

A GOSPEL-CENTERED THERAPY: AN INTERVIEW WITH CARLFRED BRODERICK

Carlfred Broderick, therapist, author, professor, sexologist and raconteur (as well as sometime guest on the Johnny Carson Show), is also a stake president, the father of eight children and a witty observer of Mormon life. His frank and helpful books on marriage and family are deservedly popular: Couples: How to Confront Problems and Maintain Loving Relationships (Simon and Schuster) and Marriage and the Family (Prentice-Hall). Dr. Broderick was interviewed for Dialogue by Ruth Stanfield Rees, Maureen Derrick Keeler and Dialogue's former editor, Robert A. Rees.

Dialogue: Do you use gospel principles in your counseling?

Broderick: I do, first, because gospel principles are subconsciously integrated into my thinking, and second, because they are principles other people can accept and act upon even though they don't understand the ultimate source. Many non-members have discovered the truth of them independently. I'm impressed with how many people in my profession are using the same principles of therapy the gospel would dictate: If you're nice to each other, that works better; if you're true to each other, that works better. Those are universal principles and Mormons have no copyright on them.

I also employ gospel principles that are not in general use. For example, I've often said to patients: "There's a Mormon scripture that may help you. It says, 'There is a law irrevocably decreed before the foundations of this world upon which all blessings are predicated, and whenever you receive any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.' Now, you're just not obeying the laws of getting well. And you're not going

to get well until you do." And they say, "That's a neat scripture!" I've never had anybody resist it yet. I have on occasion given blessings to non-members. I have given them to members more often. When I give a blessing as part of the therapy, I don't charge for the session, because I would consider it simony. I've given nonmembers blessings in situations where I've felt they were of a mind to appreciate and receive them. Because they're not used to the experience, the blessing often sticks with them more than it does with a member. Those who are not accustomed to the spirit remember and later quote the blessings back to me, saying they were turning points in their therapy. So I use the gospel more directly if I think it'll be received.

Dialogue: You seem to have a good deal of confidence in your profession as a whole. Isn't this an unusual attitude for a Latter-day Saint psychotherapist? Often in the Church one hears considerable criticism of psychotherapy.

Broderick: Well, caution is warranted. That's why people in or out of the Church ought to use the spirit of discernment when seeking a therapist, to discern whether this person's values are compatible with their own. Frankly, I would rather have a highly competent, honorable non-Latter-day Saint counselor than an unskilled or incompetent Latter-day Saint counselor.

Dialogue: Would you care to comment on what you think the general state of the art is among Latter-day Saint counselors, both within the church Social Services as well as among other practicing psychotherapists?

Broderick: The church Social Services system is terrifically overburdened. The director of the Southern California division told me that they could triple their staff and still not meet the need. As a result, they employ some who are scantily trained. I think we're fortunate that more bad things don't happen in Social Services because of the enormous range in training.

Two things please me about Social Services counseling, though. One is that the Church sees the need for trained people to augment family, priesthood leaders and Relief Society leaders, friends and neighbors. It also pleases me to know that even scantily trained people can be helpful with a wide range of problems even though they probably don't handle the more difficult ones well. Most of us can be helped by someone who'll just listen to our problems.

Dialogue: Do you think that the Church will ever move to a point where those people who are entrusted with the ecclesiastical and spiritual counseling will receive professional training?

Broderick: I give a lot of thought to that because I'm a stake president myself and have the responsibility for training bishops in my stake. I've trained bishops throughout the Church in afternoon workshops by invitation of other stake presidents. And I see the Church moving toward training tapes and films on listening and counseling, to get basic principles across.

It is the Church's position that ecclesiastical leaders ought to operate by inspiration. They ought to open themselves to the keys that they have that a counselor doesn't have. The two are different functions. If the bishop tries to be a counselor, then he may fail through lack of skill. But if he exercises his keys as bishop and judge in Israel, he can be effective in doing the things that a counselor can't do. But he can't do some things that the counselor can do. He needs to understand the special role and function of a counselor.

I have the privilege of being both, so I can switch from one role to the other in my own stake. There are some things I can do as a stake president that I can't do as a counselor, because as a stake president the person I'm talking to and I both understand that I have a revelatory relationship toward him. And I have said to some, including on occasion to non-Mormon Christians, "I want to tell you something in the name of Jesus Christ that is true. And you'll be held accountable for what I tell you." And then I tell them what by inspiration I feel they need to do. I've had people that were so resistant to therapy be touched by the spirit where the spirit, just like in missionary work, bore witness of what I said.

That's why I sometimes use blessings when I feel stuck. The Spirit of the Lord can cut through and get right to the core of a problem in a way that a counselor has a hard time doing. I honor the priesthood, and I don't think it will ever be replaced by professional counseling although it can be augmented by it. A bishop doesn't have time to deal with endless compulsions and obsessions.

Dialogue: Isn't there some confusion about that, though? Doesn't a bishop generally feel that he is supposed to be the solver of all problems and therefore spend considerable time dealing with neurotic and psychotic character disorder behavior? And because of the very problem you've described, he gets himself in trouble and still doesn't really help the people.

Broderick: Yes, that's true. The biggest mistake he's liable to make is giving advice that comes out of his own personal experience, without inspiration or sophistication. I often wince when I hear what someone's bishop told him about a problem. Of course we tend not to hear of the thousands of instances when bishops were right on target.

Dialogue: What solutions do you see for the problem where there is an increasing need for sound therapeutic services, and the Church is trying to provide these but apparently without a high degree of success?

Broderick: There are two strategies that the Church has used and will use more in the future. One is to take a traditionally non-therapeutic approach to solving problems that differs from the therapeutic approach. President Kimball, Elder Packer, Elder Ashton and others have suggested that we use a therapeutic model based on gospel principles. You know: "Homosexuality is selfishness." Well, a therapist might have said narcissistic, but it's the same

thing. And if you can use principles of gospel commitment to help somebody change their behavior or get a new insight on their behavior from the pulpit, that's terrific, and it does work that way sometimes.

The other thing they're trying to do is develop a therapy based on findings of the Values Institute at BYU. Allen Bergin and Victor Brown, Jr. are trying to develop what amounts to a gospel therapy—a therapy that is based on gospel principles and integrated with the gospel—and then teach that in and out of the Church. I don't know what luck they'll have out of the Church; they are more optimistic about that than I am. But in the Church, both bishops and therapists can benefit from pooling their respective experience as to what really works, integrating the best of both. The Church is investing considerable money in trying to develop a gospel therapy that will reach our people without challenging their faith. So those two things are happening, and I'm excited about them both. How effective they'll be, I can't say. I think the brethren know what they're doing in this area. For example, I don't find Elder Packer out of line on this at all. While some many feel that he's anti-therapy, most of the things he's said about therapy are true; for instance, that people tend to enter therapy for a spiritual handout because they aren't willing to work with their bishops or their spiritual leaders—or, I would add, their therapists—for true spiritual change. I train my counselors at USC to see therapy as a joint effort, a cooperative measure. The job of the therapist is to coach while the patient does the work.

I know people who have been in therapy for ten years, and they've spent all that time analyzing their dreams and reviewing their childhood. They never talk about how they ought to behave differently right now. I don't consider that sound therapy or consistent with the gospel. I'm not dissatisfied at all with the attitude of the Brethren toward the issues of the profession.

Dialogue: Earlier you mentioned the work of Allen Bergin and Victor Brown at the BYU Values Institute. Some of your thinking seems parallel to theirs. Is this just a coincidence, or have you discussed these ideas with them?

Broderick: My thinking just happens to coincide with theirs. These ideas and concepts seem to have been independently discovered by a number of people. In fact, the first time I sat down and talked to the people at the Values Institute about these things, they asked me what I considered were the gospel principles that apply to therapy, and when I gave my answer they just looked at each other, and Truman Madsen said, "This isn't fair. We've been hammering away at this for six months and he comes in with the package all ready."

But this illustrates that the principles are not that elusive. I believe they're spelled out in the scriptures. For example, I consider the best marriage manual in the world the twelfth chapter of Romans coupled with the 121st section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Nothing that I've written or that anybody else has written improves on those two scriptures. And the first five verses of the seventh chapter of I Corinthians, with a little help from Solomon, is a terrific guide to sexuality. The gospel principles are there, and it's not surprising that they're discovered similarly by spiritually sensitive therapists.

Dialogue: You see a number of LDS couples in your total practice. Can you make any generalizations about LDS couples in relation to non-LDS couples?

Broderick: I see many LDS couples. Perhaps people will not be pleased to know that I cannot discern the difference between Latter-day Saint couples and non-Latter-day Saint couples in terms of their problems. Latter-day Saint couples have different resources for dealing with some of those problems, but they have exactly the same power struggles, exactly the same vicious cycles, exactly the same problems with fidelity or infidelity, exactly the same problems over money or in-laws or the children or the expectations they have of each other or feelings that the other was selfish or frigid or oversexed or whatever. One time a good member of the Church came up to me with a copy of my book, *Couples*, and wanted me to sign it. I asked him if he had had a chance to look at it. He's an awfully good man and holds a responsible position in the Church. He said, "Well, I've had a chance to look through several of the chapters. I didn't think I really needed to read the chapter on sex." And his wife turned to him and said, "You need to read that chapter worse than any other chapter in the book."

I found that absolutely delightful, and I feel that it's generally true that people in the Church are not spared any of the common ills of marriages. I'm not sure if that's true because they aren't using the gospel principles they know, or why. Maybe it's just that God never promised us a rose garden. But whatever it is, I can't tell the difference.

Dialogue: Doesn't that surprise you?

Broderick: Not any more. It used to.

Dialogue: If you can't discern a difference in the kinds of problems people have, what about the resources for dealing with these problems? Can you generalize about whether or not it is easier to deal with Latter-day Saint couples? Are Latter-day Saint couples more successful in therapy because of the gospel background?

Broderick: I'm not sure. I've never undertaken a study to determine whether they are or not. You know, some people—Mormons and non-Mormons—are tough no matter how much you love them and no matter how long you work with them. They just can't seem to break out of the vicious cycles they're in. Others get better in a short time, whether they're in the Church or not.

But there are some things that a therapist can do with church members that he can't do with nonmembers. You can have the husband give his wife a blessing. That's a powerful thing because it is capable of breaking a vicious cycle. It's a serving and loving thing for him to do. It's a powerful, strong thing for him to do. To put himself in the position to give her a blessing changes the relationship for that moment and helps the couple to break out of the negative, antagonistic bind they are in.

Another example of what you can do with LDS couples is have them go to the temple and stand in the prayer circle together. I'm not altogether sure why this helps, but generally it is a powerful thing for couples to do.

If I am working with a Latter-day Saint husband who is domineering and exercising his priesthood unrighteously over his wife, I read the 121st section of the Doctrine and Covenants to him, and he has no defense against it. That's a power that as a therapist I don't have with a non-Mormon.

Or if I am counseling a Mormon woman who grew up in a family where she was badly treated, perhaps even sexually molested, and as a result she has turned away from her sexuality, I can talk to her about her sexual stewardship: "How are you enlarging this part of your life? What are your goals? How have you taken the talents and potentials that your Heavenly Father has given you in this area and enlarged them?" This is a whole new way—it's a gospel way—of looking at a problem, and if I can touch her with the spirit so that she understands and feels the importance of that stewardship, she has a whole new way of dealing with it.

As a therapist I try to connect my patients with their Father in Heaven. That's a very valuable thing to do.

Dialogue: It seems from what you have just said that the ability to connect LDS patients with the resources of the gospel would make a difference in their ability to work through problems, and yet earlier you said that you couldn't really say that there was a difference between Mormons and non-Mormons.

Broderick: Well, upon reflection I guess those seem like powerful instruments. But since I've never studied it empirically, I'm reluctant to say they work much better. Certainly with a Latter-day Saint couple, it's faster getting started, because I can assume more things, and so I suppose it's faster with them. But I have pretty good luck with people who aren't Latter-day Saints, too. It's true I'm handicapped to some extent with them; there are some things I can't do with them that I can with Latter-day Saints. I guess on reflection there probably is a stronger intervention with Latter-day Saints.

Dialogue: The divorce rate among Latter-day Saints with temple marriages indicates that we're doing better than the general population in terms of holding couples together.

Broderick: That's true. One of my students is currently doing a study on this. He finds that the ratio of Melchizedek priesthood holders to members and to the general population in a given area in Utah (he compared Utah County with Weber County) is a very good indicator of separation, divorce and illegitimacy rates, all indicators of marital breakup. So although Utah has a fairly high divorce rate, it's not among active Latter-day Saints. Provo has one of the lowest divorce rates in the world. Only the Vatican has a lower divorce rate, but they don't have a very high marriage rate either!

Dialogue: Is such a low divorce rate a mixed blessing? While there are obviously many positive things that come with strong commitment to temple marriage, do some stay in unfulfilling marriages simply because of the temple? Does this increase the incidence of serious marital problems?

Broderick: Well, for some, the commitment itself probably motivates them to resolve problems, but I'm sure it's also true that some people feel trapped in a marriage, and things get worse and worse.

Dialogue: Some may feel that if they get a divorce then they not only have the disapproval of the Church, but of God and of their family as well. These are strong deterrents.

Broderick: They are, although it's well to remember that we do permit divorce. It's possible in the Church to get a divorce and have your bishop on your side when you get it, although he's not supposed to recommend it. There are people in the Church who, because they're battered wives or subject to adultery or other kinds of abuse, get the support of priesthood leaders and others in their divorces. So there is such a thing as a Mormon-supported divorce. But then we tend not to support the person once he or she is divorced. We're not very good at that. We're more supportive of their getting a divorce than we are of what to do next. I don't know what the solution is but the life of the single person, men and women, in the Church is still sad. We do better than we used to, but it's hard to find solutions. You talk to them and their cause is just, but we can do nothing for them. I get a lot of invitations to talk to them, and I always talk about pain and how you deal with it, because it's really hard to live a chaste and fulfilling life if you're a single Mormon.

Dialogue: In your recent book, *Couples*, you indicate that you don't feel it's a particularly good idea for couples to come in for periodic marital maintenance checkups.

Broderick: I don't. It's too intrusive. One of the virtues of a marriage is its intimacy. If you violate that, either by telling all your business to your friends and relatives or to a marriage counselor, it taxes your relationship, and it ought to be done only under serious circumstances.

Dialogue: At what point should a couple come in for counseling, say a couple with a temple marriage?

Broderick: When they are caught in a vicious cycle, where the harder they try the worse things get, or when the pain is so great that the only solution they can really see is to get out of the relationship, and they feel there must be some alternative to that, and they want to explore whether there is or not. I think that is a time to get help.

I remember one time seeing a couple who had been having sexual problems. At the beginning of one session I asked, "Well, how did sex go this

week?" The wife replied, "I don't want to talk about it." I asked, "Was it that bad?" "No," she responded, "it was that good." I said, "Great! I will be happy when we have nothing to talk about at all, when everything is so good you don't want to talk about it." And that's the way I feel about it. I want to be excluded. I don't want to be part of their relationship. I want to be excluded from their relationship just as soon as possible—to get in and do the job and get out as fast as I can.

Dialogue: This confirms the reputation you have as a short-term therapist. Why do you work with people for short periods of time when the majority of therapists work with them for periods of months or even years?

Broderick: For exactly the same reason that we have short-term welfare instead of long-term welfare: to get people back to solving their own problems, not to become part of their lives. My job is to diagnose what small changes I can make to return them to their own stewardships. For example, a man came in one time who had been a regional representative. I stopped at one point and said, "You shouldn't be seeing me." "What do you mean?" he asked. I replied, "With your spiritual experience, you should be counseled by the Lord, You're coming in for terrestrial or telestial counseling and you ought to be getting celestial counseling. You know how to do it and you're not exercising it here. I have valuable service to render, but you're coming in for second class help when you've got first class help available." I saw him later and asked, "How are you doing?" He said, "Why should I tell second class help?"

Dialogue: Do you feel there is anything in Mormon culture that makes it difficult for people to seek counseling when they need it?

Broderick: Yes, two things. The first is a grave mistrust of therapists in general, which is not altogether unfounded, because there are counselors out there who are hostile to the values of the Church. Secondly, we are a people who like to be self-sustaining. We're told to be self-sustaining, to solve our own problems and not go running elsewhere for help, financial or otherwise. Both of these operate against people coming in for help.

Dialogue: You tend to prefer to work with couples and, as we indicated earlier, on a short-term basis. Do you ever work with individuals and over a sustained period of time?

Broderick: At times. When I see the pain that some individuals are in and how badly they function and the degree of their depression, I can't turn my back on them. It is a more powerful intervention to see them as couples or families, but I see some patients individually. I don't feel I'm doing therapy with them; I am just someone who listens to them. My job, of course, is to get them to a place where they don't have to pay somebody an hour a week to be their friend. There are many isolated people who have never developed the skills

or the self-confidence to function well in life, and I would not want to make a categorical statement that such people shouldn't be in long-term supportive therapy.

I don't advise or support the kind of long-term therapy which is narcissistic, where you spend all your time examining your motives, examining everything everybody says to you—where you're so busy examining your life that you don't live it. That analytic model is a terrific way of finding out about people, but it's not a good form of therapy, in my opinion. I've seen people wasting what seems to me years and years of their hope and life in it without change. But there are lost souls that it doesn't seem to me you can say shouldn't have individual therapy. Until they find something better, therapy may be a great help to these people. I have clients that I've seen off and on for little bursts of time through crises for years. They don't seem to have anybody in their lives to perform that function. That seems a legitimate service for me to perform.

Dialogue: The issue of Mormons seeking professional counseling is one of the major issues that emerged from the television program on "Depression and Mormon Women." Have you seen it?

Broderick: Yes. I think it was a landmark piece of LDS mental health journalism, but I gather that it got all kinds of responses, both negative and positive. For example, it was reported to me that a faculty member at Ricks wanted to show it and an administrator wouldn't let him. It was finally negotiated that he was able to show it under controlled circumstances.

Apparently some people were threatened by it because they felt that we ought to be a missionary church, we shouldn't show the soft underbelly, but rather the strengths, the happy family. But that approach does a disservice to people. For example, I know a Latter-day Saint woman who had been sexually abused by her father and her grandfather, and who at the age of fourteen finally had the courage in a Sunday School class—they were talking about the commandment to honor your father and mother—to raise her hand and ask, "But what if they want you to do something bad?" And the teacher said, "Oh, your parents would never want you to do anything bad. Parents only want what's good for their children." That was a grave disservice to that young woman.

There needs to be acknowledgement that everybody doesn't have good parents, that not all mothers are wonderful to their children, that not all marriages are good. There needs to be room in the Church for people to understand that.

Lavina Fielding Anderson is someone who writes that way in the *Ensign*. Her honesty is a fresh breath of air. People tell me after reading one of her articles, "Oh, it's so good to hear somebody who's open and honest, who writes about real people and real problems. I'm beginning to feel there is a place for me in the Church. I have been wondering why I'm the only one who has these problems and everybody else is so sweet." It's important to look at life realistically, not always idealize it.

Dialogue: Do you ever feel that you give into the temptation to idealize your own marriage and family?

Broderick: Well, as it turns out, I have an exceptional family and I can't deny that. Also, I value the privacy of my family. I don't think it serves the family well to expose our problems publicly, although, as you know, I do talk about them, but not without permission. A couple of times I really made myself unpopular by using an object lesson from something that had happened in my own family that I felt was benign but that made the person involved feel exposed.

I remember one time an article in *Newsweek* quoted a throw-away line about one of my kids who was in fourth grade, and he was humiliated. After that my wife would say, "Careful what you say at the table, children. It'll be splashed all over *Newsweek* next week." And so I try to be more careful.

Dialogue: And she really does not complain about your being gone so much, about your giving so much time and energy to others?

Broderick: No, she really never complains about my not being home more. She's very supportive. Also she's an intelligent, independent-minded woman. There's no issue of dominance between us. One time early in our marriage I forbade her to do something that she wasn't enjoying doing. She was all tied up in this organization that was just tearing her to pieces with expectations because they weren't used to having a Mormon who did everything. And so all the different committees were asking her to do things, and she was just going crazy. I said, trying to be helpful, "This is ridiculous. You're not getting out of this organization what you were hoping to get out of it. I forbid you to have anything more to do with it." And she said, "You what?" And I said, "I forbid you to—" and she said, "Let me understand this. Is that just a suggestion or is that an order?" Well, I decided very quickly that it was just suggestion. I don't second-guess her in her decisions and she doesn't second-guess me in mine. We have divided all the decisions in the world between us and so we negotiate.

We don't agree on everything. There are times when we have differences in style. She's a worrier and I'm not a worrier, and she wishes I would get more upset about some things, and I wish she would get less upset about some things, but that's it. We don't leave the house or storm out.

Dialogue: Do you feel our propensity in the Church to have lots of activities puts pressure on families and causes stress?

Broderick: Yes, I do, and we've got to protect our families from that stress, and not be afraid of doing so. I feel an obligation to protect my kids and my wife from excessive demands. When the bishop checks with me, as he's supposed to before he calls one of them, I won't hesitate to say, "I really don't think this is a good time for that." So I think that we have some obligation to protect our families.

Often these calls aren't coordinated through anyone. These different calls are coming from different directions, not only position calls but telephone calls asking someone to fix a casserole or to do this or that or the other. Those asking aren't always aware of the fact that you may be preparing the choir to sing a special program or getting a talk ready for Sacrament meeting or that something is weighing heavily upon you, such as an illness in the family. Generally, they don't ask about these things when they ask you to come to the inventory or fix a casserole or bake four dozen cookies for the open house. They just have a list of people they're going through. Under those circumstances I'm very supportive of someone saying no. I won't say "No" to a definite call, but prior to that there are many points of communicating about over-extension.

Elder Packer said something to me when he set me apart which I appreciated. He said, "Now there will come times when you will have conflicts between your family and your stake calling. You can always delegate things in the stake to your counselors, but there's no way you can delegate your role as father and husband."

Dialogue: In one of your recent talks you spoke about the pressures on Mormon women. Could you elaborate on that?

Broderick: Mormon women have enormous pressures on them. They face high expectations as wives and mothers, and they have high standards in terms of spirituality and church participation. But beyond that, they're supposed to have gardens, to can their own fruit and bake their own bread, to do their genealogy work and to fellowship new members, to have the missionaries in for dinner and their neighbors in for dinner. People have studied the role of a bishop and found that it's not possible for a bishop to do more than about half of the things that he's expected to do in a week. I'm sure the same thing is true of women in the Church. As a stake president and as a father and husband we are expected to make righteous choices in relation to the times and seasons of our lives. For example, the time when your children are young may not be the best time to do your genealogy work. I tell women that they ought to make judgments about what their priorities ought to be in a given time and place, and further, that they are perfectly within their rights in letting people know what those priorities are. They don't always get much understanding for that from Church, but in my stake they do. I support my own family in doing that, and encourage the members of my stake to do the same.

Dialogue: You're suggesting that there's a real need for women to take more initiative in getting the pressures off themselves?

Broderick: Yes, to define their own space, righteously. Within the wide range of things we are all expected or called upon to do, to decide which are most important and to do those. As Ecclesiastes reminds us, there's a time for

everything under the sun. Well, we don't give much support to that concept in the Church because we're afraid we're going to say "No" too often. But for the right reasons, people should say "No." Again, not to callings. For me, those are different, because I have covenanted to make all my talents available to the Lord.

But if I am called, I will ask such questions as, "Are you aware of these circumstances? Are you aware that my wife's been sick, that we're moving in three months, and that I already have six jobs?" If he replies, "Yes, we've taken all that into consideration and we feel inspired to call you," I might further ask, "Have you prayed about this?" I might even ask, "Would you pray and fast with me about this, because I certainly won't turn it down, but I need to feel good about it." But I will never say "No" to the Lord because I've already said "Yes" to him and I can't see how I can pick and choose and still be honorable. But there are many things that aren't calls, that are just church pressures, such as the pressures to go to a church supper: "I didn't see you at the church supper last Friday." "Well, no, one of my children was in a play at school." "Well, you didn't make the one last month either." "No. Last month I was out of town." Those pressures don't bother me at all. I just smile and say, "Well, church suppers aren't high on my list of things to do." And I don't let anybody intimidate me into doing them.

Dialogue: In the special issue of *Dialogue* on the family (Vol. II, No. 3), you and Lowell Bennion seemed to have different points of view about the place of sex in the eternal scheme of things. Lowell Bennion challenged your assertion that there would be sex in the next life.

Broderick: Actually, he tried to get me to cut that out of the article, but I refused to do it and, as I remember, I had to resist some pressure from the editors also. Lowell was concerned that we don't know very much about sex in the next world, that we ought to let well enough alone and just talk about sex in this world. It may be that we don't know very much about it, but I think we know enough about it to discuss it. I feel that the great symbol of our sexual stewardship is found in Genesis 2:7, where Adam and Eve, upon discovering their nakedness, make an apron of fig leaves. To me that fig leaf apron is a vivid symbol of sexual stewardship. On the one hand it's an apron, a covering, and as such represents modesty, chastity, fidelity and privacy. On the other hand, it's alive: it's green, it's living, it's fertile. It represents motion. It's not white or black, it's green. And I feel that in our sexual stewardship we have those two components. In the Church we're much better at emphasizing the privacy, chastity and fidelity than we are the life and vitality that are also integral to our sexual stewardships. In Mormon doctrine sexuality is good as long as it conforms with gospel principles.

It's interesting that the brethren have added a significant new question in the temple recommend interview: "Is there anything unholy, unnatural or worthy of repentance in your intimate relationship with your spouse?" This suggests to me not only that some things are unholy, but that some are holy

in a sexual relationship, that there is a purpose and a higher design to sexual expression. Most couples don't even see that as a stewardship. When I ask them, "What have you done to perfect your sexual stewardship?" most people give me a blank stare. They don't have any idea of what I am talking about. As long as they haven't transgressed sexually, they feel fine. They don't have any idea of how to set goals sexually or how to perfect that unity of body and spirit that Paul talks about.

And I perceive from everything the scriptures say, from the first words said to Adam and Eve—to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, to fill the earth—that our generativity is one of the chief parts of our stewardship. But it's not the only part. The other part is unity. We know a lot about unity and about generativity. The gospel's shot through with those two themes. "If ye are not one, ye are not mine," and so on. (It is interesting that for the early church fathers sexual unity between a husband and wife was a primary symbol of man's union with God.) I suspect that those two components, unity and generativity, will be elements of our sexuality forever in the celestial kingdom, although we aren't told that explicitly. The silence in the scriptures about these things should not be interpreted negatively, in my opinion. Everything that we do know about our sexuality and about eternity suggests that those two qualities at least, unity and generativity, are eternal.

Dialogue: Is sexual stewardship an individual or a joint stewardship?

Broderick: In marriage, I see it not as two individual stewardships, but as a couple's stewardship. Couples need to take prayerful thought of what their gospel goals should be in their sexual life. The scriptures suggest what some of these goals should be. For example, Paul says that husbands and wives ought to be generous in giving. So I would ask myself, "Am I exercising my sexual gifts and talents righteously, and am I being giving and generous with them, or withholding and mean with them?" "Am I taking responsibility for my fertility?" One of the things that's not very modern and not very comfortable that Latter-day Saints have to deal with is that the Lord seems to want them to have fairly large families. We're not in the position, happily, of saying that you have to have a child every time you can have one. Some people say that. But I think we are expected to bring children into the world, exercising judgment as to how many and how they're spaced. That's part of your sexual stewardship. We should ask ourselves if we are building sexual unity in our marriages. I like what Paul says in Romans 12:1–2 about bodies being a sacrifice of righteousness, of being transformed; not of the world, but transformed. Also, I am persuaded that wickedness never was happiness, that the best sex is in a monogamous, faithful, integrated, loving relationship.

Dialogue: Would you say that part of the stewardship would be to develop the capacity both to take and to give sexual enjoyment?

Broderick: I would indeed. Of course, within the bounds of the gospel. We find joy in our lives altogether, in giving and taking.

Dialogue: Do you share the concept that men and women are different in their ability to achieve sexual enjoyment, that it is more difficult for a woman to achieve sexual fulfillment?

Broderick: I don't think that's part of the design of things. I think that women are wired quite adequately for that purpose. However, we are very partial toward male sexuality in our culture, giving considerably more support for it than for female sexuality. There is absolutely no evidence that God created man and woman unequal in this regard.

Dialogue: Conditions in the world, some of which exist in the Church . . .

Broderick: All of which exist in the Church.

Dialogue: . . . seem to work . . .

Broderick: . . . against female sexuality. That's true. That's true.

Dialogue: Do you accept the hypothesis that men and women mature sexually at different stages?

Broderick: That's not the design of things, either. That was Kinsey's observation, that it took women about ten or twelve years longer to reach their sexual "peak." Again, I think the premise is wrong. There is no evidence that men and women differ in their ability to enjoy sexuality.

I wish we did a better job in the Church of teaching people the chastity ethic without making it more difficult for them to enjoy sexual fulfillment under the proper conditions. When I interview young people for the temple, I ask, "Is there anything you want to talk about?" And they often say, "Well, we've had a hard time holding out for the temple. It's been difficult for us." And I say, "That's good. I'm glad that you're holding out, because it's really important that you keep your obligations towards God. And I'd be disappointed if it was too easy for you, because those yearnings to be close and to express yourself in those ways are holy. They are from God. It's appropriate that you should feel that way toward the person you're going to marry in a week. Now, you need to continue holding out, but I'd sure feel bad for you if you weren't having fantasies and having to plan your time so that you weren't spending too much time together. That would really be a shame." Please don't misinterpret what I say. I'm 100 percent committed to chastity, but not the fearful attitude about chastity that destroys men's or women's sexual potential. I don't think our Heavenly Father teaches that.

Dialogue: Is there any way that the Church could teach sexuality in a more positive way?

Broderick: Yes. For one thing we should stop the negative teaching of sexuality. I've told members of my stake, "I hope I never hear of another fireside in

our stake where they pass around the gardenia and have everybody handle it until it turns grubby and brown and spotted and then say, 'Girls, is this the way you want to be on your wedding day?' or something like that. . . ." That's unwholesome imagery.

Secondly, we can teach what the gospel and the scriptures say: that we have been given a sexual stewardship that we're responsible for. The reason that sex is treated so specially in the scriptures is because it's one of the two or three most important components of a celestial person. We are expected to place our sexuality in its proper perspective so that we can make it an eternal part of ourselves. If you understand what your sexuality is, it makes it easier to be chaste, and easier to be fulfilled in marriage. And giving people understanding of this is the way we ought to teach about sex, rather than simply giving them prohibitions.

Dialogue: So in some sense you feel that ideally the gospel should lead us to a higher plane of sexual fulfillment not only for women but for everyone.

Broderick: Yes, I do. And to every other kind of fulfillment. I think that's true for every one of our talents, every part of ourselves.

Dialogue: What are the most important things parents can do to give their children a good sex education?

Broderick: First, they can actually model good sexuality in the household. By that I don't mean that they should violate their own privacy, but that they shouldn't try to hide their sexual attraction for one another from their children. For example, I don't think my own children have any doubt that my wife and I love each other, and it wouldn't stretch their imagination to imagine that we love each other sexually because I kiss her in their view, I let her sit on my lap in their view, I touch her when I go by her. They understand that touching and kissing and holding are a natural, normal part of a marriage relationship. And incidentally, I touch them too, so they not only have a model, but they have an experience that touching and holding are good. Secondly, I try to find opportunities to talk to them about these things and to let them get my perspective on them. I can't prevent them from getting sexual information from other children or from *Playboy*, but I can certainly upstage those sources with my own perceptions. So my kids ask questions like, "Is it fun when you're married?" "Do you have to?" "Do you do it all the time or only when you want a baby?" I want them to hear what I have to say about these things and not just what *Playboy* or the boy down the street have to say about them.

Dialogue: How do you handle being a stake president who has written a book with a very explicit chapter on human sexuality?

Broderick: That causes me a lot of concern because I am aware that that chapter might offend some Latter-day Saints who don't think stake presidents

ought to be advocating those things. When I was writing the book I had the opportunity of discussing this matter with one of the general authorities, someone I trust and care about, and I told him I was concerned about this. I told him I didn't think the chapter was a bad chapter, but that it was immodest and that the Church took a strong position that in public, in announcements from the pulpit and so on, we ought to be modest in these matters. Moreover, I didn't want to do anything that would embarrass the brethren, the people of my stake, or myself. His response was, "I haven't read your chapter and I don't know if I'd like it if I did read it, but I think if you're concerned about it, what you ought to do is say at the beginning of the chapter that you're concerned about the issue of privacy and offending people with some of this material and then say why you think you need to include it anyway." Making an analogy to what a doctor does in his office, he said, "In a doctor's office you have to take off your clothes. I realize that's not a modest thing to do, but in that context, we set aside that convention for a good purpose."

And so I went back and said in effect, "Look, there happens to be a lot of sexual pain in the world (including in the Church). And my observation is that there are things that can be done about it that are helpful and my best judgment at this time in my life is that these are things which would be helpful, and I don't want to offend anybody by what I say." If anyone thinks they might be offended, they don't have to read that chapter. (My mother has never read it!) On the other hand, there are people who find it helpful to have somebody, even a stake president, say some of those things. But I feel a little uncomfortable because there are others who feel uncomfortable.

Dialogue: Are there any activities that you have curtailed or ceased that you felt comfortable with before and would feel comfortable with now except for the fact that you are a stake president?

Broderick: Yes. For example, I used to be on the Johnny Carson show pretty regularly, where I was always introduced as a sexologist, and engaged in some banter with Mr. Carson about that. When I became a stake president, I asked my counselors how they felt about that. And they said, "Well, President, it's up to you, but we don't think that that exposure does your image any good." My condition was that if I were ever going back on the show again I would have some control over the way I was introduced and what I talked about, and so I wasn't on for four years. I've been on once since, but it was as an author of a book so the circumstances were different.

I feel my job is to help get the people in my stake back to their Heavenly Father. I think if you were to ask the people in my stake how they would characterize me, they would say that the Savior is very important to me, and that that and the worth of people were the themes that I talked about most. I think if you were to ask them what the theme of my administration was they would say it was our relationship with the Savior.

Dialogue: What do you see as the next important work that you would like to do as a scholar or as a therapist?

Broderick: I'm very interested in a gospel approach to therapy. I'm really excited about exploring the interrelations between the principles of the gospel and therapy. I'd like to write a book that does not adduce gospel principles explicitly but that incorporates them into a discussion of therapy, sort of a book on telestial marriage counseling. I would use true gospel principles such as prayer, blessings and sacrifice, but I probably would not refer to them in ecclesiastical terminology.

Dialogue: This has been a most stimulating discussion.

