipped vanilla kiss or glowing / breast with dark brown nipple." As described in "Carnal, Sensual, & Devilish," an anonymous church-goer is likely to notice the backless dress on the music conductor and

*Linda's cotton or linen
Skirt that reaches
Almost to her ankles,
Almost touching
Nancy's bare legs. . .*

But not all the fun is being had in the church house. In "Eternal Digression," our valiant comrades in a heavenly symposium "vibrate to each other's bodies, meanings, / minds." The symposium's hotel sports ankle-deep carpets, room service, and lingerie fashion shows.

Swenson's unique genius—or disability, depending on your point of view—is that he doesn't seem to notice the difference between the sacred and the profane, the spirit and the body. Somehow, it all fits together. In "Exejesus," he imagines Jesus, not as the bland lawgiver so often preached in our



STEPHEN CARTER managed to pass all his poetry classes while pursuing an MFA in creative writing, though he still can't distinguish language poetry from wombat tracks. He wishes to send shout-outs to Sister Movius, probably the only other person in Fairbanks, Alaska, who reads SUNSTONE. Stephen can be reached at <jsrc@uaf.edu>.

chapels, but as a “women’s man,” who “Wouldn’t leave the wedding till the wine was gone,” and

*Wished for Mary’s perfumed hair—
Lord, he loved the way it felt
When she caressed his feet. . .*

It would probably make a more conservative reader uncomfortable, but even when Swenson is contemplating deity, he often takes a carnal approach. In “strange gods,” he isn’t abashed to say:

*i lust after strange gods:
the god who blesses the black sheep . . .
the woman who lays her dark head
on the shoulder of an even darker
woman
and sings “faith of our fathers,” leaning
into the hymn
even as she leans into her lover’s
embrace.*

In “Motherless Child,” he writes of God,

*I glimpse a future when I may read the
body
of her work and see the vistas of her soul
unfurled.*

Reading Swenson’s meditations on the idea of a female God made me realize just how little I had ever considered Her possibility. I remember a Sunday School teacher saying that he believed we didn’t talk about Heavenly Mother because She would be dragged through the mud by blasphemers the way Her Husband was. However, in Swenson’s “God Plans Her Day,” a page from God’s day-planner that somehow made its way from heaven onto Swenson’s desk, God—the female version—is planning to “Get the New World Feminist edition of the Koran,” “Hike to Mount Baldy,” and at the end of the day, “Spank the pillow.” I don’t know—She sounds like She could give blasphemers a good run for their money.

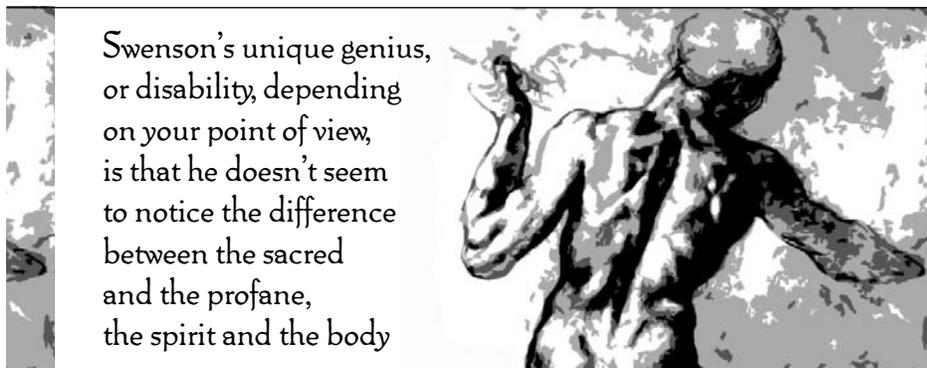
AND this is what I think Swenson really has to offer the Mormon reader: an interpretation of Mormonism that is forever inventive, forever reflective, and forever playful. But it isn’t just play. It’s deep play. You remember that deep play was first theorized by the British utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham. He describes deep play as when a person is engaged in an activity where, “the stakes are so high that . . . it is irrational for anyone to engage in it at all, since the marginal utility of what you stand

to win is grossly outweighed by the disutility of what you stand to lose.”¹

From an orthodox perspective, Swenson is definitely playing with fire. It would be easy to condemn his forays into the negative space of Mormonism. How often do we hear the warnings against contemplating the mysteries, much less publishing poems about them? How close does Swenson come to blasphemy as he seeks clues to Heavenly Mother? Is his levity about holy things beyond the pale? Is he selling his soul for a 96-

never lasts”). I felt like it skipped along the top of Mormonism, taking pot shots here and there. Indeed, his poems often read very quickly, perhaps leading the reader to doubt the possibility of depth. But after much work, I can bear my testimony that there is much to be found in *Iced at the Ward*.

You have to be the right sort of person, though, to get the full effect of his poems. And this is the main reason why Swenson’s book will probably not find a large audience outside (or even inside) Mormon circles. To



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page book of poems Jerry Johnston of the *Deseret Morning News* panned as one big, Scroogish gripe?²

I’m not going to make that call. But, as the poet Diane Ackerman says, “Deep play means no analysis, no explanation, no promises, no goals, no worries. You are completely open to the drama of life that may unfold.”³

I think that describes Swenson well.

But I also think Swenson’s approach to Mormonism may have a bit of usefulness to it. As I’ve heard in general conference and elsewhere, pornography consumption among Mormon males is on the rise. I wonder, sometimes, if that isn’t partially due to how difficult it is to talk about the negative space of sexuality, our bodies, in a nonjudgmental, or perhaps even playfully serious, context. I also wonder if we might benefit from the ability to concretely connect with a feminine divinity. Swenson’s poems seem to be good pointers in that direction.

I SHOULD admit, however, that it took me a long time to get to the point of appreciating Swenson’s poems this way. I’ve heard some of them before because, well, Paul is my great uncle (great in both the genealogical and the “what a guy!” sense), so I’ve heard him read at family reunions and other venues. Still, when I first read this collection, I felt like it sacrificed depth for cleverness (even though in his poem, “Redacted,” Paul specifically reminds himself that “clever

see if you qualify for pure Swenson appreciation, read the list below and circle each trait that describes you.

I am:

- Mormon
- Liberal
- Able to define and give at least one example of the word “Caldiero”
- Familiar with the events surrounding the September Six
- A blues and gospel music aficionado
- An appreciator of May Swenson’s poetry
- Willing to envision Paul on a proctologist’s table

I would suggest you be able to circle at least half the listed traits in order to get your fifteen bucks worth out of this book. Or be willing to put in a little time on Google and iTunes. I still can’t circle all of these, personally. One in particular. ☹

NOTES

1. Quoted in Diane Ackerman, *Deep Play* (New York: Vintage, 2000), 18.
2. Jerry Johnston, “Why Waste Space with Ire?” *Deseret Morning News*, 20 December 2003.
3. Missy Gilbertman, “‘Deep Play’ Isn’t Child’s Play, Says Ackerman,” *Cornell Chronicle*, 24 September 1997; <http://www.news.cornell.edu/chronicle/97/7.24.97/Ackerman.html>.

YEA, YEA  NAY, NAY

DNA ÜBER-APOLOGETICS: OVERSTATING SOLUTIONS— UNDERSTATING DAMAGES

By Simon G. Southerton

BLAKE T. OSTLER and D. Michael Quinn have recently taken it upon themselves to defend the Book of Mormon's antiquity in the face of DNA research (SUNSTONE, December 2004, March 2005, May 2005). While I have issues with their interpretations of the DNA science, their work also makes it increasingly difficult to distinguish the point where apologetics ends and heterodoxy begins. The underlying assumption of both writers—and they join a growing chorus of apologists—seems to be that for the last 175 years, LDS prophets have erred in doctrine concerning who the Lamanites are and where their descendants currently live. Both writers argue that these erroneous beliefs stem from an incomplete understanding of the Book of Mormon, handed down from previous generations of members and prophets, which most Latter-day Saints continue to assume as truth. As I explain in what follows, I don't believe their approach is necessarily the best one for others to follow.

I first encountered the DNA research in question in July 1998 while serving as a bishop in Brisbane, Australia. It didn't take long for me to be convinced that Native Americans and Polynesians are descended from Asians instead of Israelites, contrary to what my study of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants had formerly led me to believe. Because of my training as a molecular biologist, I was compelled to seriously compare what I thought I knew by faith with what I had just learned from science.

The DNA research on native populations sent barely a ripple through the scientific community because none of the findings seriously challenge major scientific theories concerning the colonization of the Americas. But the shock waves continue to move LDS apologists to defend the Book of Mormon.

And, judging from the various defenses to date, it is clear that these studies have exposed a conspicuous rift between what most Mormons believe and what apologists know about New World pre-history and the possible scale of any Israelite impact.

In this confusing time for Latter-day Saints struggling over what to decide about the DNA challenges, I believe some of the apologetic writings, including those of Ostler and Quinn, border on what I call *über-apologetics*—a win-at-all-costs approach to defending Book of Mormon historicity. That is, in their urgency to defend the Book of Mormon as a historical record, many apologists are not only misrepresenting the molecular research but also creating a climate that is forcing many Latter-day Saints out of the Church. But even more staggering to me than the smoke screens about the DNA research is the *über-apologists'* underappreciation of the damage to Mormon foundations that arises from their challenge to prophetic authority. Astoundingly, Ostler, Quinn, and others argue a heterodox position: that most Church leaders, including Joseph Smith, have misunderstood the scale of the Book of Mormon account. In making this claim, they are profoundly undermining one of Mormonism's core ideals. As I will argue below, I believe there is a better alternative to such extremism.

IN response to letters to the editor about Part I of his essay, Ostler states that recent DNA studies have “little or no bearing on the question of Book of Mormon historicity” (SUNSTONE, March 2005, 5). In taking this stand, Ostler seems to have cast his lot with the work of BYU anthropologist Michael Whiting and others in claiming that various factors such as genetic drift, founder effect, or bottleneck events make it difficult to use DNA to link the

small prehistoric Book of Mormon groups with living populations.¹ Given these factors, Ostler concludes: “Without knowing whether it is probable or improbable that today we would find Semitic genetic markers among DNA samples if there had been ancient Americans of Semitic descent, we cannot know if we should expect to find any” (SUNSTONE, December 2004, 71). I won't address these matters in this essay, but I deal directly with each of them in my book, *Losing a Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and the Mormon Church*, as well as in a Q&A section of the Signature Books website.² Suffice it to say here that Ostler and those who believe these factors make DNA studies irrelevant are mistaken.

While Quinn also fails to see much relevance in the DNA studies, he's anxious to employ it when he believes it supports the possibility of Book of Mormon historicity. In his short piece, “The Ancient Book of Mormon as Tribal Narrative,” Quinn claims that DNA evidence proves that “greater than 90 percent” of Amerindians descend exclusively from people who lived anciently in northeast Asia. But he also believes that research on the X lineage “supports” the Book of Mormon since the X lineage is present in indigenous populations at a frequency of about 7 percent and “matches DNA collected from North Africa and the Middle East” (SUNSTONE, May 2005, 67).

Quinn's portrayal of the DNA research is grossly misleading. It is more accurate to state that greater than 99 percent of Amerindians descend from Asians. Mitochondrial DNA lineages have been determined for more than 7,200 Amerindians from more than 180 tribes scattered across the Americas. Roughly 99.6 percent of their lineages fall into one of five lineage families: A, B, C, D, or X (see Table 1). Several LDS scholars now accept that this discovery is not compatible with a notion that these tribes derive from a relatively recent Middle Eastern migration to the Americas.³ The sequence diversity within all five families suggests they have been present in the Americas since the earliest migrations across the Bering Strait, which are known to have occurred more than 14,000 years ago when an ice bridge extended from Siberia to North America.

Scientific investigations of the X lineage continue but are unlikely to reveal anything specific to the Book of Mormon period.⁴ In order for the X lineage to be relevant, apologists need to explain these facts.

1. Amerindian DNA lineages belonging to the X family are at least as diverse as the lineages belonging to the A, B, C, and D lin-



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age families, meaning that they have been present in the New World for just as long.

2. The X lineage is rare, occurring at a frequency of about 1.6 percent across the New World (not 7 percent as stated by Quinn). It occurs at a frequency of 8 percent in Canadian tribes and 3 percent in tribes from the United States. The vast majority of apologists consider Mesoamerica to be the only plausible setting for the Book of Mormon narrative because of the Book of Mormon's description of major populations living in complex and literate cultures. To date, the X lineage has not been found in Central or South America, where the three major New World civilizations are located.⁵

3. There is evidence that X lineage DNA has been isolated from ancient remains that pre-date the Jaredite and Lehiite time period by thousands of years.⁶

4. Amerindian X lineages are only distantly related to X lineages found in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia; they are estimated to have separated from these populations more than 30,000 years ago—no later than 17,600 years ago.⁷ The fact that directly ancestral Asian X lineages have not been found is not evidence that they were brought into the Americas by non-Asian people. Deeper sampling of Siberian populations is likely to shed more light on this lineage's Asian ancestry.

Ostler believes “science will change drastically over the years and that what we take as established by the evidence and explained by adequate theories will be rejected and viewed as vastly inadequate in the not-too-distant-future” (SUNSTONE, March 2005, 6). This is a familiar argument but also a tired one. Such a hasty and broad application carries no force beyond a cry that no one should rush to judgment about any new evidence—something with which I wholeheartedly agree. But that said, on the topic of New World colonization, it is LDS scholars, not scientists, who have changed their views dramatically. For most of the past century, there has been a virtual consensus among scientists that the ancestors of the Amerindians migrated out of Asia more than 14,000 years ago. Claims that other ancient groups migrated to the Americas have come and gone

because the purported counter evidence has not withstood open scientific scrutiny. The molecular research reinforces theories developed earlier on the basis of research in genetics, anthropology, archaeology, and linguistics, all of which overwhelmingly substantiate a link with Asia. When evidence from multiple scientific disciplines points to one conclusion, it would be dramatic evidence indeed that would cause scientists to reverse their interpretation of the facts they now see.

The only DNA lineages present among Amerindians that probably did not arrive via an ancient migration from Asia are European and African lineages, which together occur at a frequency of about 0.4 percent in New World groups. These are the only candidates for lineages that conceivably could be connected to Book of Mormon peoples.⁸ A smattering of these lineages occurs throughout the Americas in tribes that interacted with post-Columbian colonists. Scientists assume these lineages arrived after 1492 because when investigators exclude people with known mixed ancestry, they typically do not encounter these other lineages.

To be fair, Ostler does not appear to be wedded to an American setting for the Book of Mormon narrative, suggesting instead an “islands” setting for the book (SUNSTONE, May 2005, 64–65). Such a view may not require the same sort of accommodation many apologists have undertaken in recent years.

MAKING mistakes regarding DNA science is only one aspect of Ostler's and Quinn's Book of Mormon *über*-apologetics. In their desire to defend historicity at all costs, they also assert that common LDS beliefs about the scale and

historical setting of the Book of Mormon are wrong. Both authors claim that through their own careful study long ago—as early as their late teens—each concluded, independently, that the Book of Mormon implies the existence of large populations with which the small Hebrew groups interacted, intermarried, and became assimilated. In coming to this conclusion, they are not alone. Various RLDS (now Community of Christ) and LDS scholars have been reading the text in this way for nearly a century. But far more boldly than others before them, Ostler and Quinn have begun to advance this view in conjunction with a bald challenge to prophetic authority. They contend that the DNA research is causing problems for many only because members and leaders have not carefully read what the book itself says and instead accept what they have been *taught* the Book of Mormon says. This results in what Ostler calls “doctrinal overbeliefs”—a euphemism for belief in things that are not true.

I believe *über*-apologists chart precarious terrain when they lay much of the blame for today's crises of faith on well-meaning but under-informed prophets. Latter-day Saints place great faith in the ability of their leaders to interpret scripture—indeed, it is an important function of the prophetic calling. Traditionally members have not relied on the interpretations of apologists, and Church leaders even today are reluctant to bestow their official endorsement upon anything the apologists write.⁹ Furthermore, many Latter-day Saints have had what they consider very specific and clear confirmations about notions Ostler labels “overbeliefs.”

Not all LDS apologists are following the *über*-apologist path. They are now interpreting the Book of Mormon in a way that is

Table 1. Maternal DNA Lineages in the New World. This table summarizes the data contained in my book, *Losing a Lost Tribe*, 213–222, where readers will find a comprehensive list of primary source references.

POPULATIONS	Maternal Lineage (number of individuals)						Total
	A	B	C	D	X	Eur/Afr	
Alaskan	288	4	13	379	0	0	684
Greenland	82	0	0	0	0	0	82
Canadian	443	42	82	29	55	3	654
United States	554	633	379	185	61	16	1,828
Central American	291	117	77	22	0	4	511
South American	676	1,175	914	683	0	9	3,457
Total	2,334	1,971	1,465	1,298	116	32	7,216
PERCENTAGE	32.3	27.3	20.3	18.0	1.6	0.4	100

compatible with what we know from science, in particular the obvious fact that the New World was widely populated prior to and during the Lehitic and Jaredite periods. Yet they are avoiding making such direct assaults on prophetic authority or showing what seems to me an arrogant disregard for members' faith and spiritual experiences.

Before I outline my proposal for a way forward that might avoid such extremism, both Ostler and Quinn have made dubious claims about the Book of Mormon that deserve attention.

ACCORDING to Ostler, it is clear that the Lehitics mixed with indigenous people soon after their arrival, and he believes the appearance of dark skin among the Lamanites is evidence of intermarriage. He also suggests that the Nephites took wives and concubines from among the indigenous women with whom they interacted. Since, according to the Book of Mormon text, the Nephites didn't inherit the dark skin, would Ostler have us believe that there were white-skinned indigenous people? Did the Nephites mix only with white others? The Book of Mormon doesn't offer any explicit support for such a claim.¹⁰

In an effort to find support for the idea that one could reasonably expect the presence of Asian ancestry among Amerindians, Ostler cites Hugh Nibley's *The World of the Jaredites*, in which Nibley speculates that the Jaredites migrated across the steppes of Asia, mixing with Asian populations along the way (SUNSTONE, May 2005, 66). Nibley claims a Jaredite migration in an easterly direction is plausible because the steppes were a land "in which there never had man been" (Ether 2:5) and because of cultural resemblance between the surviving nomads of the steppes region and the Jaredites. Nibley believes Asia fits the description of a place of many waters and that the strong winds that drove their boats to the New World are reminiscent of the prevailing westerlies that cross the northern Pacific. Based on Nibley's speculations about the Jaredites, Ostler believes that one might "expect to find Asian DNA" in today's Amerindians (SUNSTONE, May 2005, 66).

For this idea to have any real force, Ostler needs to show us where the Book of Mormon says the Jaredites carried out such an astounding transcontinental trek (at least 5,000 miles). The book of Ether gives no details of this lengthy migration, and most Mormons are unaware that some are advancing this scenario. In addition, there is now abundant evidence that Nibley's claim about the steppes of Asia being a place largely uninhabited by

man prior to the Jaredite migration is wrong: humans have inhabited large portions of central Asia for more than 20,000 years.¹¹ It has been found that Amerindians share common ancestral DNA lineages with Asian groups that derive from that time period.¹²

The Book of Mormon text says nothing explicit about peoples in the New World who already lived there before the Jaredite and Lehitic/Mulekite periods. Quinn's explanation for this difficulty is that the Book of Mormon is a "tribal narrative," and the authors were not interested in people who were not directly relevant to the tribe's experience. According to Quinn, the Book of Mormon is similar to the Hebrew Bible, which he sees as a limited tribal narrative. However, the Bible is not silent about other groups who lived nearby. It mentions Arabs, Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Midianites, Philistines, Phoenicians, Romans, Samaritans, and Syrians, and it mentions numerous cities outside Palestine. A substantial portion of the New Testament contains Paul's epistles to non-Israelite saints who lived considerable distances from Palestine. Is it reasonable to believe that during the thousand-year history of the Lehitics, when they supposedly interacted with and intermarried into the indigenous populations surrounding them, the Nephite writers didn't have a single occasion to mention the Native Americans who surrounded them?

Furthermore, the widespread LDS belief that essentially all Native Americans (and Polynesians, for that matter) are direct descendants of the Lamanites cannot be as easily dismissed as Ostler would have us believe simply by labeling them the personal opinions of prophets. Much more is at play here than prophets admitting they may have read more into the Book of Mormon than the text supports. This "overbelief" has had a profound impact on LDS interactions with native peoples in the Americas and the Pacific for well over a century. For most of the last 175 years, the Book of Mormon has been presented to native people as a history of their ancestors and, as such, has frequently played a major role in their conversion. For many decades, members have been reassured by successive prophets and apostles that they are the children of Lehi. Frequently, these reminders are delivered during regional, area, and stake conferences and during the dedicatory prayers at temples in areas with predominant indigenous American and Pacific cultures. The Church has invested heavily in schools in what have been thought of as Lamanite regions, particularly in Polynesia. Many Native American

and Polynesian members of the Church have received patriarchal blessings in which they have been told they belong to the tribe of Manasseh, the same tribe as Lehi. Perhaps most important of all, many Latter-day Saints have feelings attached to these beliefs that are difficult to distinguish from what they understand to be revelation received from the Holy Ghost. As a consequence, these beliefs are deeply entrenched in the Church and, at this writing, show no sign of slowing, given that all prophets, including the recent leadership, have endorsed them. Hence, I believe Ostler grossly understates the impact of his kind of open challenge to prophetic authority.

THE Church is clearly on the horns of a major dilemma, and whatever course it takes will be a painful one. Prophetic authority will certainly be undermined if leaders pull back from traditional claims about the geographical setting and Amerindian and Polynesian ancestry while still claiming the Book of Mormon is historical. It will hurt the Church if the leaders accept apologetic discourse that dismisses 175 years of prophetic utterances in favor of strained interpretations of scripture. The claim that the difficulties stem from innocent "overbeliefs" glosses over what is clearly a major contradiction between Mormon doctrine and scientific finding. If this route is taken, the contradiction with science will remain and the battleground will just shift to some obscure geographical region, who knows where.

There is no denying that it would also hurt the Church if its prophets were to concede that the book might not be historical and that past interpretations are now open to revision. But wouldn't it temper the damage to prophetic authority if today's prophets were to act boldly in reiterating strong faith in a miraculous Book of Mormon without forcing a particular interpretation of what that might mean?

Though not in exactly this way, this is a path that has been trodden before. Community of Christ scholars were the first to posit a limited geography, and now many in that denomination openly view the Book of Mormon as an inspired but non-historical book.¹³ But some Community of Christ members still hold to the historical claims of the Book of Mormon—and perhaps herein lies the solution. The Community of Christ accepts diversity of opinion about claims to historicity while the LDS Church does not. Currently, Latter-day Saints who do not accept the historical claims of the Book of

Mormon cannot honestly and openly express their thoughts in Church settings and consequently feel alienated by the community that nourished them and that they love (or once loved). Until these people—many of whom are faithful and upright members—find acceptance, they will either lose their faith or choose to exercise it in other churches that do not require a belief that runs counter to well-established scientific truths.

Clearly there is no one-size-fits-all for a matter as complex as this. Perhaps choosing to defend the authority of the text over 175 years of prophetic statements and widespread spiritual convictions based on these statements is ultimately a course that would prove least damaging to faith in the Church and its foundations. Nevertheless, I'm not convinced that the momentum in this direction, being fed by arguments like Ostler's and Quinn's, is based on weighing the evidence as much as on weighing the consequences.¹⁴

Über-apologists are making direct assaults on prophetic authority and demonstrating an arrogant disregard for members' faith and spiritual experiences.

Hence, what I am arguing for is an honest acceptance that no one holds all the cards regarding this matter. LDS apologists and leaders ought to stop trying to force everyone to accept the false dilemma of a "historical-or-bust" view of the Book of Mormon and respect the right of Latter-day Saints to hold differing views—without condemnation. I believe the Community of Christ is well on its way towards achieving this healthy balance. I would hazard to guess that if the LDS Church and its defenders continue to assert historicity as the only possible view even in the face of compelling scientific findings, many who objectively follow the evidence will continue to find the case against historicity just too strong to ignore and will find it too uncomfortable to remain in the fold. ☹

NOTES

1. Most of the work in this area is being advanced by scholars from the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) and the Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research (FAIR). For a comprehensive listing of this scholarship, see the appendix in part three of John Tvedtnes'

article, "Interpreting the DNA Data and the Book of Mormon," *Meridian Magazine*, <http://meridian-magazine.com/ancients/050713dna3.html> (accessed 16 September 2005).

2. Simon G. Southerton, *Losing a Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and the Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), 179–98. See also, <http://www.signaturebooks.com/excerpts/Losing2.htm> (accessed 16 September 2005).

3. This is the conclusion reached recently by BYU biologist Keith A. Crandall and two of his students. See Dean H. Leavitt, Jonathon C. Marshall, and Keith A. Crandall, "The Search for the Seed of Lehi: How Defining Alternative Models Helps in the Interpretation of Genetic Data," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 133–50. The same conclusion was reached by LDS biologists D. Jeffrey Meldrum and Trent D. Stephens of Idaho State University. See their article, "Who are the Children of Lehi?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12 (2003): 38–51. Possibly, Quinn's "greater than 90 percent" statement was derived from a talk given by BYU molecular biologist Scott R. Woodward at a FAIR conference in Provo, Utah, in 2001. See Scott R. Woodward, "DNA and the Book of Mormon," pre-

7. Reidla, et al., 1178–90.

8. Southerton, 129–30.

9. Currently no LDS apologetic organization can claim that its views are officially sanctioned by LDS leaders, though several apologetic articles are cited on the official Church website, www.lds.org—in the section for media—under the heading "DNA and the Book of Mormon." The website states "Recent attacks on the veracity of the Book of Mormon based on DNA evidence are ill considered. Nothing in the Book of Mormon precludes migration into the Americas by peoples of Asiatic origin." Readers are then directed to the articles but are told that they "are not official Church positions or statements." See <http://www.lds.org/newsroom/mistakes/0,15331,3885-1-18078,00.html> (accessed 24 August 2005).

10. For a more thorough discussion of apologetic arguments that rely on major reinterpretations of the Book of Mormon, see Southerton, 160–65, 192–98. For an examination of apologetic arguments that give new meaning to the term "Lamanite," see Brent L. Metcalfe, "Reinventing Lamanite Identity," *SUNSTONE* (March 2004), 20–25.

11. Writing in the 1950s, Nibley asserts that Asia was essentially unpopulated when the Jaredites migrated across the steppes approximately 4,000 years ago. There is now abundant evidence that the Siberian steppe was inhabited more than 20,000 years ago, and substantial human settlements have been found from that time period. See Ted Goebel, "Pleistocene Human Colonization and Peopling of the Americas: An Ecological Approach," *Evolutionary Anthropology* 8 (1999): 208–26. The earliest evidence of farming comes from Asia, where it appears about 10,000 years ago, and the earliest pottery was produced in Asia approximately 15,000 years ago. See Gary W. Crawford and Chen Shen, "The Origins of Rice Agriculture: Recent Progress in East Asia," *Antiquity* 72 (1998): 858–66, and Kwang-Chih Chang, *The Archaeology of Ancient China*, 4th ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986). See also Yaroslav V. Kuzmin, ed., "The Nature of the Transition from the Palaeolithic to the Neolithic in East Asia and the Pacific," which is a special issue of *Review of Archaeology* 24 (2003).

12. Southerton, 91–94.

13. Most of the leaders and many rank and file members of the Community of Christ doubt the historicity of the Book of Mormon. While still part of the canon, it is not revered as highly as it once was. See William D. Russell, "The LDS Church and Community of Christ: Clearer Differences, Closer Friends," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36 (Winter 2003): 177–90.

14. As I see it, part of the shortsightedness of this approach comes from advocates counting on a certain "fundamentalism" in Mormon ranks. For the most part, Latter-day Saints still prefer to divide the world up into straightforward, black and white categories, recognizing little "gray." Given this tendency, many apologists have realized that it doesn't take much for them to persuade their audience that they and their approach are "good" whereas critics or those who don't believe the Book of Mormon is historical are "evil." Hence they have framed the discussion that way. But isn't the matter far less clear cut than this? Wouldn't dismissing prophetic authority on the Book of Mormon and overlooking members' spiritual convictions about Lamanite ancestry be gray areas?

sented at the 3rd Annual Mormon Apologetics Conference, Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research, <http://www.fairlds.org>.

4. Quinn cites an article, Maere Reidla, et al., "Origin and Diffusion of mtDNA Haplogroup X," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 73 (2003): 1178–90, which Quinn claims, says that about 7 percent of DNA from indigenous people of the Western Hemisphere matches DNA collected from North Africa and the Middle East. The article in question, which focuses on global X lineages, does not make this claim. Instead, it argues that Native American X lineages arrived in the New World no later than 11,000 years ago and shared a common ancestor with Old World X lineages no later than 17,600 years ago.

5. Cláudia L. Dornelles, et al., "Is Haplogroup X Present in Extant South American Indians?" *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, forthcoming; published online at "Research Articles," Wiley InterScience, <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/abstract/109861152/ABSTRACT> (accessed 28 April 2004).

6. William W. Hauswirth, et al., "Inter- and Intra-population Studies of Ancient Humans," *Experientia* 50 (1994): 585–91; Anne C. Stone and Mark Stoneking, "MtDNA Analysis of a Prehistoric Oneota Population: Implications for the Peopling of the New World," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 62 (1998): 1153–70.

UPDATE

SERIES OF ARTICLES CHALLENGES LDS CLAIM TO BE “FASTEST-GROWING RELIGION”

IS MORMONISM THE FASTEST GROWING world religion? According to a *Salt Lake Tribune* report, the answer is no. A recent series of stories in the Utah newspaper notes a decline in the percentage of LDS membership and activity both worldwide and in Utah. This does not mean that the Church is not still growing—just that it is growing at a slower pace than are many other religions, including Seventh-day Adventists and Pentecostal groups such as the Assemblies of God.

According to a story by Peggy Fletcher Stack, during the 1990s, the Church's growth rate fell from 5 to 3 percent while the Seventh-day Adventist Church has reported 5 percent average growth each year since 2000. The Assemblies of God reports adding an average of 10,000 new members each day. In relatively new proselytizing areas such as Russia, LDS membership has reached 17,000, but in the same period, the rolls of the Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia have swelled to more than 140,000.

In a related story, Stack explores the correlation between the declining size of the missionary force and the lower percentage of converts. In October 2002, Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve said that “the bar that is the standard for missionary service is being raised. . . . While it is true that you can repent of sins, you may or may not qualify to serve” (SUNSTONE, December 2002, pp. 4, 75). Since this announcement, the number of missionaries has dropped from nearly 62,000 to 51,000. Stack speculates that this drop “may have contributed to the declining number of new LDS converts from about 300,000 to 241,000 in 2004.”

Retention

A PROBLEM RELATED to growth is the issue of retention—i.e., the percentage of new converts who remain active in the Church. At the 2003 Sunstone Symposium, Utah Valley State College professor David Knowlton compared the total number of members on Church rolls in Mexico and Chile with the number of people who identified themselves as Mormons in those countries' recent national censuses. His conclusion is that approximately one fourth of those who had been baptized in those countries actually consider themselves to be Latter-day Saints (Tape SL03-352; *Dialogue* 38, no. 2 [Summer 2005]: 53-78).

BYU demographer Tim Heaton and California physician and independent researcher David G. Stewart Jr. have both been working to better understand the dynamics of growth



“Fastest growing? No, no. . . We said fastest ROWING church.”

JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY HUGO OLAZ

and retention. Heaton's efforts show that activity rates differ greatly from area to area, ranging from 45 percent in North America and the South Pacific, to 35 percent in Europe and Africa, to 25 percent in Asia and Latin America. Based on these and other findings, Stewart “estimates worldwide activity at about 35 percent—which would give the church about four million active members.”

Stewart, webmaster of www.cumorah.com, a site containing demographic information and comparative studies of faith traditions within various countries, will soon be publishing a book distilling his findings, *The Law of the Harvest: Practical Principles of Effective Missionary Work*.

Utah Trends

IN ANOTHER STORY, the *Tribune's* Matt Canham obtained membership data that the Church voluntarily gives to Utah's Office of Planning and Budget. The data reveals that the percentage of Mormons in Utah has been declining steadily in the last fifteen years, from 70 percent to 62.4 percent. “If the current trends continue,” writes Canham, “LDS residents no longer will constitute a majority by 2030.”

Since most Mormons tend to be conservative and vote Republican, a demographic shift could carry significant political implications, but such change will take decades to occur. University of Utah sociologist Theresa Martinez says: “The LDS core population will always be a force here. In your lifetime, I am sure it is not going to change that much. It will probably be more diverse, but the power structures will probably remain the same.”

CHURCH CELEBRATES PRESIDENT HINCKLEY'S 95TH BIRTHDAY



Cutting his cake and eating it, too: President Hinckley at 95

WITH A PRESS CONFERENCE, A SMALL GATHERING IN the Church Administration Building, and a massive bash at the Conference Center, a youthful Gordon B. Hinckley celebrated his 95th birthday.

On 20 June, President Hinckley joked to reporters, "When you get to be my age, people look at you as if you were an artifact in a museum." In addition to the accomplishments of his ten-year administration as president of a church that gained three million members and more than doubled its number of temples, President Hinckley told reporters he has many additional projects in mind—so many he's not sure he'll have time to complete them. "I'll live as long as I can," he added, "and then cash in."

On 23 June, his actual birthday, President Hinckley received close associates at a small gathering in the Church Administration Building. Despite his diabetes, he ate a sliver of a cake prepared in his honor.

On 22 July, more than 21,000 people gathered in the Conference Center for a birthday bash entitled "A Celebration of Life." With CBS news reporter Mike Wallace as host, the concert and tribute included performances by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Orchestra at Temple Square; singers Gladys Knight, Liriel Domiciano, and Donny Osmond; and sibling Utah pianists, The 5 Browns. The International Children's Choir, with LDS missionaries from the Salt Lake City Mission and from Temple Square, sang "The Spirit of God" and filled the Conference Center's aisles and stage.

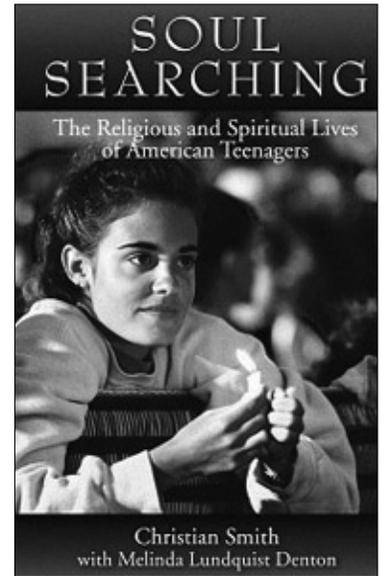
Speakers included President Hinckley's counselors, Thomas S. Monson and James E. Faust. President Faust elicited laughs from the audience when he said that "reaching the age of ninety-five with all faculties intact is absolutely remarkable."

The Conference Center and North Visitors' Center marked the anniversary by displaying some ninety photographs chronicling the life of the prophet from his childhood to his preparation for the church presidency.

LDS YOUTH RANK FIRST IN RELIGIOSITY, RESEARCHERS SAY

WILL THE YOUTH OF ZION FALTER? ABSOLUTELY NOT, say sociologists Christian Smith, Steve Vaisey, and John Bartkowski after conducting a groundbreaking study. The three researchers surveyed 3,370 pairs of parents and their teenage children across the U.S. and concluded that Mormon youth are the religious group best prepared to avoid risky behaviors such as sexual activity and drug and alcohol use. Conservative Protestants ranked second. Smith published the results of the study in a book entitled *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*.

In an event held last May at Brigham Young University, Bartkowski told the audience that LDS teenagers are more religiously devout than those of any other denomination studied. "I call it ministry on steroids," said Bartkowski, referring to the regimen of seminary program, weeknight activities, and Sunday meetings Mormon youth adhere to. He added that the LDS church is successful in transmitting beliefs to its youth because of its focus on theology (religious doctrine), history (religious heritage), and lifestyle (religious practice).



However, conservative Christians and black Protestants did outrank Mormons in some categories, especially in their high rates of belief in God. While 94 percent of conservative Protestant teenagers and 97 of black Protestant teenagers say they believe in God, the percentage of Mormon youths who claim to believe in God is a relatively lower 84 percent.

More about the study may be found at <http://www.youthandreligion.org>.

JOSEPH SMITH'S ARREST RECORDS RESURFACE

THE ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPTS, ARREST WARRANTS, AND several other documents related to the 1826 and 1830 legal proceedings involving Joseph Smith have been rediscovered and given to the LDS Church. The documents, which are related to charges about Smith's involvement with "glass looking" and being a "disorderly person," had been previously known and studied by historians but went missing in the early 1970s, taken from the basement of the Chenango County New York sheriff's office by Wesley P. Walters, a former Presbyterian pastor and author of several books challenging Mormon

claims. According to a *Newsday.com* report, Chenango County Historian Dale Storms claims that Walters' motive in taking the papers was fear for their safety. "He thought they were unsafe where they were and might be destroyed."

The documents were returned to the county by Richard Smith (no relation to Joseph Smith), whose mother, a former county historian, had kept them secreted for the past thirty years.

UTAH LAWMAKER WANTS SCHOOLS TO TEACH INTELLIGENT DESIGN

UTAH STATE SENATOR CHRIS BUTTARS CAUSED A STIR this summer when he threatened to introduce a bill that could require intelligent design to be taught in public schools.

"The divine design is a counter to the kids' belief that we all come from monkeys; because we didn't," said Buttars, who is LDS. "It shocks me that schools are teaching evolution as fact."

Buttars wanted the Utah State Board of Education to issue a statement clarifying that "there is no . . . evidence that has stood up to scientific scrutiny regarding the evolution of man from other species," but board members, with backing from Governor Jon Huntsman Jr., refused to comply.

The inclusion of intelligent design in the school curriculum is gaining momentum in several parts of the country, including Kansas, where it has been implemented statewide. Recently U.S. President George W. Bush declared that he believes teachers should explain intelligent design immediately after discussing evolution.

LDS scientists David H. Bailey, Trent D. Stephens, and Duane E. Jeffery participated in a 2005 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium panel in which they argued that intelligent design is not a scientific theory but instead the latest incarnation of creationism. Said Jeffery: "Until intelligent design can show that you can actually do science and make testable predictions, it has no business being in the science classroom" (Tape SL05-131).

FLDS COMMUNITY CONTINUES TO UNRAVEL



Fugitive FLDS president
Warren Jeffs

IN A SITUATION THAT SEEMS to mirror some of the problems that plagued the LDS Church shortly before the 1890 Manifesto, the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints faces mounting legal, financial, and image troubles. FLDS president Warren Jeffs has become a fugitive, and a Utah judge has suspended the trustees of the United Effort Plan Trust, which controls some \$150 million in FLDS assets.

Jeffs, who has not been seen

in public in nearly two years, was indicted on 9 June on charges of child abuse for sanctifying a marriage between a minor and a 28-year-old man who already had one wife. In July, the FBI added the charge of unlawful flight and joined the search for Jeffs, who is also the object of a lawsuit by disaffected former followers. Officials are offering a \$10,000 reward for information leading to his arrest.

"His hold on this community continues to hold its members, and it is time he answered to these charges in a court of law," says Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard.

On 8 July, six sheriff's cruisers and helicopters with Arizona officers descended on Colorado City, part of the FLDS enclave on the Utah-Arizona border. Eight residents were charged with marrying minors. Six of them surrendered 11 July at the Mohave County Sheriff's Office in Kingman, Arizona. A seventh was arrested, and an eighth appeared in court. Bond was set at \$2,500 for seven of the men and at \$7,500 for the eighth. All the men posted bond and were released. During that same weekend, some eighty residents showed up for a town meeting intended to clear up confusion about the court-ordered takeover of the United Effort Plan.



PHOTO: ABC NEWS

FLDS
"Lost Boy"
Sam Icke
says he
was forced
to leave his
home when
he was caught
kissing a girl.

Young men and women who were expelled or ran away from their homes in Hildale and Colorado City have received wide media attention. In May, the popular *Dr. Phil* television interview show aired an episode on "brainwashed brides," featuring Fawn Broadbent and Fawn Holm, two of the teenage girls who had fled their polygamous homes.

Other TV shows have focused on "The Lost Boys"—young men who have been expelled from the community, ostensibly because they had become competition for older polygamous men. According to an ABC News story, at least 400 teenage boys have fled or have been kicked out of their communities along the Utah-Arizona border and forbidden to return home.

Sam Icke and John Jessop are two "Lost Boys" who became outcasts and had to find new homes. Icke told ABC his father made him leave home for the offense of kissing a girl. He said that if his father had not kicked him out, his father would also have faced likely expulsion.

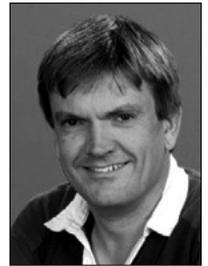
"It's hard," added Jessop, "not being able to talk to my family at all, really. I think about it all the time. I actually have a hard time sleeping because of it. . . . There's been times I wish I didn't exist. I felt alone in the world."

People

Deceased. ELDER HELVECIO MARTINS, 75, of heart problems, in Sao Paulo, Brazil, 14 May. Martins was the first and only Mormon of black descent to ever serve as an LDS general authority. Some believe that Martins's devotion to Mormonism may have been an influential factor that led President Spencer W. Kimball to seek the 1978 revelation that lifted the ban on black men holding the priesthood.



Excommunicated. Australian plant geneticist and former LDS bishop SIMON G. SOUTHERTON, who recently wrote a book on DNA and the Book of Mormon, on charges of "having an inappropriate relationship with a woman"—an affair that Southerton admits occurred two years earlier, while he and his wife were separated. After the proceedings, Southerton expressed disappointment that he had not been excommunicated for what he considered the real reason driving the action: apostasy in connection with his writings.



Deceased. RODELLO HUNTER, 85, noted Utah author, 19 August. Rodello Hunter was a born storyteller, writing with humor, remarkable clarity of style, and a rare gift for characterization and dialogue. Two of her books, *A House of Many Rooms* and *A Daughter of Zion*, both published by Knopf, are National Library selections and have been translated into several languages through the *Reader's Digest* Book Clubs. She was for many years very active in LDS women's auxiliaries and in civic affairs. In later years, although less conventionally religious, she remained intuitive and a bit of a mystic, but with a profound and unshakeable belief in a loving and compassionate God and in the power of prayer. Up to within days of her death, she was preparing for publication, *Knock*, a book about her spiritual guides.



Appointed. LDS science-fiction writer ORSON SCOTT CARD, as distinguished professor of English at Southern Virginia University, a predominantly LDS college in Buena Vista, Virginia. Besides his successful professional career, Card is a political writer whose conservative views appear in the *Rhino Times*, a Greensboro, North Carolina, paper.



Named. KIM CLARK, 56, as president of Brigham Young University-Idaho. Clark, who had been serving as dean of the Harvard Business School for the past decade, shocked colleagues when he accepted the new post this past June. "If the President of the Church did not call me . . . , we wouldn't be here," says Clark. I probably would have stayed [in Harvard] quite a bit longer." Formerly known as Rick's College, BYU-Idaho is today a four-year university with a student body of 11,200.



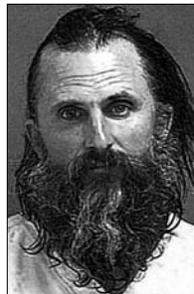
Surviving. RAFE JUDKINS, 22, on the CBS reality show, *Survivor: Guatemala*. In a video clip on the show's website, Judkins describes himself as "a gay, Mormon, Ivy League-grad wilderness guide." Affirming of the Church even though it condemns his lifestyle, Judkins says, "There are so many things about the Mormon religion that I want to bring to my life. When I have a husband and kids, I want us to have Family Home Evening on Monday nights and all get together and play board games or do whatever. I think the Mormon Church has so much good that you can take from it." *Survivor* airs Thursday nights.



Revealed. A Justice Department memo detailing how seriously DALLIN H. OAKS was considered for a 1981 vacancy on the U.S. Supreme Court. According to Bruce Fein, who was then associate deputy attorney general, Oaks and other male nominees were second-tier prospects because of Ronald Reagan's 1980 presidential campaign pledge to nominate a woman if he were elected.



Declared. Mentally incompetent to stand trial, BRIAN DAVID MITCHELL, 51, the alleged kidnapper of then-14-year-old Elizabeth Smart. It is believed that Mitchell kidnapped Elizabeth in order to take her as a polygamous wife. "My satisfaction will be seeing him behind bars, not back out on the street to hurt anyone again," said Elizabeth's father Ed. "If he wants to be the way he is, so be it, and let him waste away in a mental hospital."



Sentenced. Returned LDS missionary MARK HACKING, 29, to six years to life in prison for killing his wife Lori Soares. The Hacking case received wide media attention when Soares disappeared in July 2004.

AS CHRIST FAILS TO APPEAR, TLC MEMBERS SUE CHURCH

A UTAH COURT OF APPEALS REVIVED A CASE BROUGHT by two former members of a Mormon polygamist sect who were promised land and a face-to-face meeting with Jesus Christ.

In 2002, Kaziah May Hancock and Cindy Stewart sued the True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of the Saints of the Last Days, claiming they were not compensated for \$265,766 they had donated to the Church. The women say church founder James D. Harmston had promised them land as well as membership in the “Church of the Firstborn,” whose members would be privileged to see Christ face-to-face. None of the promises materialized.



PAINTING: WWW.POLYGAIBOOKS.COM

PAINTING OF JOSEPH SMITH AND JAMES D. HARMSTON
TLC founder Harmston claims he is Smith reincarnated.

An attorney for Harmston argued that the promises are rooted in church doctrine instead of being understood as a business contract. Also, Utah law requires a written contract for agreements related to property, attorney Kevin Bond said. He added that the promises were not to be fulfilled by Harmston, but by God.

A local judge threw out the original lawsuit the two women brought, but now a court of appeals says some of the claims include secular alleged wrongs and the case should therefore move forward.

The Manti-based True and Living Church is a polygamous sect with some 300 members.

SIGNATURE BOOKS LAUNCHES ONLINE LIBRARY

IN A DEVELOPMENT THAT IS SURE TO DELIGHT historians and students of Mormon history, Signature Books has launched a new website that makes some of its titles available online free of charge. So far the collection includes three



Neither White nor Black is one of the Signature Books classics now available online.

titles originally published in the 1980s: *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History* (1986), *Establishing Zion: The Mormon Church in the American West, 1847-1860* (1988), and *Neither White Nor Black: Mormon Scholars Confront the Race Issue in a Universal Church* (1984). The collection is expected to grow to eventually include most of Signature Books' out-of-print titles.

The new site also has a section with essays about basic LDS topics such as the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, Mormon Polygamy, and Mormon Temples.

To visit the online library, go to <www.signaturebookslibrary.org>.

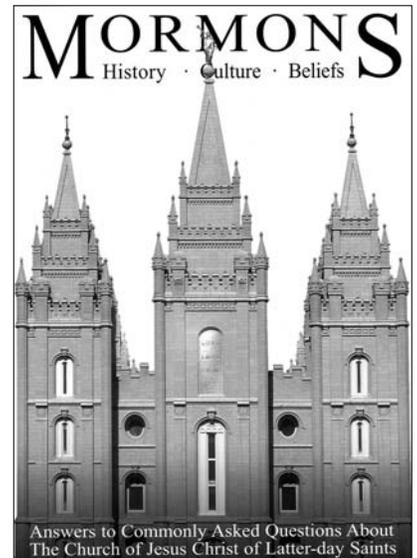
NEW BOOK GIVES BASIC LDS FACTS— BOTH SUBLIME AND SILLY

WITH FULL COLOR illustrations and art by *Salt Lake Tribune* cartoonist Pat Bagley, a new book, *Mormons: History, Culture, Belief* provides a fun introduction to Mormonism, answering some of the questions most commonly asked about Latter-day Saints.

The \$13.95, 48-page guide is informative and entertaining, striking a balance between the basic facts of LDS doctrine and peculiar facets of Mormon culture.

The section on culture and folklore, for instance, includes an explanation about green Jell-O, a recipe for Mormon muffins, a brief introduction to Mormons in the movies, a picture of a CTR ring, and an explanation about the Three Nephites.

For ordering or additional information, go to www.utah-whitehorse-books.com.



Whether it's for Mormon doctrine or dessert recipes, Mormons: History, Culture, Belief is a fun guide.

Celluloid Watch

NAPOLEON DYNAMITE
PHENOMENON CONTINUES TO GROW



IF YOU DIDN'T BELIEVE THAT A clean, independently produced, teenage comedy made by Mormons could become a cultural icon, think again. As a case in point, in June, a crowd of 3,000 fans gathered in Preston, Idaho, for the 2005 *Napoleon Dynamite* Festival, celebrating the 2004 blockbuster shot in this small southern Idaho town, population 5,000. Organized by the

Preston Chamber of Commerce, the event included a *Napoleon Dynamite* look-alike competition held at the school where parts of the film had been shot. The Deseret Industries store where Napoleon buys his odd prom suit became a tourist attraction for the duration of the festival.

Hot Topic, a retailer that sells *Napoleon Dynamite* merchandise, includes on its website more than 150 Napoleon-themed products, from the now-ubiquitous "Vote for Pedro" T-shirt to a tiny "Liger" G-string. (A liger is a cross-breed of a male lion and female tiger which in the movie Napoleon claims is "pretty much my favorite animal.")

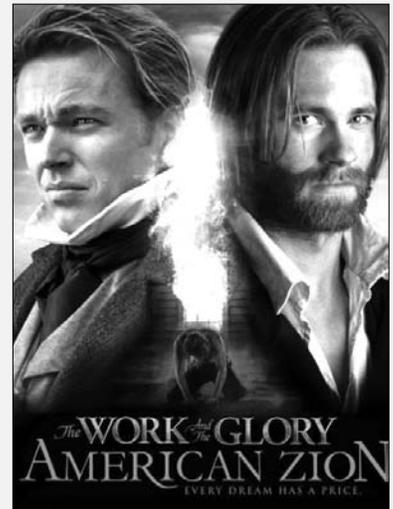
There is also evidence that the *Napoleon* phenomenon extends far beyond the Mormon Corridor. In Colorado, an evangelical Christian ministry sent out a primer on how to connect the film to Jesus's message. At Boston College, an a

cappella group has recreated the "Happy Hands Club" and imitates the movie's sign-language performance of Bette Midler's "The Rose." The film has also affected language, with some teenagers adding the word "friggin'" and the exclamations, "Gosh!" and "flippin' sweet!" to almost every sentence. Sources also report that llama owners are now proudly christening their pets "Tina."

Made on a \$400,000 budget, *Napoleon Dynamite* has grossed more than \$45 million at the box office alone. Borrowing a phrase from the movie, that's what we call a "sweet ride."

THE WORK AND THE GLORY
MOVES FORWARD

ALTHOUGH STILL waiting to financially break even on Part One, LDS businessman Larry Miller continues to fund the film adaptations of Gerald Lund's multi-volume pioneer epic *The Work and the Glory*. Part One, which debuted last November, made \$3.2 million at the box office—less than half of what it cost to make. Part Two is expected to be released



before Thanksgiving, and Part Three will be released next year. Production of Parts Two and Three included fifty-five days of filming in Tennessee, upstate New York, and Utah.

Miller, who confesses that producing *The Work and the Glory* is more a labor of love than a profitable business venture, still expects to break even through strong DVD sales of Part One, which was released this past May. "The early orders on the DVD will exceed [that of] any other LDS film," he said.

Miller has also announced the formation of his own company, Vineyard Productions, to handle the distribution of the films.

The trailer for Part Two is available at <www.americanzion.com>.



"Honey, I know you're a fan and all, but for the last time, are you sure you want to name him Napoleon Dynamite Jacobson? I mean, GOSH!"

JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY HUGO DUIZ

AN OLIVE LEAF

“THIS EXCHANGE OF LOVE”

By Marion D. Hanks

The publication of the new biography of President David O. McKay by Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright (see review, page 65) has brought renewed attention to McKay's life and style of ministry. The following short reflection by Elder Marion D. Hanks, an emeritus member of the Seventy, is excerpted from the collection of gospel messages gathered in his *The Gift of Self* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1974), 217–22.

IT IS SAID THAT A GREAT man is “one of those rare souls who sees sermons in stones and books in brooks, and the bright light of God over everything. Across a reverently gay and gentle lifetime he has had eyes to see and ears to hear music which most of us miss.” It could be as well, and maybe better, said of President McKay than of any other man. . . .

Would you hear a brief statement of the purpose of life from his own writings:

The true end of life is not mere existence, not pleasure, not fame, not wealth. The true purpose of life is the perfection of humanity through individual effort under the guidance of God's inspiration. Real life is response to the best within us. To be alive only to appetites, pleasure, pride, money-making, and not to goodness, and kindness, purity and love, poetry and music, flowers, stars, God and eternal hopes, is to deprive one's self of the real joy of living.

In the clarity of his vision, the keenness of his intellect, the scope of his knowledge, the depth of his wisdom, David O. McKay stands a paragon. Poets, philosophers, prophets, all are within his ken—their thoughts stored in his memory through hours invested and hard labors performed. His per-



ceptive mind, his noble character, his generous nature have translated, refined, applied, made wisdom the amalgam of his learning and his love. To him the words of a friend seem particularly appropriate: “I gave it and gave it and gave it until it was mine.” . . .

HOW WELL PRESIDENT McKay has applied his ideals, fleshed in their skeleton, breathed into them the spirit of life! His ministry and his life are eloquent answer. Rather than describe, let me illustrate with [an incident] from my own experience.

I was leaving for Vietnam shortly before the Christmas season. I had a brief interview with President McKay to receive a message he wanted carried to our men in the bush and the rice paddy. He kept me longer than I had intended, anxious to hear, apparently, my plans and

prospects for this mission. Interestingly, he didn't commiserate with me or sympathize a bit when he learned that the projected absence might involve the holiday season away from my family. What he said was, “What a wonderful privilege for you to be going!”

When we were through, that great hand reached out and touched me lightly on the knee, and he said something that seemed to me to summarize the glory of his ministry and a noble lifetime. “Tell them of this exchange of love,” he said. “Tell them of this exchange of love.”

It was not the words of love to which he was referring, but the sweetness and beauty of the feeling in his heart, which I'm sure he knew was reciprocated in my own. I wonder if that isn't really what life is all about—to have the capacity to feel and the strength to communicate, to exchange love. ☺

EUGENE ENGLAND MEMORIAL PERSONAL ESSAY CONTEST



THE SUNSTONE EDUCATION FOUNDATION invites writers to enter the 2006 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 at the 2006 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 postmarked) to Sunstone by 30 JANUARY 2006. Entries will not be returned. A \$5 fee must accompany *each* entry.

Call for entries!



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, 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 May 2003, July 2003, October 2003, March 2004, May 2004, July 2004, and May 2005 issues of *SUNSTONE*.

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PEDESTALS & PODIUMS

UTAH WOMEN, RELIGIOUS
AUTHORITY & EQUAL RIGHTS

MARTHA SONNTAG BRADLEY



PEDESTALS & PODIUMS:

Utah Women, Religious Authority & Equal Rights

by Martha Sonntag Bradley

"Bradley has written a page turner of a book! Using Utah as a case study, she demonstrates with admirable objectivity the clash of forces at work, identifying the economic realities, religious influences, political conservatism, and radical and moderate feminism that did battle on the field of women's rights. This is a book to be trusted."

—MAUREEN URSENBACH BEECHER,
Brigham Young University, emerita; general editor of the *Life Writings of Frontier Women* series,
Utah State University Press

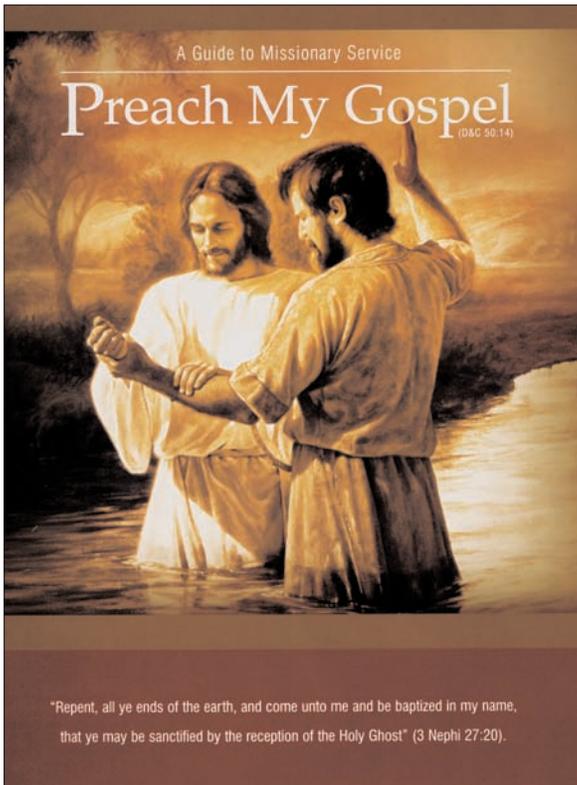
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