DIALOGUE

a journal of mormon thought

On the cover: Rebecca Wagstaff, Inheritance, 2016, 60"x36", oil on muslin on panel
On the back cover: Rebecca Wagstaff, Consider the Lilies IV, 2006, 19"x15", oil on panel

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is an independent quarterly established to express Mormon culture and to examine the relevance of religion to secular life. It is edited by Latter-day Saints who wish to bring their faith into dialogue with the larger stream of world religious thought and with human experience as a whole and to foster artistic and scholarly achievement based on their cultural heritage. The journal encourages a variety of viewpoints; although every effort is made to ensure accurate scholarship and responsible judgment, the views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or of the editors.

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Letter to the Editor

I think Dialogue readers might be interested in a recent change at the Church History Building. I was shepherding a group of Young Men from our ward at a youth conference on Temple Square. Several hundred teenagers were present from many wards to participate in a full-day's schedule of events, involving many of the different buildings in the area. We got to a lecture area at the Church History Building, where a professional historian with a doctor's degree discussed with us the story of the translation of the Book of Mormon. On a table was a large white stovepipe hat made out of "bleached beaverskin hair." He began by showing slides of some of the paintings used in the past to illustrate how the translation occurred. He then asked what was wrong with each painting. The first showed Joseph Smith poring over the gold plates. He explained that the plates were not used in the translation. Next he showed a picture of the breastplate and urim and thummim and another of a seer stone, and asked what was wrong with that. Then he called for two volunteers. One sat by the hat, and slowly read a couple of verses from the Book of Mormon that had been placed at the bottom of the hat. The other sat across the table and carefully wrote down what the first volunteer read. "Oliver" then read back what "Joseph" had slowly dictated. The historian then explained that we needed to update in our minds how the translation really took place.

We went from there to the Museum of Church History and Art and saw a film of the First Vision. The narrator explained that there were nine different accounts, by Joseph and others, of what had happened, and stated that the account in the Pearl of Great Price contained elements from several of the different accounts.

Large groups of teenagers meet every few days for youth conferences on Temple Square all summer long. I am impressed that the Church is now making an effort to clarify some of the foundational events of Mormonism and present them in a more accurate format.

Incidentally, I started subscribing to Dialogue with the very first issue, and devoured it and every single issue that has followed. Thanks for a lifetime of stimulating, informed writing on all things Mormon. I'm very grateful and impressed!

—Reed Wahlquist

NOTE ON IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY

Boyd Petersen

Editing this issue, I have thought much on both identity and community. I want to assure *Dialogue* readers that we remain committed to being a place of continued connection, vibrant welcoming, and life-affirming discussion. In this era when so many forces seek to divide us, we are dedicated to being a force for unity.

Earlier this fall, President Russell M. Nelson called for members to use the Church's full name rather than its nickname "Mormon." Those of us in the broader Mormon studies community have spent countless hours discussing this issue, and I believe all of us tend to be fairly united in our desire to be respectful to the institutional Church's directives. Nevertheless, this call does raise challenges regarding identity and community that all of us recognize.. Given those challenges, *Dialogue* has determined that it will use the full name of the Church when an author is speaking specifically of the institution itself.. However, there are many times when articles we publish refer to something beyond the institutional Church: rather, they reference the broader culture, to a community of people who may or may not participate in that institutional Church but who continue to identify with that culture in one way or another, or to another church that originates with Joseph Smith like the Community of Christ. Because *Dialogue* is a forum for this broader culture, our subtitle will remain *A Journal of Mormon Thought*. I also hope you will forgive us when we falter. We were already working on the present issue and many of the essays printed here were already typeset at the time of President Nelson's address, so we ask for your patience that we have not consistently applied these standards.

I hope too that all Church members will follow the counsel given by Hal Boyd, Special Assistant to the Managing Director of Church Public Affairs, at a recent conference held at Utah Valley University to use charity and compassion with those of us who may not "get it right."[1] We do not need yet another thing to divide us. Instead, we at *Dialogue* seek to build compassion, connection, and community. We thank you for your support in 2018, and invite you to continue with us as we welcome 2019!

1. "What's in a Name: 'Mormons,' 'Latter-day Saints' and the Politics of Self-identity," Nov. 14, 2018, https://www.uvu.edu/ethics/events/whatsinaname_panel.html.

ON SOLACE

Fiona Givens

Charles Dickens suggests that epochs roll into one another in a cyclical pattern. Each cycle comprises the pairing of opposites: wisdom and foolishness, belief and incredulity, Light and Darkness, virtue and vice, hope and despair.[1] If Dickens is correct then the "best and worst of times" shall continue as humankind's constant companions till the last syllable of recorded time. That being said, pillars of light occasionally descend, piercing the choking fog we currently inhabit. Those who witness them are appropriately named luminaries. They comprise the vanguard for the human family—working assiduously to break the cycle, moving the world slowly if imperceptibly toward a glorious dawn, comprising harmony, peace, hope and good will among men—an eventual Zion. Until that particular sunrise, opposition in all things continues to define our mortal experience. Indeed, our scriptural records suggest that the experience of opposites is crucial for our education in matters divine. Were it not so "all things must be a compound in one," rendering us incapable of the discernment necessary to inhabit Divinity.[2] In speaking to the couple, Adam, deeply concerned about the course their progeny is following, God responds that it is only by tasting the "bitter" that we "know how to prize the good."[3] This mortal sphere, therefore, provides the necessary experience in which we are invited, in spite of all obstacles, to join with the Celestial Family "to bring to pass [our] immortality and eternal life."[4]

1. Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities* (New York: A. L. Burt, n.d.), 9.

2. 2 Ne. 2:11.

3. Moses 6:55.

4. Moses 1:39.

While opposites are contiguous; they also appear to be contingent one upon the other—the Tree of Wisdom's bitter fruit in opposition to the sweet fruit of the Tree of Life. However, had Eve not eaten the fruit from the Tree of Wisdom, the couple and their progeny could never have entered the realm of pain and suffering—the indispensable schoolroom in which we learn through sympathetic suffering that we are surrounded by extraordinary people and that we ourselves are extraordinary and that this life is but a precursor to that which is to come. We live with the promise that Christ has come that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly.[5] While life may not be one long continuous vale of tears, the weight and duration of the bitterness and the sweetness that we experience are neither proportional nor settled. Time is a mysterious entity. It drags its feet in darkness and despair, masticating slowly the bitter fruit. Joy, on the other hand, hummingbird-like, appears fleetingly, momentarily alighting, imparting gentleness and beauty and ascending almost immediately. I have learned it is best to record these moments of sweetness and joy, lest they be lost in the dark nights of my life. Breadcrumbs to nibble on in the shadows. Are they substantial enough to give us the strength to move across the wilderness from despair to hope? "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted . . . because they were not."[6] When Wisdom's acolytes did not return to divulge the location of the Child who would be King, Herod "sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under"[7] Many, if not most, are incapable of complete recovery from such horrific loss. The eleven-year old son of my friend, Renate, was killed by a fall from the roof of an adjacent building. When I last spoke with her, now decades after the tragedy,

5. Moses 5:11.

6. Jer. 31:15.

7. Matt. 2:16.

she told me that the pain associated with his loss increases with each passing year. Sometimes that chasm from bitterness to sweetness is not traversed in the face of life-long injury.

It is instructive that the massacre of the innocents follows rather than precedes the Christ Child's coming. The joy of Advent neither prevented nor ameliorated the tragedy. When confronted for the first time by Brian Kershisnik's "Massacre of the Innocents," I was surprised by shock and then horror as my eyes moved from one mother and slain child to another. And yet, in the second pass, I noticed details I had not seen initially—trees barely budding with pink blossoms, and a woman we shall call Solace holding a mother, senseless beneath the weight of her grief. Solace holds her tenderly but tenaciously. We are drawn to

Detail from Massacre of the innocents © Brian T. Kershisnik. Used with permission.

imagine her unflagging patience as the hours pass and the mother's body grows heavy in her arms. Like Job's friends, she awaits in silence grief's slow abatement. When the mother at last has the strength to rise, Solace continues to hold her as she stumbles, blinded by grief along what must feel like an endless journey home. Solace prepares soup and gently assists the mother to eat. She lays her down on her own bed and sits with her through the night. Day after day Solace continues to mourn with the bereaved, striving to assume some of the weight of her burden, rocking the mother gently in her arms when the darkness again descends. Until one day the mother tastes a forgotten sweetness and notices out of the corner of her eye a glimmer of light. It is not a pillar. It is not even a shard. Nevertheless, the glimpse of something bright is enough to soften the edge in the dark.

Why is Solace alone in her ministering? Where is God in our time of intimate despair and loss? "My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, O God where art thou?"[8] Have we not all wept, grieved, or screamed this question into the heavens? By what sort of a God are our entreaties met if there is a God at all? Is God capable of descending to the depths in which those most stricken by grief are to be found? Christ is capable. Our records attest that "he has taken upon himself our infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, that he may know how to succor his people according to their infirmities?[9] If this is true of the Son, is it not then equally true of the Father? "Wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer?[10] Several years ago I attended a women's retreat in Denver. At the table sat a young wife and mother, grief stricken. Standing next to her all the while was her friend, stroking her hair and holding her hand while the mother sobbed out her anguish. Solace remained close

8. Psalm 42:3; D&C 121:1.

9. Alma 12.

10. Moses 7:37.

to her side the entire weekend. The young woman was oblivious to the compassionate ministrations, so deep was her pain. But one day she would again taste sweetness on the air where now all was bitterness.

"It is impossible to develop a character of God which shall be intelligible, deeply affecting, and a sympathetic bond of union . . . so long as the power to suffer is denied him . . . [for] God has suffered in all ages, and still suffers."[11] The Son, the very image and likeness of God comes, like the ministering women, with the power of divine healing. His vow to us has always been to release us from the shackles of our woundedness and eventual death. We are made whole through His suffering and alive in His death. He "hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows… He was wounded . . . he was bruised . . ." It is with His stripes we are healed.[12] He will take upon himself death [also], that he may [loose the bonds] which bind his people."[13]

"Only the suffering God can help" winning power and space in the world through his divine vulnerability."[14] Perhaps, as the Congregationalist Minister, Edward Beecher suggested, it was the discipline of suffering, the necessary education of mortality that caused the defection among the hosts of heaven. "From pleasure, of course, there was no temptation to revolt."[15] Although woundedness in some form is an inescapable part of our mortal journey, we are all invited to do what are able with the gifts we have been given. In celebration of the birth of the Christ Child Wisdom's envoys presented Him with three treasures—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. As we are re-born at our baptism, we

11. Edward Beecher, *The Concord of Ages* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1860), 68–69.

12. Isa. 53:3–5.

13. Alma 7:12.

14. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "The Bible directs Man" to Eberhard Bethge, Jul. 16, 1944. In Larry L. Rasmusssen, Dietrich Bonhoeffer: *Reality and Resistance* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 17.

15. Edward Beecher, *The Concord of Ages*, 98.

too, like the Christ Child receive three gifts of unparalleled worth. They are wrapped as invitations and presented as covenants. The first is to bear another's burdens; the second: to mourn with the grieving; and the third—to comfort the comfortless. Each member of the Godhead is present to ratify the covenants given and received and endow them with divine power. The God, who carries our burdens through his life, into Gethsemane and onto Golgotha is God, the Christ. The God who mourns with us when we mourn is God, the Father. The God who comforts us when we stand in need of comfort is God, the Holy Spirit. As we live in "a society of gods and goddesses," it matters not with whom the gifts are shared.[16] The expectation is that we share our gifts liberally. Each time we extend our arms to embrace those who are stricken with grief, laid low by life's caprice, ostracized and wounded, light pierces the darkness and the world moves a little closer to that glorious day when we shall fall on each other's necks with joy. "And the voice of weeping shall be no more heard . . . nor the voice of crying."[17]

16. C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory And Other Addresses* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 18.

17. Isa. 65:17–19.

HERETICS IN TRUTH: LOVE, FAITH, AND HOPE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR THEOLOGY, COMMUNITY, AND DESTINY

Terryl L. Givens

I want to begin with a passage of startling—and unsettling—insight, from John Stuart Mill:

> There is a class of persons . . . who think it enough if a person assents undoubtingly to what they think true, though he has no knowledge whatever of the grounds of the opinion. . . . This is not knowing the truth. Truth, thus held, is but one superstition the more, accidentally clinging to the words which enunciate a truth.[1]

In this formulation, a conviction that is correct, but is held on insufficient grounds, is just a superstition that happens to be true, or words that accidentally coincide with the truth. John Milton, in his work *Areopagitica*, spoke to similar effect, using the expression "heretic in truth" to describe those who happen upon the truth but hold it on inadequate, erroneous, or insufficient grounds.[2] They both speak with powerful relevance to our own cultural moment. It is not enough to hear the truth and accept the truth. One must seek out and find good cause, good reason, to embrace that truth, to live that truth, and to cleave to that truth. One must make

1. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty,* edited by Elizabeth Rapaport (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1978), 34.

2. John Milton, *Areopagitica,* edited by Richard C. Jebb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1918), 43.

it one's own, or it is just a superstition we hold that happens to be true. I think, in such a case, we are the plant in the parable who, in the words of Mark, "have no root in themselves" (Mark 4:17).

So I want to talk today about foundations and fractures. Why do some stay disciples and others depart from the way? I have wondered of late what part faith, hope, and charity play in discipleship. And I am going to relate them, in my own experience, to theology, community, and destiny.

Paul speaks of love, faith, and hope as the triad of virtues most devoutly to be desired—and I am going to suggest they provide us with a map of durable discipleship.

Charity—pure, absolute love—is the only force in the universe stronger than self-interest. I believe it to be the necessary motive force behind faith, the only salvational catalyst, because all other motivations are a form of investment, of behavior that is merely prudent, of actions that are directly or indirectly self-seeking. Faith is manifest when we enter that realm where the present is severed from future reward or happy outcome. It is perhaps the only occasion in which we engage the divine non-teleologically.

Faith is the purest manifestation of such a motive force. It is the commitment to be responsive, true, and loyal out of love, in the here and now, the present moment, with no conceptualization of a tomorrow. It is the willed offering of trust in response to the call of love.

Hope is the concrete expectation of a good result, the opposite of despair. Faith is the leap into the darkness, hope is the confidence you will be caught. We generally conflate the two into the concept of faith, but faith does not anticipate the end of the action. When Mormon returned to lead his armies, saying it was without faith (Mormon 3), it was without faith in the outcome, or more accurately, without hope. It was a gesture devoid of trust in the efficacy of the gesture.

Hope is something, according to Paul, that we rejoice in (Romans 5:2). Hence, it has to be the other side of the coin of faith. Faith is the cast of the dice that only we can originate. Hope is when we have, from the outside, intimations of the outcome. Or as Paul told the Colossians, hope "grounds and settles" us, after the initial gesture of faith (Colossians 1:23). Or again, faith is manifest in the act; it is the gesture requiring willful effort, what Paul calls the actual "work." Waiting with what he calls "patience" in anticipation of faith's fruit is the realm of "hope." This is how he explains the relationship to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1:3). And the engine motivating the whole sequence, he says, is charity.

Abraham's relationship with God is predicated on love. There is a relationship of mutuality. Stupendous as it sounds, God has actually invited Abraham into intimate communion with him, and Abraham reciprocates. Asked to sacrifice his son, love guides his gesture. He acts in a trusting way, without regard to consequence. That is his faith clothed in action. His hope is in the expectation that this is going to end well, though he can't find a logical reason for such anticipation. Hope is not always founded in empiricism, but in the spirit's attestation. Hope is what we receive in response to our act of faith. Only love can carry us through what is at times a harrowing and prolonged process.

Now my point today is that this process of discipleship breaks down if any of those three ingredients fail. If we do not feel the call of love and find it in ourselves to respond. If we are unwilling to take the risk that faith entails, to make ourselves vulnerable, to expose ourselves to error and self-deception. And if we find we cannot endure in the desert of failed expectations, with no spiritual or emotional meat to sustain our journey.

So I am going to lay those three stages, those three Pauline virtues, along three parallel topics to chart my own spiritual pilgrimage. Those topics are theology, community, and destiny.

Love and Theology

I want to preface this section with a plea that you open yourself to the possibility that theology is not mere intellectual abstraction but the very lifeblood of the disciple's heart.

How is theology related to love? In Moses' reconstituted vision as described by Joseph Smith, Moses sees the "workmanship of [God's] hands" constituting "works . . . without end," including the human family from first to last (Moses 1:4). More startling, he sees that the universe includes endless worlds, "and each land was called earth, and there were inhabitants on the face thereof" (Moses 1:29). This stupefying vision overwhelms Moses with his own finitude and smallness: "Now . . . I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed" (Moses 1:10). After describing the immensity of creation as seen by Moses, Smith learns a second truth that utterly inverts his self-appraisal when God makes man the focal point and telos of all divine striving rather than an inconsequential atom in an infinite structure. Moses learns from the Father's own mouth that "mine Only Begotten is and shall be the Savior," whose work it shall be to accomplish the Father's self-appointed task: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:6, 39). The poetic irony is religiously profound: we are an infinitesimal speck in a boundless sea of fathomless immensity, yet that minute particle called humanity is the focus and guiding preoccupation of the master architect of the whole. Whereas dozens of writers from Tertullian to Rick Warren and John Piper have written with perfect unanimity that God created humans and their world "for the glory of His [own] majesty," "for God's glory" not ours, because "God loves his own glory above all things"—those are direct quotations from those writers, and I could cite numerous others—in the face of such holy

sacrilege, Joseph Smith has Moses reverse the equation.[3] God is not the supreme narcissist of the cosmos, but a being of incomprehensible selflessness who, like his Son, "doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world" (2 Nephi 26:24). Yet not the world, but its each and every inhabitant; not the vineyard, but each individual tree therein, is a cause for divine rejoicing and divine tears.

At this moment, at the very commencement of any survey of Mormon theology, I find the most unutterably sublime being of any faith tradition. And in Restoration theology, we find that such love has boundless efficacy. Some years ago, a woman revealed that Holocaust victims continued to be baptized posthumously into the LDS faith. (According to some reports, the woman submitted the name in order to subsequently blow the whistle.) Commentators and public figures were indignant. I was asked to field some questions from a Philadelphia radio station on the subject of proxy baptism. Why, the Jewish host asked me, are you baptizing my dead ancestors? I said, "We believe in heavenly parents who envision a great wedding feast at the last day, where the entire human family will be present. We believe the privilege has been given us of preparing the guest list. You don't have to come, but we believe everyone should be invited." "What a beautiful idea," he responded. "How do I get on the guest list?"

His response was good-natured and half in jest. But I like to think it was half in earnest. For in his gracious reply was embedded the recognition of a divine generosity, capaciousness of heart, and efficacious love, without parallel.

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3. Tertullian, *Apology,* translated by S. Thelwell, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, vol. 3, *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), 31; Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 55; and John Piper, *The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God,* 2nd ed. (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Multnomah Books, 2000), 192.

Now many people both in the Church and out consider theology to be an antiquated science, too remote, too filled with abstractions and verbal formulae to be directly meaningful to the lived experience of religion. I couldn't disagree more. In the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, God teaches most powerfully of the crucial link between theology and discipleship. Commenting on the many corruptions to the biblical text, the voice of the Lord speaks in mercy, understanding, and promise. He tells Nephi, "Neither will the Lord God suffer that the Gentiles shall forever remain in that state of *awful woundedness* which . . . they are in, because of the plain and most precious parts of the Gospel of the Lamb which hath been kept back" (my emphasis).[4] This is one of the most potent scriptures in our canon because it states the dilemma that necessitated the Restoration with economy and beauty. Because of scriptural corruption and loss, because of what the Lord himself called creedal abominations, we are in a wounded state. We are, all of us, wounded. No one within the sound of my voice has not suffered hurt, anxiety, loss, disappointment, and despair. This generation, more than any in history, knows the loneliness of depression, the darkness of perpetual anxiety. But compounding those wounds, aggravating and intensifying our pain, is the God of the Christian creeds—devoid of body, parts, and passion, seeking his own glory, limited and confined in the scope of his redemptive love. However, those words to Nephi promised that God would not abandon us to such a condition of misrepresentation, ignorance, and fear.

That saintly man of God, Edward Beecher, proclaimed that "of all errors, none are so fundamental and so wide reaching in their evil

4. *The Book of Mormon* (Palmyra, N.Y.: E. B. Grandin, 1830), 31. In the 1981 edition currently used by the LDS Church, this passage is designated as 1 Nephi 13:32 and follows an 1837 emendation by Smith to "state of awful blindness"; see Royal Skousen, "The Systematic Text of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11, no. 2 (2002): 56–57.

tendencies and results as errors with respect to the character of god."[5] Joseph Smith, with sentiments exactly parallel, taught that a "correct idea" of God's character is the only foundation, the only effective catalyst, to meaningful discipleship.[6] John may have said that God is love (1 John 4:8), but it took the prophets Zenos and Enoch to show us, convincingly, what that love looks like, not just in Christ, but in his Father, "Man of Holiness" (Jacob 5; Moses 7). It is only in the Restoration scriptures that we encounter the weeping God.

And that is just the beginning. One of the great scholars of early Christianity has recently noted that the father of Western Christianity predicated his entire theological edifice on blatant, demonstrable errors of translation. Not proficient in Greek, Augustine did not know that the *proorizein* of the New Testament should be rendered "to mark out in advance," or as Mormons would say, "to foreordain," not to predestine.[7] As a consequence, Augustine vanquishes the efficacy of human agency and individual choice, in the face of a predestinating God of caprice, whim, and indefensible cruelty. This is the God fully embraced and taught by the great Reformers, a sovereign deity who damns and saves indiscriminately and independently of human efforts, choices, or desires.

Augustine compounds the error by elaborating a pernicious dogma of original sin. In David Bentley Hart's analysis (which is, by the way, seconded in numerous sources), "only in the West did the idea arise that a newborn infant is somehow already guilty of transgression in God's eyes," because the Latin text Augustine relied upon "contained a mistranslation that suggested that "'in' Adam 'all sinned.'" The actual

5. Edward Beecher, *The Concord of Ages, or, The Individual and Organic Harmony of God and Man* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1860), 156.

6. Joseph Smith, "The Character of God," Lectures on Faith, in *Doctrine and Covenants* (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams, 1835), 36.

7. David Bentley Hart, *The Story of Christianity: An Illustrated History of 2000 Years of the Christian Faith* (New York: Quercus, 2012), 77.

Greek text," he continues "says nothing of the sort."[8] So sin and depravity become the basis, the default, on which Western theology is constituted.

Fiona and I would challenge a third translation. The Greek word *sodzo* has the meaning of healing or making whole. It appears numerous times when Christ is curing, restoring sight, bringing back health and healing. But following upon the foundations of sin, depravity, and inherited guilt, translators have opted to render the word in most cases as "save." This in spite of the fact that when Christ announces his own mission and the purposes thereof, he quotes Isaiah's beautiful words that he has come to "heal" the brokenhearted and those damaged by calamity, not to rescue from sin and condemnation. Sin is real, and we need divine assistance to escape its allure in our lives. But Christ's emphasis, as the Book of Mormon teaches us, was on pain, our wounds, our infirmities.

Taken together, Joseph's revelations restore a God wholly devoted to our fullest thriving who safeguards our agency at terrible cost, who sacrificed beyond imagining to bring us healing in his wings and guide us through this terrible but necessary mortal crucible. Through the Restoration, I have come to know, and I have come to love, a Christ and a Father as more than scriptural abstraction. The place of Mormon theology in my life, in my private discipleship, is that it has engendered in me a real, visceral adoration for the true God and his Christ. I feel to say, with George MacDonald, that "whatever energies I may or may not have, I know one thing for certain. That I could not devote them to anything else I should think entirely worth doing. Indeed, nothing else [could] repay the labor, but the telling of my fellow many about the one man who is the truth, and to know whom is life."[9]

I do not know that God exists. I believe, I hope, I trust that he does. Perhaps, in my better moments, my belief attains to knowledge. But one thing I do know for sure. I know only that the the Weeping God

8. Ibid.

9. George MacDonald, *Thomas Wingfold, Curate* (n.p.: Tutis Digital, 2008), 312.

of Enoch—the Weeping Gardner of Zenos—and Christ the Healer, are [not is] worthy of the risk. And so I am willing to live by faith in such a divine family.

Faith and Community

The Christ whom I worship, the Parents to whom I aspire to return, enjoin me to something beyond a shallow spirituality, a cheap substitute for costly religion. So let me turn to what is, to my mind, the most amazing development in the Restoration. And that is what *didn't* happen on that spring morning in 1820. Joseph Smith would record in his earliest autobiographical sketch of 1832 that he was concerned as a young boy "for the welfare of [his] immortal soul."[10] Oliver Cowdery, claiming Smith's assistance for his 1834 narrative, wrote that Smith hungered for "that *assurance* which the Lord Jesus has so freely offered."[11] "I felt to mourn for my . . . sins," Smith wrote in his 1832 account.[12] So he "cried unto the Lord for mercy . . . and the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness. . . . A pillar of light above the brightness of the sun at noon day came down from above and rested upon me."[13] Vision became revelatory encounter when he "saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying, Joseph my son thy sins are forgiven thee."

Now my question is, why was this not the end of the story? Why was this consummation, so devoutly desired by Joseph and by millions of others before and since, not the final word? Why did he not, following

10. Joseph Smith Jr., "History, circa Summer 1832," *The Joseph Smith Papers: Histories,* vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2012), 11, available at https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-circa-summer-1832/2.

11. Oliver Cowdery, "Letter III," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 3 (Dec. 1834): 43.

12. Smith, "History, circa Summer 1832," 12.

13. Ibid.

Luther and Wesley and myriad others, feel his quest essentially at an end and thereafter share the good news of his and humanity's salvation?

"My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no assurance that my merit would assuage him," wrote Luther in providing the spiritual backgrounds to his own work as a Reformer.[14] Persuaded that salvation was to be found through a personal reliance upon Christ's righteousness rather than our own, a conception that would come to be called salvation by grace or imputed righteousness, Luther believed he had found the path to salvation. His work was henceforth to convince the world of that path. John Wesley, too, found his spiritual quest one of perpetual anxiety until a decisive moment when, he recorded, "I felt that I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation, and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."[15] His work, too, was the simple broadcasting of that good news, the incitement to recapitulate in the lives of countless others the saving grace he had experienced.

I wonder, have we paused to marvel at the fact that Joseph's quest for salvation began at that precise point where that of the Reformers ended? Joseph's religious journey could have so easily ended that spring morning. He could have gone home happy in his discovery that God loved him, his sins were forgiven, and rested peacefully in the assurance he had found.

I believe the exercise of comparing Joseph to Luther and Wesley (or George Fox and C. S. Lewis, for that matter) is an invaluable step toward more fully appreciating what constitutes the magnificence of Mormonism: the contrast makes clear that perhaps the single most distinctive hallmark of Smith's religion-making was his subsequent

14. Martin Luther, quoted in Roland Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York: Abingdon, 1950), 65.

15. John Wesley, "24 May 1738," in *The Heart of Wesley's Journal* (New Canaan, Conn.: Keats, 1979), 43.

conviction that salvation was collective and collaborative, not personal and individual. He wanted to bring everyone home, build the city of Zion and enlarge its borders unendingly, enlist us all in the great work of being saviors on Mount Zion, extending the gospel's reach—for the first time in the post-apostolic age—across the bounds of life and into the very depths of hell.

His conception culminated in discerning God's grand design of providing a means to redeem the entire human family, incorporating them into an eternal chain of belonging through sacramental rituals and binding covenants. The locus for the earthly consummation of these preparations is within the temples that crowned Smith's religious project. So first and foremost, I find in my Mormonism a faith of limitless generosity and expansiveness, and the incitement to actively participate in a project of supernal spiritual ambitions. After such a vision, I can no longer conceive of religion as a merely private affair. I no longer believe there is a private—or solitary—road to salvation. I will not find God in the mountains or at the seaside. That seems to me now, by contrast, a contracted, selfish, and impoverished substitute for the real thing. If, as I said at the onset, my faith is motivated by love, by an outgoing of the spirit, then it necessarily places the self in relation to others.

We have been particularly gifted by our associations in far-flung wards and branches. I remain deeply convinced that Joseph's prophetic gifts are manifest in the unique Mormon communities that have become legendary for their love, cohesion, and synergy. Lay clergy, home and visiting teaching (I mean, "ministering"), high religious demands made individually and collectively, and, most potent, ward boundaries that enclose us in fixed laboratories of love from which there is no escape—only the ever more insistent calls to forgive, to tolerate, to endure and to serve—these create crucibles of discipleship without parallel in the world, and I have tasted the foreshadowings of Zion they can often herald.

But here I also find challenges that some of us have found insoluble. I have never found Restoration theology to fail me. Still in process of

unfolding, it is the most compassionate, generous, reasonable, and beautiful system of belief I ever expect to encounter. And I do not know of anyone who has ever turned away from the Church because they found its God too full of love and feeling, his plan too capacious, or its heaven too populous. Still, I have found that words are not always adequate to staunch bleeding spiritual wounds because it is not always questions that lead people to seek other paths, but needs. Words can answer questions, but they are often helpless in the face of urgent human needs.

Martin Buber notes how this is most evident with children, who form relationships with imaginary creatures and stuffed animals sometimes even before language takes shape. As he recognizes, "It is not as if a child first saw an object and then entered into some relationship with that. Rather, the longing for relation is primary, the cupped hand into which the being that confronts us nestles."[16] The key is that the encounter begins as a "readiness, as a form that reaches out to be filled."[17]

Time and again I have met with young persons who have no problems with Mormon theology. It is the community that their hearts do not resonate with. Hyrum Smith, like his brother Joseph, thought a community of fellow saints was like heaven on earth. Hyrum once said, "Men's souls conform to the society in which they live, with very few exceptions, and when men come to live with the Mormons, their souls swell as if they were going to stride the planets."[18] I have felt that way, time and again. But not everyone feels that way. And I get that. So let me say a few words at this juncture, to those who at present, or at some time in the future, may find themselves feeling out of sync—if not with the theology or doctrine of Mormonism then with the tone, the nuances,

16. Martin Buber, *I and Thou,* translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), 78.

17. Ibid.

18. "Address of Hyrum Smith," Apr. 6, 1844, in *History of the Church,* edited by B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975), 6:300.

the language, or the temper that can erupt through the scriptures, the conference talks, the temple, and the Sunday School classes.

I want to say two things about the challenges this can present to some of you. First, I would want you to note how God's language changes, and evolves, with time, with circumstance, and with need. Brigham Young said, "When God speaks to the people, he does it in a manner to suit their circumstances and capacities. . . . Should the Lord Almighty send an angel to re-write the Bible, it would in many places be very different from what it now is. And I will even venture to say that if the Book of Mormon were now to be re-written, in many instances it would materially differ from the present translation. According as people are willing to receive the things of God, so the heavens send forth their blessings."[19]

And so we have heard in our own day Elder M. Russell Ballard's words that tough questions deserve strong answers, not mere testimony-bearing.[20] Elder Jeffrey R. Holland's words that there is room in the Church for those with doubt, and that perplexity in the face of new narratives is not sinful or faithless.[21] (I note parenthetically, and with sadness, that not everyone seems to have gotten those last two memos; they need to listen to these prophetic voices.) Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf's words that the "day of judgment will be a day of mercy and love—a day when broken hearts are healed, when tears of grief are replaced with tears of gratitude, when all will be made right," and his reminder that "salvation cannot be bought with the currency of obedience; it is

19. Brigham Young, "The Kingdom of God," Jul. 13, 1862, *Journal of Discourses,* vol. 9 (Liverpool: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1862), 311.

20. See M. Russell Ballard, "The Opportunities and Responsibilities of CES Teachers in the 21st Century" (address to CES religious educators, Salt Lake Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Utah, Feb. 26, 2016, https://www.lds.org/broadcasts/article/evening-with-a-general-authority/2016/02/the-opportunities-and-responsibilities-of-ces-teachers-in-the-21st-century?lang=eng).

21. Jeffrey R. Holland, "Lord, I Believe," Apr. 2013, https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/04/lord-i-believe?lang=eng.

purchased by the blood of the Son of God."[22] Elder Dale G. Renlund's words that Christ sees our condition not as an evil to be punished, but as "a condition that needs treatment, care, and compassion."[23] I rejoice in a church whose truths never change but whose language can evolve to keep pace with our needs, sensibilities, and spiritual preparations.

And to my second point: as I recently wrote to a loved one in her frustration, "You are part of a community of kindred spirits, but you just don't know that. Others, like you, have been dismayed by the kind of cultural ills that you have lamented, but they have found a way through them. . . . So I just wanted you to consider [that] your true community may be hidden around you." My wife and I have traveled to twenty-five countries and borne testimony in some twenty-five states to thousands of our fellow travelers throughout the world. And I can tell you with assurance that if we could learn to be more trusting, more vulnerable, and more outward-looking, we would find ourselves surrounded by others asking the same questions, craving the same spiritual nourishment, wrestling through the same challenges and feelings of occasional alienation and isolation. You have more fellow travelers ready to minister and be ministered to in the particularity of your spiritual questing than you have realized. I bear you my testimony that that is true.

Hope and Destiny

I come now to my third topic. I have argued that the gospel reveals a love beyond our understanding, and by imagining that love, letting it work upon our hearts and minds, we can find the motive power to exercise faith. I have suggested that the act of faith is a leaping forth

22. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "O How Great the Plan of Our God!" Oct. 2016, https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2016/10/o-how-great-the-plan-of-our-god?lang=eng; and Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "The Gift of Grace," Apr. 2015, https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2015/04/the-gift-of-grace?lang=eng.

23. Dale G. Renlund, "Our Good Shepherd," Apr. 2017, https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2017/04/our-good-shepherd?lang=eng.

into the void; that it exposes us to risk; that it imbricates us in a shared community where we may find disappointment and pain alongside the joy of participation in the greatest communal enterprise Christianity has yet conceived. And now I come lastly to hope, which I relate to the Church and its destiny. If faith, as I said at the beginning, is the outgoing, love-laden gesture of response, hope is founded in the voice that calls back to us. And when all we hear is silence, hope is what fails. Some of us may feel, as did the poet George Herbert,

> What? shall I ever sigh and pine?
> My lines and life are free; free as the road,
> Loose as the wind, as large as store.
> Shall I be still in suit?
> Have I no harvest but a thorn
> To let me blood, and not restore
> What I have lost with cordial fruit?
> . . . .
> No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?
> All wasted?[24]

To those who feel on the brink of despair and capitulation, I can only plead. We have before us the last, best hope of Christianity. May we resist the urge to resort to what Eugene England called "the appalling luxury of . . . utter skepticism."[25] All paradigms, of the naturalist, the atheist, the scientist, or the disciple, require a life of strenuous endeavor to maintain it by continual questioning, reexamining, adaptation, and adjustment. So I would leave you with the words of B. H. Roberts, prophetic words that I think were delivered to him by the spirit for this very hour.

"Mormonism" . . . calls for thoughtful disciples who will not be content with merely repeating some of the truths, but will develop the

24. George Herbert, "The Collar," in *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* (London: Pickering, 1838), 159.

25. Eugene England, "Enduring," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16, no. 4 (Winter 1983): 113.

truths; and enlarge it by that development. Not half—not one-hundredth part—not a thousandth part of that which Joseph Smith revealed to the church has yet been unfolded, either to the church or to the world. The work of the expounder has scarcely begun. The Prophet planted by teaching the germ-truths of the great dispensation of the fulness of times. The watering and weeding is going on, and God is giving the increase, and will give it more abundantly in the future as more *intelligent discipleship* shall obtain. The disciples of "Mormonism," growing discontented with the necessarily primitive methods which have hitherto prevailed in sustaining the doctrine, will yet take profounder and broader views of the great doctrines committed to the Church; and, departing from mere repetition, will cast them in new formulas; cooperating in the works of the Spirit, until they help to give to the truths received a more forceful expression and carry it beyond the earlier and cruder stages of development.[26]

I want to be the kind of disciple Roberts describes here. I hope you do, too, and that you can envision Mormonism at its very best, fulfilling its promise—and that you will stay to make that destiny unfold. And that you will find seeds of hope to sustain you. But you must make such hope a quest. It is my witness that the seeds of hope are all around us, in the doctrines, the communities, the lives touched and transformed by the Restoration.

I now conclude with one final thought. In C. S. Lewis's masterful retelling of the Fall, Eve only gradually comes to a recognition of her own moral agency. She simply assumes that through her posture of total obedience and trust, she has given her will over to another. But then she awakens to the reality and inescapability of the burden of choice. As she explains to a kind of spiritual mentor,

26. B. H. Roberts, "Book of Mormon Translation: Interesting Correspondence on the Subject of the Manual Theory," *Improvement Era* 9, no. 9 (Jul. 1906): 713.

> I have thought that I was being carried, and behold, I was walking. . . . Out of my own heart I do it. . . . I thought that I was carried in the will of Him I love, but now I see that I walk with it. I thought that the good things He sent me drew me into them as the waves lift the islands; but now I see that it is I who plunge into them, with my own legs and arms.[27]

I love this scene, because it clarifies for me one of the most important keys to the vocation of the disciple: the recognition that discipleship is not a relinquishing of the will but a redirection: a condition of perpetual, willful, and will-filled redirection and reaffirmation (which is my preferred translation of *metanoeo*). Discipleship, belief, commitment, are in the end high-stakes, risk-taking, vulnerability-laden choice.

May you immerse yourself in the gospel deeply enough to taste God's love, may you find the faith to be willing to give yourself wholly to the community of fellow Saints, and may you realize that the choice is yours to find and nourish seeds of hope to sustain you along the way.

27. C. S. Lewis, *Perelandra* (New York: Collier Books, 1944), 68–69.

Rebecca Wagstaff
Branch & Vessel
oil on muslin on panel, 24x38, 2007

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO IN CYBERSPACE?: A COMPARISON OF ONLINE AUTHORITY APPEALS ON TWO LDS WEBSITES TARGETING BELIEVERS AND NON-MEMBERS

David W. Scott

Religious practice is shifting from churches to the internet in what some critics call a "post-denominational era."[1] One early commentator predicted that "the web would reduce us to a virtual community of believers practicing a kind of 'McFaith'—fast, convenient, but hardly nourishing."[2] These concerns were driven in part by the internet's ability to undermine traditional religious authority.[3] In today's religious sphere, the web shifts the locus of power from clergy to the individual in much the same way the printing press empowered individualism and gave rise

1. Lori Leibovich, "That Online Religion with Shopping, Too," *New York Times*, Apr. 6, 2000, G1, https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/tech/00/04/circuits/articles/06reli.html.

2. Butler-Bass, "Internet Religion Just Doesn't Compute as Lent Begins: People of Faith Realize That Only Human Bodies Can Touch the Divine," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Mar. 8, 2000, A-19.

3. Esther Dyson, George Gilder, George Keyworth, and Alvin Toffler, "Cyberspace and the American Dream: A Magna Carta for the Knowledge Age," The Progress and Freedom Foundation, Aug. 1994, accessed Mar. 9, 2015, http://www.pff.org/issues-pubs/futureinsights/fi1.2magnacarta.html.

to the Protestant Reformation.[4] It encourages new religious movements and compels clergy in established traditions to reconsider the way they interact with followers.[5] Religious organizations are also increasingly turning to the web to attract followers.[6] But entering cyberspace creates new challenges. Online forums allow detractors or the uninformed to propagate misinformation about church teachings.[7] Furthermore, religious organizations face an uphill battle to appeal to a generation that seeks religious or spiritual fulfillment beyond denominational worship.[8]

How then does an international church use the internet to maintain authority when communicating to its flock? How does it use authoritative appeals to reach a generation of outsiders who often eschew denominational religion? This paper addresses these questions by analyzing how authority is constructed on two websites operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Introduction

Mainline churches have been losing followers since the end of World War II.[9] Wade Clark Roof suggests that this transition was propelled by

4. Paul A. Soukup, "Challenges for Evangelization in the Digital Age" (presented at Continental Congress on the Church and Information Society, Monterrey, Mexico, 2003).

5. Morten T. Højsgaard and Margit Warburg, eds., *Religion and Cyberspace* (London: Routledge, 2005).

6. Lorne L. Dawson and Douglas E. Cowan, eds., *Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

7. Lorne L. Dawson, "Researching Religion in Cyberspace: Issues and Strategies," in *Religion on the Internet: Research Prospects and Promises,* edited by Jeffrey K. Hadden and Douglas E. Cowan (New York: JAI, 2000), 25–54.

8. Wade Clark Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999).

9. Ibid.

postmodern values favoring "personal, deeply felt spiritual concerns."[10] Because individual spirituality is preferred over dogma,[11] personal autonomy becomes a more prevalent feature of worship.[12] The preponderance of recent studies of US religious practice finds a growing distrust of religious authority claims, skepticism of scripture, suspicion of "absolutes," and religion valued for its "instrumentality" rather than its theology.[13]

This distrust of religious authority is exacerbated by the rise of religion on the web. Yet, a recent review of 109 studies of online religion found that only nine examined the relationship between discourse and religious authority.[14] The internet challenges religious authority in a number of ways. It "poses a radical challenge to the restrictive control imposed by [church] leadership" by allowing communities to converse outside the vertical channels imposed by leaders.[15] One example of this is evident in a study by David Piff and Marit Warburg finding that a Baha'i online forum encouraged discussants who challenged the official positions of church leaders.[16]

10. Ibid., 58.

11. Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith Since WWII* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988).

12.Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991).

13. Roof, *Spiritual Marketplace.*

14. Heidi Campbell, "Religion on the Internet: A Microcosm for Studying Internet Trends and Implications," *New Media & Society* 15, no. 5 (2013): 680–94.

15. Eileen Barker, "Crossing the Boundary: New Challenges to Religious Authority and Control as a Consequence of Access to the Internet," in *Religion and Cyberspace,* 67–85.

16. David Piff and Margit Warburg, "Seeking the Truth: Plausibility Alignment on a Baha'i Email List," in *Religion in Cyberspace,* 86–101.

The internet also creates "instant experts" who, despite lacking the credentials of traditional church leaders, are often quite influential.[17] In some cases, communal support establishes online religious commentators as authoritative.[18] Others may subvert traditional religious authority figures by claiming to have their own supernatural connections.

While informative, these inquiries limit the definition of authority to Max Weber's notion of "pure legitimate authority." Heidi Campbell argues that scholars studying the impact of the internet on religious authority should determine how authority is conveyed rather than just its outcome.[19] She identifies four types of online authority: 1) hierarchical (religious leaders); 2) structural (official organizations or community structures); 3) ideological (shared beliefs, ideas, or identity); and 4) textual (recognized teachings and creeds or religious books).[20]

Recognizing these authority types is particularly useful when examining authority claims within the LDS Church because the institution's distribution of power is somewhat paradoxical. It has a top-down priesthood hierarchy at the institutional level, while also including a "grassroots" organization comprised of all "worthy" males who receive priesthood authority at the age of twelve.

The Church's emphasis on authority is also tied to the teaching that it is the only "true and living" church.[21] And most of the religious teachings

17. Marilyn C. Krogh and Brooke Ashley Pillifant, "The House of Netjer: A New Religious Community Online," in *Religion Online: Finding Faith on the Internet,* 205–19.

18. Debbie Herring, "Virtual as Contextual: A Net News Theology," in *Religion and Cyberspace,* 149–65.

19. Heidi A. Campbell, "Religious Authority and the Blogosphere," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 15, no. 2 (2010): 254.

20. Heidi Campbell, "Who's Got the Power? Religious Authority and the Internet," *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 12, no. 3 (2007): 1043–62.

21. The Church's prophet-founder, Joseph Smith, wrote (and subsequently canonized as scripture in the Church) that this new organization was "the

and directives come from the Church's semiannual general conference meetings that feature sermons by General Authorities. According to Gordon and Gary Shepherd, "it would be difficult to propose a modern religion in which the rhetoric of religious leaders plays a more significant role than in Mormonism."[22]

Another authoritative source unique to the LDS Church is its open canon of scripture, along with other sources of textual authority including correlated LDS publications,[23] the Handbook of Instructions, books by General Authorities, and the LDS.org website.

Since the 1960s, the Church's correlation program has controlled the information that is distributed to members,[24] resulting in a standardized instructional curriculum that, according to some critics, marginalizes intellectuals who might challenge the claims of Church leaders.[25] This emphasis on correlation encourages a fundamentalist acceptance of Church authority.[26]

The popularity of online faith discussion groups challenges this fundamentalist trend. Blogs and websites such as exmormon.org and affirmation.org create space for people to question LDS teachings. Church

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only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth," in Doctrine and Covenants 1:30.

22. Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd, "Mormonism in Secular Society: Changing Patterns in Official Ecclesiastical Rhetoric," *Review of Religious Research* 26, no. 1 (1984): 30.

23. These are all approved by leadership at the highest levels and include periodical magazines, Sunday School manuals, missionary discussions, and seminary and other Church Educational System (CES) curriculum.

24. Peter Wiley, "The Lee Revolution and the Rise of Correlation," *Sunstone* 10, no. 1 (Winter 1984–85): 18–22.

25. Richard D. Poll, "The Swearing Elders: Some Reflections," *Sunstone* 10, no. 9 (1985): 14–17.

26. Armand L. Mauss, "Assimilation and Ambivalence: The Mormon Reaction to Americanization," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22, no. 1 (1989): 30–67.

reactions to such sites are mixed. Kate Kelly, the founder of ordainwomen.com (an internet forum advocating for the ordination of women to the LDS priesthood) was met with resistance from Church leaders, culminating in Kelly's excommunication in 2014.[27] Furthermore, John Dehlin's Mormon Stories podcast questioning LDS teachings and practices regarding same-sex marriage—and reaching thousands of listeners—likely contributed to his excommunication in 2015.[28] The Church's strategy isn't limited to punishing cynics. During the initial US presidential bid by Mitt Romney, the Church launched a multi-million dollar "I'm a Mormon" advertising campaign featuring an internet presence accompanying over ninety different ad executions across the globe.[29] This campaign depicts Church followers acting as the public face of the institution, with videos featuring everyday Latter-day Saints sharing their faith.

The paradoxical and diverse sources of authority within the Church, the rise of the internet as a means of transmitting information, and the cultural shift away from denominational religion create growing challenges and opportunities for the LDS Church in its online messaging strategy. How does the Church use authority to appeal to LDS members versus non-members?

Research Questions

Here I apply a close reading of two LDS websites. The first, LDS.org (hereinafter LDSO), reaches practicing Latter-day Saints; the second,

27. Laurie Goodstein, "Mormons Expel Founder of Group Seeking Priesthood for Women," *New York Times,* Jun. 23, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/24/us/Kate-Kelly-Mormon-Church-Excommunicates-Ordain-Women-Founder.html.

28. Laurie Goodstein, "Mormon Church Expels Outspoken Critic," *New York Times,* Feb. 10, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/11/us/mormon-church-expels-critic-for-apostasy.html.

29. Chiung Hwang Chen, "Marketing Religion Online: The LDS Church's SEO Efforts," *Journal of Media and Religion* 10, no. 4 (2011): 185–205.

Mormon.org (hereinafter MoOrg), targets non-members. Guiding the analysis are the following research questions:

1. Which of Heidi Campbell's authority types are most prevalent in the lead articles of each website?

2. How is religious authority manifest in the design elements of each site?

   • What do the layout, visuals, and interactive features suggest about authority types?

   • Which types of authority are evident and/or taken for granted in the narration and text regarding key theological claims?

Procedures and Limitations

This study is grounded in the close-text method outlined in Stuart Hall's introduction to Paper Voices, which approaches media content as a text: a "literary and visual construct, employing symbolic means, shaped by rules, conventions, and traditions intrinsic to the use of language in the widest sense."[30] This approach extends the scope of scrutiny beyond a content-analysis approach that examines the "manifest" text, seeking also to unearth "the latent, implicit patterns and emphases" that underscore authority claims on each website.[31]

Beginning with the lead topics and stories, the manifest discourse is determined by tallying the sources of authority claims in photographs and visual links, topic titles, and references within the written and video narration linked to these subjects. Next, the use of authority appeals on fundamental topics highlighted in MoOrg and central to the denominational practice of Latter-day Saints (prophets, the Bible, family and temples, the Word of Wisdom, and baptism) are compared. When a

30. Stuart Hall, "Introduction," in *Paper Voices: The Popular Press and Social Change 1935–1965,* edited by A. C. H. Smith, Elizabeth Immirzi, and Trevor Blackwell (London: Chatto and Windus, 1975), 17.

31. Hall, "Introduction," 15.

MoOrg topic is not on the homepage of LDSO, the analysis centers on the leading LDSO page following a search for the subject.

This investigation is premised on observations that are fixed in time and place, despite the fact that cultures "do not hold still for their portraits."[32] Furthermore, this analysis is not comprehensive in time or scope, nor is it intended to predict future LDS communication strategies.

Findings

Across all the areas analyzed, LDS.org emphasizes the institutional Church by stressing hierarchical and structural forms of authority. However, Mormon.org favors ideological authority premised on shared values.

Authority Sourcing in Feature Stories

In the feature stories, LDSO references or portrays sources of authority sixty-six times (figures 1 and 2). Of these, 71 percent (n=47) reference hierarchical or structural authority (these often overlap in the context of LDS authority), 21 percent (n=14) feature textual authority (most of which is tied to scriptures unique to LDS canon), and 8 percent (n=5) allude to ideological claims. The MoOrg website reverses this pattern. Its lead articles feature forty-four authoritative support references, with 7 percent (n=3) featuring hierarchical proof, 17 percent (n=7) offering textual support (linked primarily to the Bible), and 76 percent (n=32) backed by ideological proofs (all of which are tied to shared beliefs).

The disparate authority appeals are manifest in both the subject matter and sourcing of lead stories. Five of the seven feature stories on LDSO either source or are about hierarchical or structural authority:

32. James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 10.

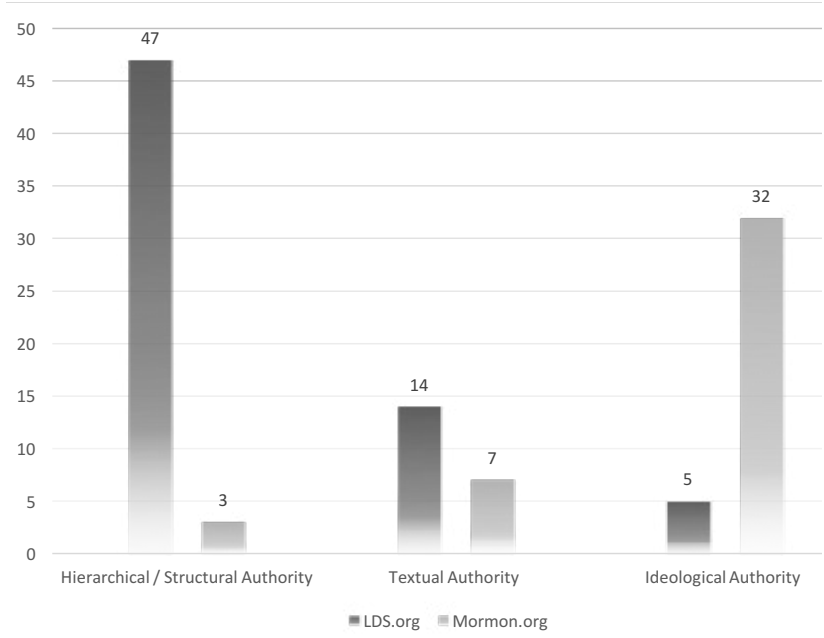

Figure 1. Number of lead story authority references by website

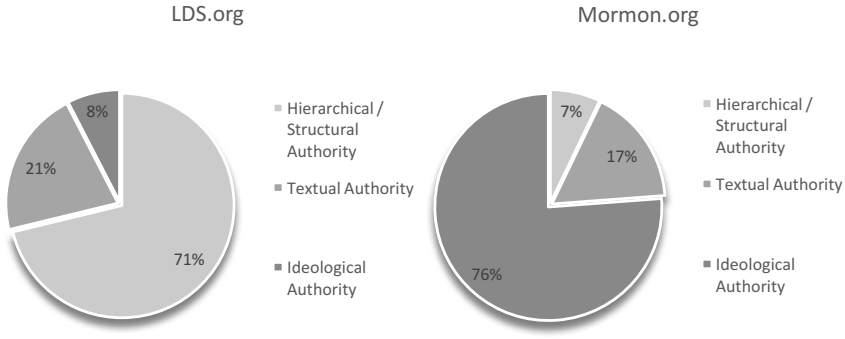

Figure 2. Distribution of authority appeals in lead stories within each website

- Prophets: The Way God Shows His Love (by the First Presidency)
- Worldwide Devotion: How to be a Strong Link in your Family (by an apostle)
- President Monson: Follow His Example of Kindness (by the prophet)
- First Presidency Encourages People to "Just Serve" Storm Victims (by the Church News)
- Discover Deep Learning (by a General Authority)

Conversely, MoOrg leads with uncited conversation starters: Who are Mormons, Jesus Christ's Church, 10 Things About Missionaries, The Book of Mormon, and Jesus Christ, followed by articles that rarely make hierarchical claims.

This pattern is further evident in additional supporting material linking to the main stories on LDSO. These added articles and features are also tied to the institutional Church by way of structural/hierarchical and textual authority:

- Scriptures (links to the LDS canon)
- Prophets and Church Leaders (linking to articles and talks by prophets and apostles, other leaders, and a book titled Teachings of the Presidents of the Church)
- Learning Resources (subsequent links to five sources of correlated Church manuals and the Church's newsroom)
- Teaching Resources (material from correlated instructional material)

This finding is further evident in our topical analysis. On LDSO, the lead articles regarding key theological claims discussed on MoOrg (the Bible, baptism, the Word of Wisdom, temples, prophets) yielded fifty-six additional links to hierarchal authority (talks by General Authorities), twenty-seven to the canon, and twenty-eight to LDS instructional material (figure 3). These are in addition to the other articles and authority references within each article.

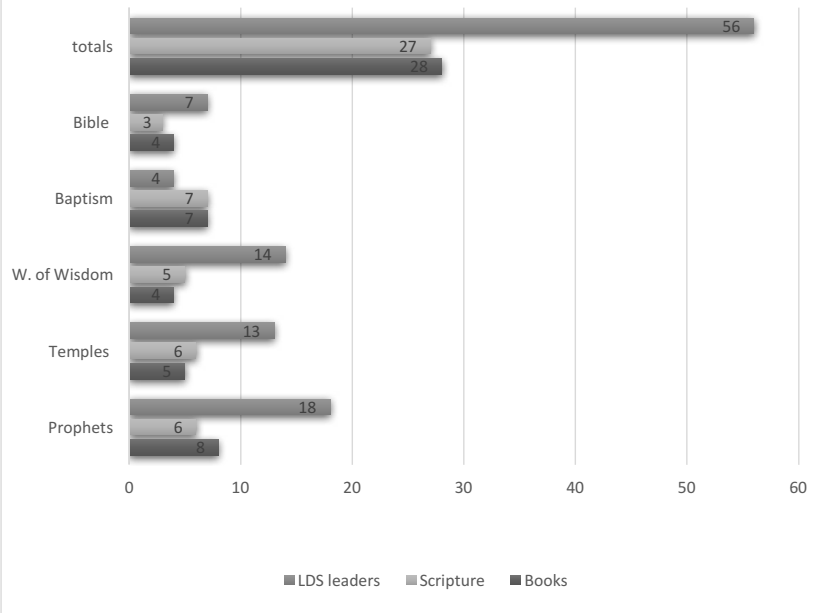

Figure 3. Additional authorities linked to primary LDS.org topical search pages (using Mormon.org lead stories as topics)

The first article linked to a search of "prophets" on LDSO was backed by the most hierarchical proofs (n=32), with over half drawn directly from talks by LDS leaders (figure 4). This circular strategy of promoting hierarchical authority figures by citing hierarchical authorities suggests that leadership power is less taken for granted than may otherwise be assumed. Conversely, the topics with the fewest hierarchical proofs were "baptism" (eighteen references with only four general conference talks) and "the Bible" (fourteen references with seven general conference talks).

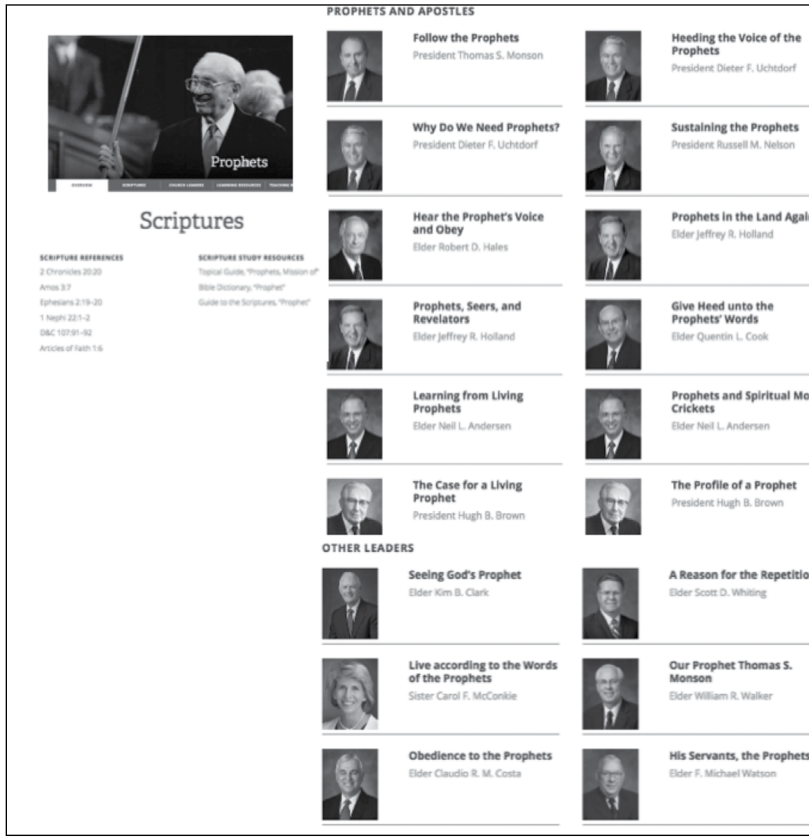

Figure 4. LDS.org authorities cited on subject of prophets

Web Design and Visuals

LDSO is organized as a space where Church members can access information to not only assist them in their spiritual pursuits, but as source material for participating in ecclesiastical service (such as teaching Sunday School or giving "talks" during local Sunday worship services). It is structured like an encyclopedia: formal, content-heavy, with much

of the material emphasizing institutional sources and authority as well as instructions. Furthermore, unlike its sister site, it offers few interactive features. Its emphasis on content creates a significant amount of clutter (figure 5). The homepage has five pull-down tabs[33] linking to fourteen topical headings with over sixty-two more links (totaling eighty-one links). The seven articles on the homepage are also content-heavy, featuring sixteen text-based "Quick Links," eight more thumbnails, and thirty-one other links.

MoOrg offers little by way of in-depth answers to religious questions, instead directing visitors to seek additional information from LDS representatives offline. The site itself is also less formal and includes more streaming video and interactive content. It features only three pull-down tabs (Beliefs, FAQs, and Contact) linking to eighteen articles or interactive features. Half of the main page is devoted to answering "Who Are the Mormons?" with one video and four links, followed by six thumbnail links and five text links.

The visuals on each site further illustrate their conflicting authority appeals. Even the trademark of the Church, embedded at the top of both sites, is noticeably larger on LDSO than it is on MoOrg, conveying the centrality of the institutional Church's trademark for LDS visitors while downplaying it for non-members.

Dominant on LDSO are photographs of Church leaders, Church buildings, or people involved in religious worship. Additionally, the typical streaming videos are general conference talks by Church leaders. MoOrg, however, presents streaming video and photographs that never show LDS leaders and seldom portray people participating in religious activities.

These differences are most evident in content accompanying the five key MoOrg topics. Each LDSO article on these subjects includes a photographic illustration—four of them tied to institutional religious

33. Scriptures and Study, Families and Individuals, Share the Gospel, Inspiration and News, Serve and Teach.

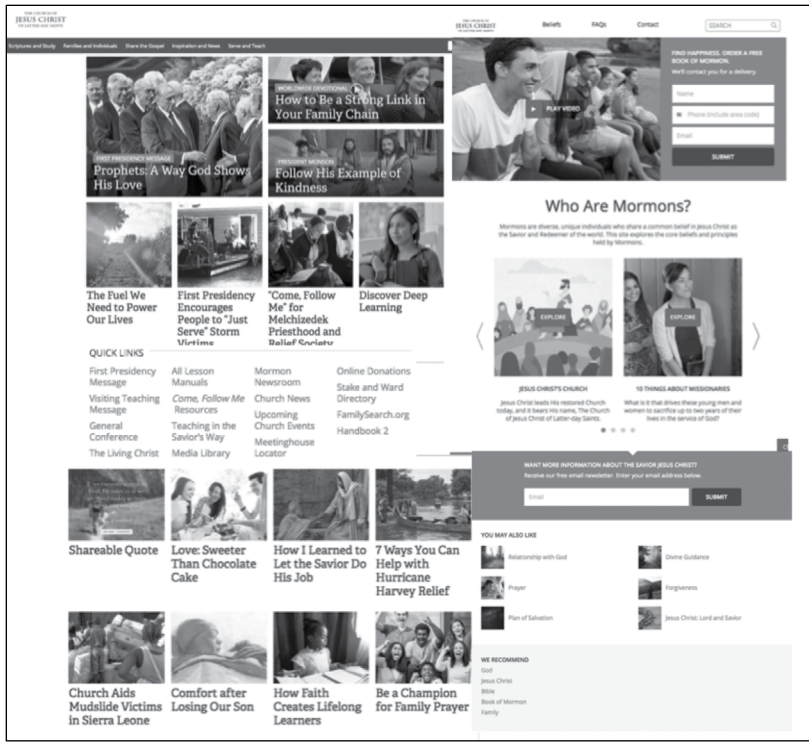

Figure 5. Layout comparison of first page of LDS.org (left) and Mormon.org (right)

practice.[34] MoOrg's only photograph shows people playing backyard football. The remaining MoOrg pages are supported with clip art, interactive quizzes, animated videos, or links to the "I'm a Mormon" campaign. These distinctions are telling because, as noted by Roland Barthes, unlike other illustrative forms, photography tends to limit

34. These photos show a person holding a Bible, a boy being baptized in an LDS font, an LDS temple, and the Church's current prophet.

potential interpretations of the image because photographs are understood by people to be objective representations of reality.[35]

LDSO video content not drawn from general conference addresses is scarce and difficult to find. These alternative video streams are buried in the Media section at the bottom of the Topics pages, requiring viewers to scroll past numerous banners and links emphasizing institutional authority before locating them.[36] Furthermore, the thumbnails linked to this streaming content are not only comparatively small, but they are embedded in a back-page location next to a few streaming audio samples of children's Sunday School songs—suggesting perhaps that adding them to LDSO was an afterthought.

Conversely, MoOrg features a plethora of entertaining streaming video content. The most common have catchy jingles, anonymous (i.e., no official authority) narrators, clip-art graphics, and inclusive language. The language and structure of these videos highlight ideological (shared) beliefs. The Book of Mormon video leads with the narrator suggesting that "practically everybody" (shared authority) wonders what this book is, especially those who saw the play (cut to playbill in Manhattan). Its authority is tied to its populist appeal—the "millions" of people whose lives have been impacted by its message. "Who are the Mormons?" focuses on worship as shared experience. A narrated animation describes Latter-day Saints as "an extended family of faith" who interact with one another throughout the week because "God doesn't love us only once a week."

Structural elements of the LDS Church such as the women's Relief Society and its youth programs are divested of their institutional nature in animations showing LDS women "putting together care packages for neighbors in need" and youth programs that "reinforce values and let

35. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography,* translated by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981).

36. These links or headings to be bypassed include scriptures, talks by the first presidency, talks by other leaders, articles in correlated books, Church magazines, CES material, and even stories from the Church's Newsroom.

the kids know they are not alone." Additional animations show Latter-day Saints helping others move, participating in family activities, and throwing neighborhood parties. Local Church members, not leaders, are shown teaching in Church because, the narrator says, "there is no paid clergy" in the Church. This emphasis on local congregant service is finally linked to the textual authority of the Bible, noting that members do these things because "it's what Jesus did. And that's why it's what Mormons do, wherever they are, all over the world."

The contrasting emphasis on shared experience rather than Church authorities is most evident in the "Jesus Christ" sections. MoOrg makes no reference to LDS leaders, emphasizing instead shared beliefs ("nearly everyone has heard the name Jesus Christ"). Its animated clip ends with inclusive pronouns and language typical among Christians:

> Jesus' greatest miracle is giving every human being the opportunity to have life and happiness beyond mortality. All we have to do is believe in Him, and try our best to follow his example and teachings. Sometimes we fail, but that's exactly why Jesus came to earth in the first place.

However, the LDSO page "Who is Jesus Christ?" emphasizes LDS leadership. This page is broken down into eight segments about Jesus, seven of which link directly to talks or articles by the Church's highest leaders:

- The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles (a signed proclamation by LDS apostles and the First Presidency)
- Who is Jesus Christ? (by late apostle Boyd K. Packer)
- Special Witnesses of Jesus Christ (linking to talks by each of the Quorum of the Twelve and three members of the First Presidency)
- Jesus the Christ (linking to a book of that title by a late LDS apostle)
- He Lives! Witnesses of Latter-day Prophets (linking to written testimonials of all sixteen LDS prophets dating back to Joseph Smith)
- We testify of Jesus Christ (testimonial of the late President Gordon B. Hinckley)

• The Only True God and Jesus Christ Whom He has Sent (video of general conference talk by apostle Jeffrey R. Holland)

These segments include fifty more links to statements, talks, or books by LDS presidents or apostles. They reinforce the "prophet, seer, and revelator" status of the Church's top fifteen leaders by excluding comments by other Church members (including general authorities), referring to the top leaders as "special witnesses," and by presenting a testimonial signed by them (The Living Christ) in the form of a legal document (thereby reducing the likelihood of resistant readings). Interestingly, despite the title, this content reads more as a treatise about the special status of those within the Church who are authorized to speak of Jesus than as a commentary about Jesus himself.

Only in the final segment, titled "What do Latter-day Saints believe about Jesus Christ?," are LDSO visitors presented with the experience of everyday Latter-day Saints. However, here, visitors are sent to "I'm a Mormon" campaign videos located on the MoOrg website. Hence, people on LDSO seeking an understanding of LDS beliefs about Jesus beyond those made by the First Presidency and apostles are ultimately ejected from the website.

The Narrative Construction of Authority

Religious information on LDSO is typically prescriptive—framed as a warning—with emphasis placed on obedience to Church authorities. MoOrg narratives are more affective, placing emphasis on shared experience and pastoral religion.

Apostasy and the role of prophets

A central teaching of the Church is of a universal apostasy shortly after Jesus' death, necessitating a prophetic restoration by Joseph Smith.

On MoOrg, a feature video explains that after Jesus was crucified, "people split off and didn't always stay true" to his message, stating that

eventually, "people only had parts of Christ's original teachings." This language about "people" and "teachings" reinforces personal religiosity versus the institutional Church. The narrator uses a passive voice that emphasize the earnestness of believers and the value of teachings, rather than priesthood authority:

> After Christ's Resurrection, there was considerable chaos and dissent; apostles were martyred, and the foundational principles of Christ's Church became diluted. As a result, the members of His Church were scattered. Left with only remnants of the original truth, each generation of earnest followers strayed further from the true teachings and doctrine of Christ's Church.

The LDSO passage on this subject uses an active voice with emphasis on hierarchy and structural authority:

> After the deaths of the Savior and His apostles, men corrupted the principles of the gospel and made unauthorized changes in Church organization and priesthood ordinances.

This notion of "unauthorized" changes, "Church organization," and "priesthood ordinances" reinforces the dominant narrative throughout LDSO underscoring the authority claims of Church leaders.

The pattern continues in the discussion of prophets. MoOrg frames LDS prophets as pastoral ministers. Here, they "give instructions and counsel," and "advise" on "social issues such as marriage . . ., practical matters such as education and financial prudence, and spiritual subjects that help us overcome personal trials." Prophets are not portrayed as authority figures, but are instead shown to be concerned helpers: "Truly God knows our deepest concerns and wants to help." MoOrg further appeals to shared experiences, again using first-person pronouns: "We" will learn the value of a prophet's words when "we apply them in our personal lives," adding, "Those who hear these messages often comment, 'It was like they were speaking to me!'"

Rather than functioning as pastoral ministers, LDSO leaders "speak boldly and clearly, denouncing sin and warning of its consequences,"

and "their teaching reflects the will of the Lord." Furthermore, LDSO visitors are warned of dire consequences should they disregard the decrees of Church leaders:

> What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and excuse not myself. . . . [W]hether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same. (D&C 1:38)
>
> Though shalt give heed unto all of his [Joseph Smith's] words and commandments. . . . For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you. (D&C 21:4–6)

The Bible and Family Roles

When discussing the Bible, LDSO stresses prophetic authority and "revelation," while noting the canon's limitations. This emphasis highlights the need for continued "revelation" through current leaders. According to LDSO, the Bible contains "revelations written by prophets," though it is "not God's final revelation to humanity." However, MoOrg avoids hierarchical authority figures in its presentation of the Bible. Instead, it democratizes the canon, stating that the Bible "tells of the Lord's interaction with his people" (emphasis added).

LDSO visitors learn that "parents have a sacred duty" to care for their children and "to teach them to love and serve one another [and to] observe the commandments of God." Furthermore, they have "a solemn responsibility to care for each other and for their children" (emphasis added). These directives come from the first link on the LDSO Family page, "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," a 1995 statement signed by the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve. Although the document allows for extenuating circumstances that impact parental roles, it ends by warning that failure to follow its edicts will bring about "calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets."

MoOrg's narrative about family matters is more pastoral and positive. It acknowledges that "Mormons are family oriented," but that they "demonstrate this family focus" by conducting weekly family activities.

Missing here is the LDSO emphasis on obedience, Church leaders, or calamities. Instead, visitors learn that LDS family members gather together and "share music, lessons, scripture, stories, fun activities, and prayer, with the goal of strengthening their relationships." Finally, rather than emphasizing solemn duties, MoOrg readers are told that family roles are fluid and grounded in shared responsibilities: "Whether parent, child, sibling, or spouse, every one of God's children has a role in taking care of one another."

The Word of Wisdom

The Church's health code, the Word of Wisdom, is also an important aspect of LDS worship. Commitment to its precepts is a prerequisite for baptism into the faith, and obedience is required for members wishing to participate in the Church's highest sacraments in the temple. How the two LDS websites approach this topic offers a unique litmus test of how contemporary authority is framed within the Church because, historically, this code was interpreted in a less confining manner than is currently practiced. This canonized revelation by Joseph Smith in the early nineteenth century stated that it was not a commandment.[37] Unlike the modern emphasis on abstention from tobacco, alcohol, tea, and coffee,[38] early Latter-day Saints viewed it as a call for moderation.[39]

Both websites state that the Word of Wisdom is a law given for "physical and spiritual" well-being. After this, they part ways. MoOrg again uses inclusive language, explaining that "we are counseled to eat meat sparingly and to avoid addictive substances," while LDSO readers are told that "the Lord revealed that . . . alcoholic drinks; tea and coffee . . . are harmful." MoOrg visitors are told that Church leaders have "added

37. "To be sent greeting; not by commandment or constraint, but by revelation" (D&C 89:2).

38. Some Latter-day Saints today believe all caffeinated drinks are proscribed.

39. Robert J. McCue, "Did the Word of Wisdom Become a Commandment in 1851?," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14, no. 3 (1981): 66–77.

counsel to abstain from using illegal drugs, abusing prescription drugs, and overeating." This counsel is supported by "a wide range of studies by esteemed scientific and medical institutions and schools unaffiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." LDSO visitors, however, learn that "illegal drugs can especially destroy" them, and that disregarding the Word of Wisdom is "destructive spiritually and physically." These declarative statements from LDSO, offered without the need of scientific support, underscore the taken-for-grantedness of the Word of Wisdom as a signifier of one's faithfulness in the Church and of the divine source of authority through which it is currently interpreted. It is also telling that the LDSO language is the most forceful regarding a subject that, at least historically, was not an important signifier of one's commitment to the faith.

Conclusion

Given the democratizing power of the internet to challenge religious authority, it is not surprising that the LDS Church would emphasize its authority claims to believers. This analysis of LDSO demonstrates that the Church approaches this challenge head-on by constantly reaffirming its hierarchical and structural authority when speaking to its followers. This strategy of frequently sourcing, depicting, discussing, and quoting Church leaders, while also emphasizing their divine calling, suggests that the retrenchment phase of the Church that was articulated in Armand Mauss's treatise has transitioned from traditional correlated material to the internet. These findings also buttress the Gordon and Gary Shepherd finding that much of LDS identity and belief is tied to the rhetoric of General Authorities. This appears to be equally relevant on the internet.

It also makes sense that to appeal to non-members, MoOrg would emphasize shared beliefs rather than hierarchical authority. Given the growing aversion to denominational religion in the United States, a strategy of emphasizing absolutes and institutional authority figures

would likely be ineffective in gaining converts. The MoOrg website illustrates how shared religious values can be used as a means of supporting religious claims by emphasizing what people already believe.

However, this study also indicates that the Church has created a contradictory rendition of itself on the web. In terms of authority appeals, these two sites seem to speak for two unrelated faith traditions. A visitor to LDSO would believe that the Church is comprised primarily of powerful leaders who speak authoritatively and often about matters of orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and faith. The idea of local worship or shared values at the community level is overshadowed by emphasis on the institutional Church and a religion grounded by theological absolutes. To be a Latter-day Saint, then, is not primarily about individual worship but is instead valued within the context of one's membership in the tribe and obedience to Church leaders. Most (if not all) theological claims have merit only within the confines of structural and hierarchical authority.

MoOrg offers a counter-version of the faith. Here, the Church is lauded for its instrumentalism rather than its theology. It is not a top-down organization but is instead comprised of a community of local believers with shared values. Members do not belong to the institutional Church as much as a community that meets regularly to participate in spiritual quests and to contribute to the good of society. Church leaders on MoOrg, especially apostles and prophets, function largely behind-the-scenes, offering pastoral service, advice, and counsel only when needed. Here, the Church is fiercely personal. It is also less absolute, less rigid, more interactive, and more entertaining.

These findings beg the question as to what happens when converts transition to the next phase into the Church. What happens if, after visiting Mormon.org, instead of contacting the Church to send missionaries, these potential converts find the LDS.org page? Does this bombardment of hierarchical proofs sit well in the minds of seekers who are apprehensive of religion practiced at the denominational level? Does LDS.org's emphasis on hierarchy and structure resonate with a

visitor who learned about the Church by watching whimsical videos depicting local worship on Mormon.org? What happens to new LDS converts who experience this rhetorical shift after joining the Church and conversing with their new LDS friends, who, as insiders, are familiar with a faith tradition that constitutes one's place in the tribe in relation to commitment to hierarchical and structural authorities?

These questions suggest a need for additional explorations of how LDS authority is discursively constructed and negotiated in the blogosphere, where Latter-day Saints can find an alternate space to discuss matters of faith, authority, and doubt. How are believing Latter-day Saints or those who are experiencing a faith crisis negotiating these issues of authority in the blogosphere? Do they find solace in the Church's emphasis on hierarchy, or is it a source of tension in their spiritual lives? Until further studied, God only knows.

A final note. After this study was completed, President Russell M. Nelson became the new prophet and president of the Church. One of his first major public statements was to condemn the use of the term "Mormon" in reference to the Church and its followers. He not only condemned the use of the term but in subsequent addresses told his followers that the name "correction" was a revelation from God, and that Jesus Christ was offended when the term was used.[40] Subsequently, the Church has been renaming many of its iconic organizations and reconfiguring both of its websites to align with this new teaching, including removing the "I'm a Mormon" videos from the Mormon.org website.[41] These changes on the websites, once fully developed, beg for additional investigation.

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40. Russell M. Nelson, "The Correct Name of the Church," Oct. 2018, https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2018/10/the-correct-name-of-the-church?lang=eng.

41. For example, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir was renamed The Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square, and though the URL for Mormon.org remains the same, the masthead and lead banners have replaced "Mormon" with other terms.

Rebecca Wagstaff
Considering
oil on panel, 38x21, 2005

BRITISH LATTER DAY SAINT[1] CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS IN WORLD WAR I

Andrew Bolton

World War I was the founding disaster of the twentieth century. It began for Britain on August 4, 1914. Nobody at the time realised how serious it was going to be. Ultimately, the Great War involved many nations and their empires and resulted in over 8.5 million military deaths and between 6.6 and 13 million civilian deaths.[2] It ended empires, added to

The author would like to acknowledge: Peter Judd for finding and sharing key primary source documents on Edwards and for an unpublished essay, "RLDS Attitudes Toward World War I." Bill Hetherington, archivist for Peace Pledge Union in London, who through an interview and lengthy emails very generously helped me understand conscientious objection in WWI Britain and helped me make important corrections. Cyril Pearce and Jay Beaman for their generosity of time, expertise, and CO databases for Britain and the US and Canada, respectively. I very much enjoyed the conversations with Paul and Lyman Edwards, sons of F. Henry Edwards. Finally, the author is grateful for the collegial sharing, encouragement, and good fellowship with LDS scholars David Pulsipher and Patrick Mason.

1. Before changing their name to Community of Christ in 2001, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS Church) stylized this term as "Latter Day Saint," while The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) stylizes it as "Latter-day Saint." The references throughout this paper will be consistent with whichever organization is being discussed, and "Latter Day Saint" will be used when referring to both.

2. "Source List and Detailed Death Tolls for the Primary Megadeaths of the Twentieth Century," Necrometrics, http://necrometrics.com/20c5m.htm#WW1. There is a consensus around 8.5 million military deaths. Civilian death estimates

others, and redrew maps beginning in Europe. The maps redrawn in the Middle East still plague us with consequences today. About fifty million or more died from a devastatingly destructive Spanish flu epidemic, incubated in the wartime trenches in France and spread worldwide among many populations weakened by wartime conditions.[3] In sunny August in 1914, many young would-be soldiers and their families, in an explosion of patriotism all over Europe, were blind to the coming devastation and carnage of industrialized, mechanized, and chemicalized warfare. By Christmas 1914, 177,000 British soldiers had been killed, more than one thousand every day.[4] The romantic illusion of war was fading everywhere in Europe. Much worse was to come. After pursuing an initial policy of neutrality under President Wilson, the US entered the war on April 6, 1917, over one hundred years ago. Ironically, it was also Good Friday.

Response of Latter Day Saints in World War I

What of the Latter Day Saint movement that claimed to prophetically discern the times and seasons of these latter days and also boldly proclaimed that they were *the* restoration church? The founding heart of the restoration vision was restoring Jesus Christ to the very centre of our attention: "This is my beloved Son. Hear Him!"[5] In the Book of Mormon, Jesus taught again the Sermon on the Mount in all its uncompromising

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range from 6.6 million to 13 million depending on whether the Russian Civil War and the Armenian massacres are included.

3. Jeffery K. Taubenberger and David M. Morens, "1918 Influenza: The Mother of All Pandemics," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 12, no. 1 (Jan. 2006): 15–22, available at https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/12/1/pdfs/05-0979.pdf.

4. Oliver Haslam, *Refusing to Kill: Conscientious Objection and Human Rights in the First World War* (London: Peace Pledge Union, 2014), 16.

5. Joseph Smith—History 1:17. See also *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints,* vol. 1, *1805–1835* (Independence, Mo.: Herald, 1951), 9.

and radical love of enemies.[6] According to the story told in 4 Nephi, the Nephite people responded to the ministry of Jesus by conversion. With the love of God in their hearts, they lived for two hundred years in a form of peaceful Zion that parallels Acts 2:36–47. There is economic justice, the abolition of classes and "ites," and the joy of strong families. This time ends with these words: "And they did smite upon the people of Jesus; but the people of Jesus did not smite again."[7] The founding, original vision of non-violent Zion is in response to the crucified Christ, who taught and practiced the love of enemies.

So how did believers in the Book of Mormon's message respond to World War I? For Latter Day Saints, conscientious objection (CO) would have been a faithful response to the founding vision of non-violent Zion, notwithstanding their earlier violence in Missouri, Illinois, and Utah.

David Pulsipher explains in an essay how criticism and suspicion of the war by LDS Church leaders changed after the US actually entered the war.[8] Larry Hunt in his biography of Frederick M. Smith, RLDS president from 1915 to 1946, describes Smith's belligerent nationalism.[9] So after April 6, 1917, most American leaders of both churches urged a patriotic response to World War I by their members. This was done to gain acceptance by the wider American society. Enlisting, obeying the draft, and buying war bonds demonstrated that they were loyal Americans. The gospel of peace was displaced by American nationalism as old men sacrificed their young men for acceptance by the wider American society.

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6. LDS 3 Nephi 12:19–26, 38–48; RLDS III Nephi 5:66–75, 84–92. Compare with Matthew 5:21–26, 38–48.

7. LDS 4 Nephi 1:34; RLDS IV Nephi 1:37.

8. J. David Pulsipher, "'We do not love war, but . . .': Mormons, the Great War, and the Crucible of Nationalism," in *American Churches and the First World War,* edited by Gordon L. Heath (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2016), 129–48.

9. Larry E. Hunt, *F. M. Smith: Saint as Reformer,* vol. 2, *1874–1946* (Independence, Mo.: Herald, 1982), 438–43.

There are now known to be four British Latter Day Saint COs in WWI. Francis Henry Edwards from Birmingham was the youngest. He was apprenticed as an articled clerk, unmarried, and RLDS. It was his seventeenth birthday when Britain entered the war on August 4, 1914. He was nineteen when he was court-martialled at the Norton Army Barracks, Worcester, in December 1916 as a CO and sentenced initially to 112 days' hard labour. Edwards served this punishment in Wormwood Scrubs prison, London before going before the central tribunal and being judged as an authentic CO. He then opted to be transferred to do work of national importance in Dartmoor Prison in Princetown—converted to a work centre for COs during WWI.

The other three conscientious objectors were all LDS. William Bradley was thirty-five, married, a cotton spinner from Oldham, Lancashire, and secretary of the Lancashire congregation of the LDS Church. He went before the Oldham military service tribunal on July 7, 1916 and was exempted from combatant service and recommended for hospital work—work judged to be of national importance. George Snook, a clerk to an egg and butter merchant, was from Portsmouth, Hampshire, aged forty and married with three children when he was posted to Aldershot in the Non-Combatant Corps[10] on January 16, 1917. He was demobilised on April 30, 1919. Edmund Wilfrid Wheatley was a clerk to a road board in Richmond, Surrey, aged forty-two and married with five children. He followed the difficult path taken by Francis Henry Edwards. He too was court-martialled, though in Wimbledon, London, and sentenced on November 4, 1917 to two years' hard labour. He was also sent to Wormwood Scrubs prison in London. He too came before the central tribunal and was finally adjudicated to be a genuine CO on January 4, 1918, and then sent to the Wakefield work centre in Yorkshire.[11]

10. The Non-Combatant Corps (NCC) was a corps of the British Army comprised of conscientious objectors.

11. Credit for the discovery of these three LDS conscientious objectors belongs to Cyril Pearce, a premier scholar of British World War I conscientious objectors.

More Latter Day Saint COs have come to light recently thanks in part to the tireless work of Jay Beaman, who, like Cyril Pearce in England, is compiling a database of all COs in the US and Canada. Charles Dexter Brush was twenty-eight and married with one child in 1917, RLDS and a farmer, with a fifth-grade education, living in Buffalo, Missouri.[12] British-born LDS member Albert White had migrated to Salt Lake City in 1909 at the age of eighteen. He was a conscientious objector in 1917, aged twenty-six, married with two young children.[13] George Amos Grigsby was a Canadian LDS member in Toronto and married when he called up in January 1918 and sent to France as a non-combatant.[14] In Germany there are no visible COs. Five hundred LDS men in Germany were immediately conscripted in 1914 and eventually seventy-five were

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His database "CO Register VII Access 2010.mdb" was sent to me Sept. 20, 2017, and all four Latter-day Saint COs are included. As of that date he had 18,328 entries. However, Pearce continues to add to the database. An older version of Cyril Pearce's registry is available online through Imperial War Museums. This version is now out of date by two years. It has 17,426 documented conscientious objectors and includes Francis Henry Edwards and Edmund Wilfrid Wheatley but not William Bradley or George Snook. This older public registry is available at https://search.livesofthefirstworldwar.org/search/world-records/conscientious-objectors-register-1914-1918.

Edmund Wilfrid Wheatley came before central tribunal with Lord Richard Cavendish and Lord Hambleden on Jan. 4, 1918. Lord Richard Cavendish was a member of the central tribunal who reviewed Francis Henry Edwards a year earlier. See the central tribunal minutes for the meeting held on Jan. 4, 1918. These minutes can be downloaded from First World War Military Service Tribunals, National Archives, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/conscription-appeals. See also National Archives MH-47-2-2.

12. Draft Registration Card for Charles Dexter Brush, form 314, no. 18. It is held under the volume label 25-32 A at the NARA (National Archives) in Morrow, Georgia, for the draft board ledger for Brush's home county in Missouri in 1917.

13. Patrick Q. Mason, "'When I Think of War I Am Sick at Heart': Latter-day Saint Non-Participation in World War I" (presidential address, Mormon History Association 53rd Annual Conference, Boise, Idaho, Jun. 9, 2018).

14. Jay Beaman, email to author with documents, Sept. 5, 2018.

killed. However, Karl Eduard Hofmann, former Social Democrat, was a reluctant soldier who had no intention of killing anyone. He was able to do medical work until he lost a leg from a lobbed grenade while tending a patient.[15] Until September 2017, there was only one known Latter Day Saint CO: RLDS F. Henry Edwards. Now, if we include Grigsby and Hoffman, there are eight, with still more perhaps to be found.[16]

Why so many British Latter Day Saint COs from small national churches? Leaders of both churches were critical of WWI before the United States entered it. Edwards, Bradley, and Snook all took their CO stand before the US entered the war on April 6, 1917, when they notionally still had the support of their American church leaders. It is important to remember that the war in Europe lasted over four years, but for the US it was over in one-and-a-half years. The hellish reality of the war was well understood by ordinary British working people. In the US, many people still had romantic ideas about the war.

The WWI conscientious objection story of Francis Henry Edwards is the best known and documented at this time. It is Edwards's story that I now want to tell, leaving competent LDS historians to work on the newly discovered British, American, German, and Canadian LDS conscientious objectors. Patrick Q. Mason, in his 2018 Mormon History Association presidential address, has already made a helpful beginning. Telling the story of F. Henry Edwards will also help others know where to begin looking for more information on the other British LDS and RLDS conscientious objectors.

15. Mason, "When I Think of War," 3, 10–11.

16. Arguably, Canadian George Amos Grigsby, as a non-combatant, was a CO. German Karl Eduard Hofmann did not have a legal right to be a CO in Germany, unlike Britain, Canada, and the US. He, like a number of others in the German army, were closet COs in WWI, quietly refusing to hurt anyone, and demonstrated by Hoffman in getting medical duties.

The Conscientious Objection Story of Francis Henry Edwards

Unlike continental armies in Europe and elsewhere at the time, the British Army was a volunteer force. The British Army up to this point had always been small, since the English Channel and the greatest navy in the world protected the British Isles from possible invasion. Initially there were plenty of volunteers responding to the patriotism and nationalism of WWI to supply the army, and conscription was not introduced until early 1916.

Francis Henry Edwards was a member of the Birmingham RLDS congregation. He was familiarly known as Frank. Later, he adopted F. Henry as his formal name. Frank, a serious seventeen-year-old, wrote a letter dated February 13, 1915 to his church's international magazine, *The Saints' Herald*.[17] After sharing his conviction about the church, he continued to write: "I think that in this work we cannot do too much. My fellow countrymen are making great sacrifices for their king and country, and I want to be willing to give my life, if need be, for my King, the King of kings, and for the establishment of his kingdom—to be a patriot in the great sense."[18] In his first recorded statement of conscience, he stresses his commitment to a greater patriotism. He wrote this a year before conscription was introduced in Britain.

Edwards was born into an RLDS family in Birmingham. His father had been an inactive Mormon, or Latter-day Saint. His parents were baptised into the RLDS Church on April 6, 1883. Their church life was central to the family and shaped F. Henry as he grew up. He was baptised November 3, 1905 at the age of eight years old. He fell and broke his

17. The publication was called *The Saints' Herald* from 1877–1953. It changed to *Saints' Herald* in 1954, then to *Saints Herald* in 1973. Since 2001, the publication's official name is *Herald.* References to the periodical throughout this paper will use the name that was in use at the time.

18. Francis Henry Edwards, letter to the editor, Birmingham, England, Feb. 13, 1915, published in *The Saints' Herald,* May 12, 1915, 40.

teeth at the age of eight or nine and did not get dentures until he was a teenager. He suffered in school and was very self-conscious about how he looked.[19] Perhaps this gave him a greater sense of empathy for others as victims. His faith included teachings about the worth of all souls in the sight of God and the kingdom of God on earth, or Zion.

Figure 1. A young Francis Henry Edwards.

19. Paul M. Edwards, interview, Jun. 29, 2017.

The RLDS Church had an international presence in nine countries at this time and had just officially been established in Germany in 1914.[20] To consider killing a German soldier who was possibly a church member would be a grave difficulty given the close, loving fellowship enjoyed by RLDS Church members. Every communion service included a re-covenanting to keep the commandments of Jesus Christ. Love your neighbour as yourself and love your enemy could be considered such commandments. F. Henry's motivation for being a CO is stated to be religious in his records. However, his faith included an international patriotism, and he was as strongly for economic justice as any member of the democratic socialist Independent Labour Party of his time. F. Henry grew up in a working-class home, and he had to be very careful with money later in life as well. He was always in solidarity with other working-class people. His son Paul described how he was very generous in his tips to restaurant staff and anyone doing work on his home—something he and his brother Lyman also inherited as a practice.[21]

F. Henry was called to the priesthood the next year and ordained a priest on April 27, 1916.[22] He could preach, teach, and was pastorally responsible for families. He had as much sacramental authority as a priest in the Church of England or Roman Catholic Church. However, in the tradition of his denomination, he earned his livelihood not by ministry but by employment in another job. F. Henry was an articled clerk (apprentice) in a chartered accountants' office, training to be an accountant.

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20. Council of Twelve Apostles, "Establishing the Church in New Nations," *Official Policy,* revised May 4, 2014, 11.

21. Paul M. Edwards, interview, Jun. 29, 2017.

22. Summary in F. Henry Edwards's biographical file in Community of Christ Archives, Independence, Mo. See also Paul M. Edwards, *Articulator for the Church* (Independence, Mo.: Herald, 1995), 17.

Road to Conscription in WWI Britain

The road to conscription was in stages. In July 1915, Parliament passed the National Registration Act, requiring all people between fifteen and sixty-five to be registered. This enabled the government to identify men who had not yet volunteered. Military recruiting officers then visited the homes of all men aged eighteen to forty to put pressure on them to enlist. This, however, was still not enough. On January 27, 1916, conscription was introduced in Britain through the Military Service Act. Implementation started February 3, 1916. From March 2, all unmarried men aged eighteen to forty-one could be called up for military service,[23] including F. Henry Edwards. Married men were included a few months later.[24]

There was opposition to both the National Registration Act and the Military Service Act, but people were imprisoned for speaking out or for refusing to be conscripted. Any publication that might dissuade men from joining the armed forces was liable to be seized, even biblical materials. As Leyton Richards notes, "Twenty thousand copies of the Sermon on the Mount (printed without comment as a leaflet) were ordered by a magistrate in Leeds to be destroyed as seditious literature, and their would-be distributer was committed to jail under a sentence of three months' hard labour."[25]

The Military Service Act contained a provision for conscientious objection, and F. Henry was one of around twenty thousand British conscientious objectors in WWI.[26] Of this number he was also one of

23. In American English, drafted. However, the US term "drafted" is never used in Britain. Bill Hetherington, Peace Pledge Union Archives, email to author, Jun. 20, 2017.

24. This paragraph draws from Haslam, *Refusing to Kill,* 21–27.

25. Leyton Richards, *The Christian's Alternative to War,* 4th ed. (London: SCM, 1930), 89.

26. The online Cyril Pearce registry hosted on the Imperial War Museums' "Lives of the First World War" has 17,426 documented conscientious objectors, including F. Henry Edwards; see https://search.livesofthefirstworldwar.

about six thousand sent to prison.[27] Although many COs were treated quite well in civilian prisons, those in the hands of the army suffered terribly. Seventy-three British COs died either in prison or as a direct result of their incarceration. Thirty-one went insane from their treatment.[28]

In May 1916, forty-two resisting COs, later called the "Frenchmen," were sent to France to serve in the army without first being able to tell their relatives or friends.[29] They were warned that if they continued to resist, they would be shot. Suffering intimidation, harsh treatment, and continuing threats, this group of COs did not yield. Messages arrived to family and questions were raised in Parliament by sympathetic members of Parliament. A Quaker journalist and Baptist pastor F. B. Meyer were able to investigate what was happening in France and interviewed the men. In the period of June 7–24, 1916, thirty-five of the men were tried by the field general court martial. On Thursday, June 15 on a large parade ground, the sentences of the first four were announced: "The sentence of the court is to suffer death by being shot." Pause. "Confirmed by the Commander in Chief." Long pause. "But subsequently commuted to

org/search/world-records/conscientious-objectors-register-1914-1918. Note that access to the full records requires creating a free account. Bill Hetherington, interview, Mar. 13, 2017. He estimates that there are around twenty thousand COs altogether.

27. Haslam, *Refusing to Kill,* 38.

28. David Boulton, *Objection Overruled: Conscription and Conscience in the First World War* (Hobsons Farm, Dent, Cumbria: Dales Historical Monographs, 2014), 11. See page 266 for a list of names of the seventy-three who died. For a longer discussion of those who went insane, see page 258.

29. Earlier, Bill Hetherington had estimated fifty in this group. Since then he has been able to identify by name all the "Frenchmen" and he is satisfied the number was exactly forty-two (email to author, Jun. 20, 2017).

penal servitude for ten years."[30] The other thirty-one had their sentences announced in two later similar ceremonies.[31]

Facing Tribunals, Court Martial and Prison]

So in going down the path of conscientious objection, F. Henry Edwards was not choosing an easy way. He did not know if he might be shot in France by British soldiers. First, F. Henry faced a borough council tribunal in Birmingham in order to present his case for being a conscientious objector. He was not successful in demonstrating he was genuine. Second, there was an appeal tribunal, but again F. Henry was not successful.[32]

The Military Service Act 1916, making conscription legal, was fair in its intentions about protecting the rights of sincere conscientious objectors. The implementation of the tribunal system, however, was not well done. Tribunal members were often biased against COs. Hearings were brief. The tribunals, though a form of court, usually did not have experience in following legal procedures or understanding due process. A military representative, a retired army officer or a recruitment officer, was also party to the tribunal, and his role was to argue against any CO claim and, if necessary, appeal the decision of the tribunal if CO status were granted. So, it is no surprise that F. Henry was twice refused conscientious objector status.[33] We do not know the tribunal details for F. Henry Edwards, since all records were destroyed after WWI (with the

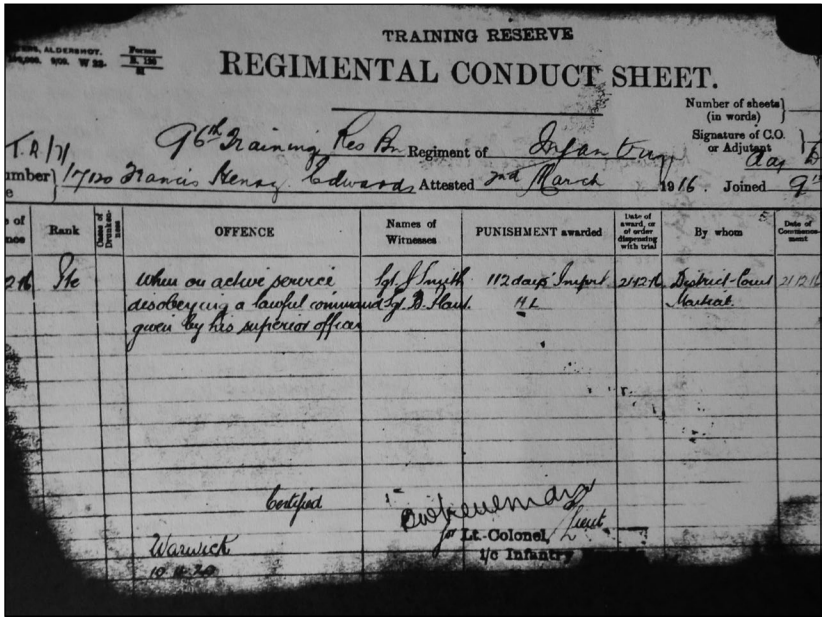
30. Felicity Goodall, *A Question of Conscience: Conscientious Objection in the Two World Wars* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1997), chap. 3.

31. Bill Hetherington, email to author, Jun. 20, 2017

32. Bill Hetherington, interview, Mar. 13, 2017. After the war, tribunal records were destroyed for the sake of space. Tribunal records for Middlesex (the county west of London) were kept in order to demonstrate how the system worked. So, while F. Henry Edwards's tribunal records are not available, the system that he went through is well understood.

33. Haslam, *Refusing to Kill,* chap. 3.

exception of the county of Middlesex).[34] We do know, however, that he chose not to yield to the tribunals' denial of CO status but to resist.



TRAINING RESERVE

REGIMENTAL CONDUCT SHEET.

Number of sheets (in words)

Signature of C.O. or Adjutant

T.R. 1/1

96th Training Res Bn Regiment of Infantry

Number 17120 Francis Henry Edwards Attested 2nd March 1916. Joined

Rank	OFFENCE	Names of Witnesses	PUNISHMENT awarded	Date of award, or of order dispensing with trial	By whom	Date of Commencement
Pte	When on active service disobeying a lawful command given by his superior officer	Sgt J Smith Sgt B. Hart	112 days' Imprt H.L.	2/12/16	District Court Martial	2/12/16

Certified

Warwick

10.12.16

Professional

for Lt.-Colonel, Lieut.

1/6 Infantry

Figure 2. F. Henry Edwards's regimental conduct sheet.

F. Henry was likely arrested at home in December 1916 by a local policeman. He would normally have come before a magistrate's court and be fined forty shillings (two pounds), nearly two weeks' wages in a working-class job. We also know that he was handed over to the army—the Worcester Regiment, 96 Training Reserve Battalion, at the Norton Army Barracks, on December 10, 1916.[35] On the same day, as a conscientious objector, he refused both to sign and submit to a medi-

34. Bill Hetherington, interview, Mar. 13, 2017.

35. "New Soldier's Record," Francis Henry Edwards 17120: Record of Service, 3. I am grateful to Peter Judd for finding this on the internet: http://www.greatwar.co.uk/research/military-records/british-soldiers-ww1-service-records.htm.

cal examination to determine whether or not he was fit for service.[36] Two days later on December 12, he was charged with the offence of "disobeying a lawful command given by his superior officer." His army records show that F. Henry's offence was witnessed by Sergeant J. Smith and Sergeant B. Haul. He was kept in the guard room for eight days. On December 21, 1916, F. Henry was court-martialled and sentenced to 112 days' imprisonment with hard labour (see Fig. 2).[37] The sentence was confirmed two days later, and he was committed to the Wormwood Scrubs prison in London.[38]

Prison and Afterwards: Wormwood Scrubs and Princetown

In Wormwood Scrubs prison, many prisoners sewed mail bags alone in their prison cells. With some six thousand COs in prison by mid-1916, largely because of tribunals' arbitrary refusal of exemption, there was a scandal in Parliament and the press. This led to devising the Home Office Scheme for COs. All imprisoned COs would be specially interviewed by the central tribunal, which was originally set up under the Military Service Act as a final court of appeal for exceptional cases. This tribunal would have the discretion to decide whether a particular CO was, after all, "genuine." For this purpose, the central tribunal would convene in Wormwood Scrubs prison (to which COs imprisoned elsewhere would be brought), and those COs found "genuine" would be offered the

36. Ibid. See also Francis Henry Edwards's records (specifically, the war service comments) in the Conscientious Objectors Register, 1914–1918, hosted by the Imperial War Museums, https://search.livesofthefirstworldwar.org/search/world-records/conscientious-objectors-register-1914-1918.

37. "New Soldier's Record," Regimental Conduct Sheet, 7.

38. "New Soldier's Record," Statement of the Service of No. 17120, 9.

opportunity to perform civilian work under civilian control in specially created Home Office Scheme work centres.[39]

On January 30, 1917, Edwards appeared before the central tribunal, a panel of two: Lord Richard Cavendish and Sir Francis Gore—two aristocrats to judge whether a working-class boy from Birmingham was a genuine CO. It would have been intimidating. Edwards successfully persuaded them that he was a genuine CO.[40] One option then before F. Henry was to accept the Home Office Scheme of doing work of national importance at a work camp like Dartmoor or Wakefield. To serve the purposes of the Scheme, those two prisons had legally been decommissioned. COs had freedom to go out in the evenings and on Sundays and to wear ordinary clothes. It meant, however, continuing on the list of the army reserve. Absolutists, refusing any cooperation with the army, did not accept the Home Office Scheme and suffered repeated court-martials and imprisonment and could have a very difficult time.

Edwards, however, was not an absolutist, and he accepted the offer of the Home Office Scheme. On March 9, 1917, he was transferred for employment by the Brace Committee at the work centre in what had been His Majesty's Prison Dartmoor but was now Princetown Work Centre.[41] The Dartmoor prison was originally set up to hold French prisoners during the Napoleonic War and then Americans during the War of 1812.[42] Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes book *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is set in Dartmoor and refers to the prison. At 1,430

39. Bill Hetherington, email to author, Jun. 20, 2017. I am grateful to Bill Hetherington for this paragraph.

40. See the central tribunal minutes for the meeting held on Jan. 30, 1917. These minutes can be downloaded from First World War Military Service Tribunals, National Archives, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/conscription-appeals. See also National Archives MH-47-1-3.

41. "New Soldier's Record," Statement of the Service of No. 17120, 9.

42. Wikipedia, s.v. "Princetown," last modified Apr. 4, 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Princetown.

feet and surrounded by the gloomy moor, it is a fitting, dismal place for a prison. However, for the COs, conditions were much better here than in prison. Edwards's contribution to work "of national importance" was serving in the kitchen, making cocoa, and baking bread and fruit pies for his fellow inmates.[43] Paul Edwards, his son, said that his cocoa was awful and the fruit pies not much better, so he did not become a skilled cook during his time at Dartmoor.[44] Others moved stones out of fields, worked in a granite quarry, gardened to feed the inmates, and other tasks. Classes were available in the evenings, taught by qualified COs, after a nine-hour work day and included English, French, shorthand, logic, and many others. F. Henry was proficient in shorthand—perhaps he learned it at Dartmoor.[45] There were about one thousand COs at Dartmoor, one quarter of whom were religious, while the rest were socialist and political objectors. In some ways, it was almost a university for COs. The Bishop of Exeter, however, would not let any of the COs use the chapel. If they had been normal criminals or murderers they would have enjoyed the grace of the Church of England, but COs were rejected. There were only a few work centre warders. The COs basically ran the work centre themselves.[46]

F. Henry Edwards went to the RLDS congregation in Exeter on Sundays on a bicycle bought by the congregation.[47] It was about twenty-seven miles each way, downhill going to church, uphill on the way back. The whole ride would have taken five-and-a-half to six hours. His family reported two difficulties for him during this time. On one occasion when visiting a nearby town, perhaps Plymouth, from the work centre, he and

43. Edwards, *Articulator for the Church,* 17.

44. Paul M. Edwards, interview, Jun. 29, 2017.

45. Felicity Goodall, *A Question of Conscience,* 48.

46. Ibid., 44.

47. I heard this from Frank Wilson, an eighty-four-year-old church member with whom I stayed as an RLDS missionary in 1977.

a few other conscientious objectors were apparently taunted and beaten up by some sailors in an attempt to compromise their nonviolence. He did not fight back. At another time, while out of the work centre on a pass, he was asked to leave a cinema because several people strongly objected to his presence.[48]

Support by Community, Quakers, and No-Conscription Fellowship

Cyril Pearce describes the communal support of COs in the industrial Yorkshire town of Huddersfield.[49] In Leicester, less than an hour from Birmingham, Malcolm Elliott also tells the same story of communal resistance to the war and conscription.[50] There were over six hundred COs from Birmingham, and no doubt Edwards also found local communal support.

On August 28, 1917, Edwards was visited by a group of Quakers in Dartmoor, and in brief notes held in the Quaker archives at Friends House in London the visitor reported dates of Edwards's court-martial and his 112 days in Wormwood Scrubs prison. The Quakers also noted that Edwards was currently being held at Princetown, Dartmoor.[51] F.

48. Keith Allen, interview, Mar. 4, 2017. Paul M. Edwards told me about the cinema story in an interview in Aug. 1997.

49. Cyril Pearce, *Comrades in Conscience: The Story of an English Community's Opposition to the Great War* (London: Francis Boutie, 2001).

50. Malcolm Elliott, "Opposition to the First World War: The Fate of Conscientious Objectors in Leicester," *Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 77 (2003): 82–92.

51. David Irwin, email to author, Mar. 2, 2017. Case No. 3610 held in the Visitation of Prisoners Committee files (YM/MfS/VPC, box 3, file 4) at Library of the Religious Society of Friends, Friends House, 173–77 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ.

Henry's son Lyman reported that F. Henry had said he would have been a Quaker if he had not been RLDS.[52]

The No-Conscription Fellowship was the leading anti-conscription organization in Britain. It is likely that F. Henry had contact with the No-Conscription Fellowship.[53]

Compromised Support by the RLDS Church

What support did Edwards's church give him? His motivation was, after all, religious.[54] John Schofield, district president, went with Edwards to support his claim of CO status at the tribunals.[55] Edwards's family and friends supported him, although there were issues in the Edwards' home congregation in Birmingham. However, what did RLDS Church leaders think of the war?

At the outbreak of the war in 1914 the RLDS First Presidency had supported US President Wilson's positon of neutrality twice in *The Saints' Herald* magazine editorials.[56] Joseph Smith III had taken the RLDS Church in a peace direction in his fifty-four-year ministry from 1860–1914.[57] The RLDS Church had members of British and German

52. Lyman Edwards, interview, Jul. 3, 2017.

53. *Conscientious Objectors Report* LXII, Jan. 5, 1917 (Information Bureau, 6, John Street, Adelphi, London, WO). This was a publication of the No-Conscription Fellowship. Edwards is reported as one of nine arrested from Birmingham.

54. See the Conscientious Objectors Register, 1914–1918, hosted by the Imperial War Museums, https://search.livesofthefirstworldwar.org/search/world-records/conscientious-objectors-register-1914-1918.

55. Franklin Schofield told me this story about F. Henry and his father, John Schofield, in the early 1990s.

56. "Neutrality Enjoined," *The Saints' Herald* 61, no. 37, Sept. 16, 1914, 873; "Caution Enjoined—A Second Warning," *The Saints' Herald* 61, no. 45, Nov. 11, 1914, 1065.

57. Lachlan Mackay, "A Peace Gene Isolated: Joseph Smith III," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 35, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2015): 1–17. This is a

heritage in the US, and the church in Germany had officially begun in 1914. After Joseph III's death in December 1914, Frederick M. Smith became president of the church the next year and his administration led the church through both World War I and World War II. He, like many other religious leaders, was caught up by the nationalist feelings of the time. As Sydney E. Ahlstrom wrote about the United States: "The simple fact is that religious leaders—lay and clerical, Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant—through corporate as well as personal expressions, lifted their voices in a chorus of support for the war."[58]

Frederick M. Smith believed that if a man were conscripted he should go and do his duty. In both World Wars he was a vigorous US nationalist. He disparaged pacifists as "cowardly slackers" and would not allow them to speak their position from the pulpit.[59] His ethic about war was a nationalist ethic. This is arguably an inadequate ethic for a world war and an international church. He did not see that obeying it could result in German and British church members killing each other, but most other Christian leaders at the time did not see that as a problem either. So, from the president of the RLDS Church, Edwards would have had no moral support. Regardless, Frederick M. Smith did not articulate

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good overview of Joseph Smith III's peace direction.

58. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972), 884.

59. Frederick M. Smith was a strident nationalist in World War I like many other leaders and members in other denominations in this period. At the outbreak of World War II, Frederick M. Smith's editorial "Our Attitude to War" (*The Saints' Herald* 86, Nov. 18, 1939, 1443) argues an ethic of obeying the law of the land in terms of conscription. He also argued against conscientious objection in this editorial and other writings. Peter A. Judd in an unpublished essay, "RLDS Attitudes Toward World War I" (Saint Paul School of Theology, Feb. 24, 1975) describes well the change within the US church from "a position of strict neutrality in 1914 to a position of unqualified support for the United States and allied nations by 1918" (9). For a good overview of Frederick M. Smith's nationalist attitudes from WWI to WWII, see Hunt, *F. M. Smith: Saint as Reformer,* 438–48.

Figure 3. Frederick M. Smith ca. 1915.

his position on COs until after the United States had entered the war, and by that time, Edwards was already in the Princetown Work Centre in Dartmoor.

Back in Britain, in his home congregation in Birmingham, some members harassed the Edwards family when they sat down to worship by singing "God is marshalling his army" and adding the line, "We will have no cowards in our ranks." This created some tension at the time.[60]

After Princetown Work Centre

The Great War ended on November 11, 1918. Edwards was in the Princetown Work Centre, Dartmoor for around two years from March 1917 until the Home Office Work Scheme ended and the work camp was closed in April 1919.[61] He was released from the army reserve as part of the military demobilization a year later on March 31, 1920.[62]

Edwards went back to work at the accountants' office. However, some clients did not like that he had been a conscientious objector in the war, and his employment ended. Continuing to be involved in volunteer church work, he became secretary of the RLDS British Isles Mission. Sometimes, when preaching, congregational members would walk out in protest against his CO stand. However, in the end most came to accept his ministry.[63]

RLDS Church Leader

In April 1920, Edwards was ordained an elder and also entered general church appointment as a missionary elder in the Birmingham and London districts. Practically, he spent most of his time at St. Leonard's,

60. Ida Dix of the Leicester congregation told me about this trouble in the Birmingham congregation around 1996. She was a girl at the end of World War I. The hymn was by Joseph Woodward.

61. Bill Hetherington, interview, Mar. 13, 2017.

62. "New Soldier's Record," Statement of the Service of No. 17120, 9.

63. Edwards, *Articulator for the Church,* 18.

London. He supported leaders as a secretary, continued his work as British mission secretary, served as historian, and kept church statistics.

Then RLDS President Frederick M. Smith came to Britain on a long missionary visit. He needed secretarial help, and F. Henry was asked to serve. He could, after all, do shorthand. Conscientious objector Edwards and American nationalist President Frederick M. Smith met. One imagines it could have been a very awkward encounter for both of them. Edwards tells the story of how it began: "I went to his room the first time in fear and trembling, but soon found that he was kindness personified. When I 'settled in' a little, I even ventured a question or two. . . . For me, it was like a course in church administration."[64]

A warm relationship developed between the two. Edwards went to the United States in September 1921 and studied at the church's Graceland College for a year in the religious education program.[65] Then a year later, at the age of twenty-five, he was called by Frederick M. Smith to the Council of Twelve Apostles and ordained at general conference on October 13, 1922. He immediately became secretary to the Council of Twelve and served in this role until 1946.

Edwards was then called to be a president of the church and counsellor to the new Prophet-President, Israel A. Smith, until the latter's tragic death in 1958.[66] Edwards continued this role for W. Wallace Smith, who took over as Prophet-President after the death of his brother. Edwards left the First Presidency in 1966 after serving in a very significant way as an RLDS Church leader for over forty-four years. He finally retired

64. Naomi Russell, "Sixty-nine Years of Ministry," *Saints Herald* 132, no. 15, Sept. 1985, 384.

65. F. H. Edwards's naturalization card.

66. The First Presidency of Community of Christ consists of three people, the Prophet-President of the church and two counsellors or assistants. Each is called a president and it is together that they have authority to preside over the church. So, F. Henry Edwards was not the Prophet-President but a counsellor to the Prophet-President.

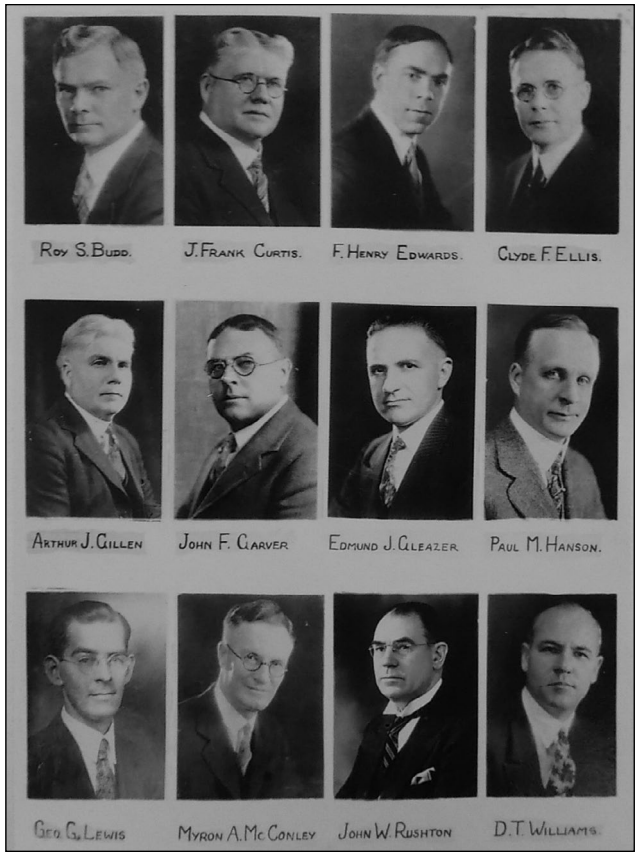

Figure 4. Council of Twelve Apostles including F. Henry Edwards.

in 1972 after serving over fifty years in full-time church ministry. He spoke French, Spanish, and passable German.[67]

Edwards was a very able administrator and perhaps the most prolific writer in the whole Latter Day Saint movement—penning over five hundred articles and over three dozen books and texts.[68] Paul Edwards called

67. Paul M. Edwards, interview, Jun. 29, 2017.

68. Edwards, *Articulator for the Church,* 88–123. Paul lists here F. Henry Edwards's books and articles.

his father "articulator for the church" and used this phrase as the title for the short biography that he wrote about him.[69] F. Henry's last book, *The Power that Worketh in Us,* was published when he was over ninety years old. His writing was accessible, well-expressed, and deeply Christian. Edwards did not have a college degree, was largely self-taught, and his writing contributions, which he continued in retirement, were significant.

One of his last *Saints Herald* articles, published in September 1985, was titled "Let Contention Cease" and written just after the RLDS Church had made the decision to ordain women.[70] There was uproar from conservatives. Edwards was clear that he did not intend to end debate. Debate was important. However, what was also important was how the debate about this, and other issues, was carried out. Was it done in love and with mutual respect? To the end, Edwards still believed in peacemaking.

Edwards became a US citizen with some reluctance at the beginning of World War II so he could continue to serve on the board of the church's radio station.[71] Alexander Smith, younger brother of Frederick M. Smith, was a federal judge and enabled F. Henry to take a modified citizenship oath in a private ceremony so he would not be promising to take up arms against Britain or others. Despite losing a good friend on the USS *Arizona* at Pearl Harbor, he objected to selling defense stamps in Sunday School.[72]

It is interesting that Edwards was careful not to go out on a limb publicly on causes like pacifism or civil rights for Blacks, although he believed strongly in both. As a minister he wanted to have long-term influence with people, to keep the door open for further conversation. It could be argued that it was a strategy with integrity.[73]

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69. Ibid., 85.

70. F. Henry Edwards, "Let Contention Cease," *Saints Herald* 132, no. 15, Sept. 1985, 381–83.

71. According to his naturalization card, Edwards became a naturalized citizen on Dec. 19, 1938.

72. Paul M. Edwards, interview, Jun. 29, 2017.

73. Ibid. Lyman Edwards, interview, Jul. 3, 2017. Lyman Edwards stated that his dad was not obsessive about his conscientious objector stand but was

Edwards's Korean War veteran son, Paul, summed up his dad's stand on peace in these words: "A particular note should be taken of Frank Edwards's lifelong advocacy for peace. But, in all fairness, it was more than that: it was the abhorrence of war. Edwards not only disagreed with the concept of war as a political tool among nations, he condemned the absurd waste of human potential and the destruction of both human life and human values as well."[74]

Family

In 1924, F. Henry married Alice Smith, President Smith's daughter. Alice, a Stanford graduate, was more than equal intellectually, and her own inner strength tempered Edwards's "in-charge" tendency. They were married for forty-nine years and had two sons, Lyman and Paul, and an adopted daughter, Ruth. Edwards was a good husband and a loving father, and both his sons speak with affection about their dad. He missed Alice terribly when she died. When his daughter, Ruth, died, he also took that very hard. Both sons affirm that F. Henry never changed his mind about the folly of war or regretted the rightness of his WWI conscientious objection stand.[75]

The Significance of F. Henry Edwards's Stand as a Conscientious Objector

In his book *The First World War,* British military historian John Keegan writes, "The First World War was a tragic and unnecessary conflict."[76]

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comfortable in what he had done.

74. Edwards, *Articulator for the Church,* 44.

75. Paul M. Edwards, interview, Jun. 29, 2017 and Lyman Edwards, interview, Jul. 3, 2017. Phil Caswell told me that F. Henry had told Clifford Cole that he had revised his view of conscientious objection, but this is contradicted by Paul and Lyman. Phillip Caswell, interview, May 22, 2017.

76. John Keegan, *The First World War* (London: Hutchinson/Random House, 1998), 3.

Unnecessary because the conflict between Austria and Serbia was a local conflict and because the war could have been prevented. Tragic because more than seventeen million people died, and it set up the conflict that would result in World War II. If ever a war was unjust and stupid, it is the First World War. It was fueled by nationalisms that practiced human sacrifice on a huge, industrialized scale. Is it apostasy for patriotism to displace the gospel, for the president or prime minister to nullify the voice of Jesus, for national laws to replace the commandments of Jesus?

So, with hindsight, F. Henry Edwards's stand, and that of the three other British LDS conscientious objectors, looks prophetic, courageous, and righteous. He did not worship at the altar of British nationalism, nor later at the altar of American nationalism. He did not run away. He did not hide. He was upfront in his witness of resistance. It was an act of civil disobedience for which he suffered the consequences as did Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.[77] In faithfully seeking to follow the ways of Jesus, his stand was later vindicated. In Britain, more RLDS men followed Edwards in WWII as COs even though President Frederick M. Smith in the US was against this position. Perhaps Edwards, as more people learn about his story, can also inspire the growing peace mission of Community of Christ today.

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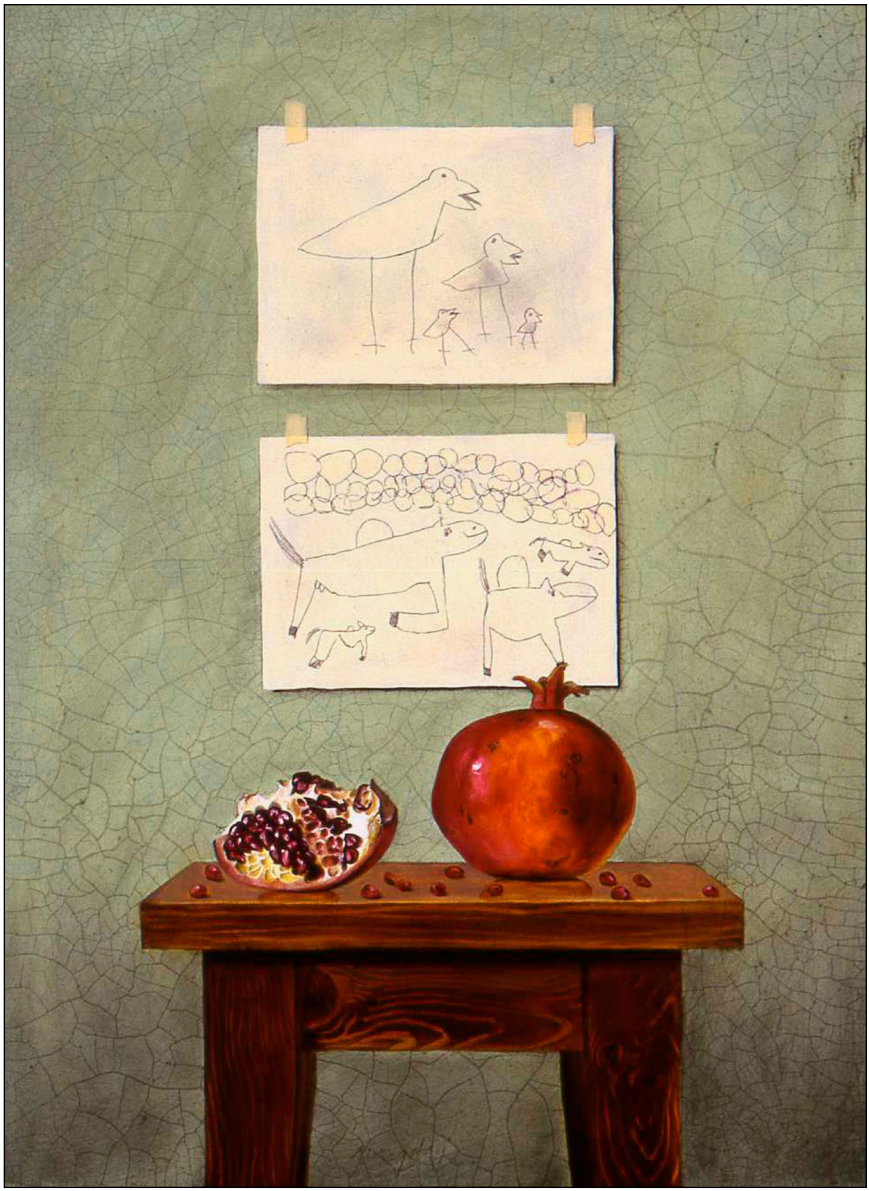
77. Henry Thoreau in his essay on *Resistance to Civil Government (Civil Disobedience),* published in 1849, described his act of refusing to pay a war tax during the Mexican-American War, 1846–1848. He opposed the slavery implications of this war and was imprisoned for this act of civil disobedience. This essay was a very important influence on Mohandas K. Gandhi and his non-violent resistance campaigns in South Africa and later in India. It is important to remember that Gandhi was a lawyer who respected law, but drew the important distinction between civil disobedience and criminal disobedience. Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Letter from Birmingham Jail,* written Apr. 16, 1963 also articulates the moral responsibility to non-violently break unjust laws that were defending racism and segregation. Both Gandhi and King suffered imprisonment for their civil disobedience. British Latter Day Saint conscientious objectors like Edwards, Bradley, Snook and Wheatley were also acting in this tradition of civil disobedience—by refusing to be conscripted and thus refusing to kill in war.

The lives of F. Henry Edwards and subsequent British RLDS COs in WWII—most of whom I personally knew—also say something very important to me. They were not only *against* an evil, that of killing a fellow human being, they were *for* something more—a world where every family could live "beneath their own vine and fig tree and live in peace and unafraid."[78] Their later years of loving, skilled, dedicated service testifies to the authenticity of their earlier witness. If they were *against* war it was because they were *for* the peaceable kingdom of God on earth, and in baptism they had given their lives fully to that. Their lives were also poems of a just spirit, lived out, incarnated. Their witness should not be dismissed.

How are we to be COs today? I look to a day when there will be enough conscientious objectors to not only close down war as a way of solving conflicts but to abolish nuclear weapons, end climate change, poverty, racism, sexism, and injustice of all kinds. Believers in Zion can do no less. Am I willing to be a conscientious objector against evil in my day as I live for the King of kings and the kingdom? Love of country is too small a love, and that is why it is a form of idolatry. "For God so loved *the world* that he gave his only Son."[79]

78. Song based on Micah 4:4.

79. John 3:16 NRSV.



Rebecca Wagstaff
Crow Family & Family of Flying Horses with Pomegranate
oil on panel, 24x18, 2005

THE RESTORATION OF CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

Ron Madson

They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and . . . nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. —Isaiah 2:4

In 298 CE, Marcellus, a Roman centurion, was converted to Christ while serving with his unit in Northern Africa. A respite from conflict was taken to celebrate the pagan Roman emperor's birthday and pledge allegiance to the empire. Marcellus rose before the banqueters, cast off his military insignia, and cried out: "I serve Jesus Christ the eternal King. I will no longer serve your emperors." Marcellus was immediately arrested for breach of discipline. At his trial, he declared that "it is not right for a Christian man, who serves the Lord Christ, to serve in the armies of the world." He was immediately beheaded. According to the testimonies of those present, he died in great peace of mind, asking God to bless the judge that condemned him.[1]

In the first three centuries of Christianity, the martyrdom of Marcellus was not an isolated act of faith—like tens of thousands of early Christians, he was following the example of those first apostles and disciples who observed intimately the words and example of Jesus of Nazareth.

1. Monks of Ramsgate, "Marcellus," in *Book of Saints* (1921), available on *CatholicSaints.Info,* Nov. 19, 2014, https://catholicsaints.info/book-of-saints-marcellus-30-october; and "Saint Marcellus: Military Martyr," *In Communion* (blog), Oct. 27, 2007, https://incommunion.org/2007/10/saint-marcellus-military-martyr.

Two millennia later, there are few Christian faiths that advocate conscientious objection to military conscription of their nation. Nearly all major Christian religions and churches have chosen another path, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is one of them. Its position is articulated on the Church's website: "Latter-day Saints in the military do not need to feel torn between their country and their God. In the Church, 'we believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law' (Articles of Faith 1:12). Military service shows dedication to this principle. . . . [I]f they [Latter-day Saints in the military] are required to shed another's blood [in war], their action will not be counted as a sin."[2]

Is this policy compatible with the words and life of Jesus, which he invited us to follow? Ultimately, the answers to these questions are a matter of conscience. But if our belief in Christ demands more than obedience to secular "kings, presidents, [and] rulers," there is another way available to all LDS members: conscientious objection.

A World of Perpetual Violence

After a lifetime of research, historian Will Durant observed: "War is one of the constants of history, and has not diminished with civilization or democracy. In the last 3,421 years of recorded history only 268 have seen no war." [3] All eleven volumes in Will and Ariel Durant's *The Story of Civilization,* the last volume of which ends appropriately with Napoleon at Waterloo, meticulously chronicle perpetual violence among all humankind, with very rare exceptions, as each warring faction engages in mimetic "justified" violence upon those not of their tribe or nation.

Israel was no exception to never-ending violence. Entering the promised land with sword in hand, Joshua and his people killed every

2. "War," Gospel Topics, https://www.lds.org/topics/war?lang=eng.

3. Will and Ariel Durant, *The Lessons of History* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1968), 81.

newborn, infant, toddler, child, young man, and young woman; they killed fathers, mothers, the infirm, crippled, handicapped, disabled, and elderly in the city; they "left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed" (Joshua 10:40). The only people spared were those in the brothel who helped their spies. Israel's founding historical narrative created a warrior God who sanctioned all sorts of genocide, brutality, and even torture of one's enemies.

Every four years in Gospel Doctrine class, we dance around the horrors of the Old Testament as we either ignore or justify the unrelenting violence of kings and "prophets." Israel's King David is hailed a hero and favored of the Lord even after cutting off the genitals of two hundred Philistine men as a wedding gift to his father-in-law, Saul, and placing captive Moabites in three lines, cutting off the heads of every two lines while sparing one. Only when he commits adultery and schemes to murder Uriah is he considered fallen. Why? Because all manner of violence, torture, and even genocide is approved by their god when dealing with other tribes; only when they harm someone in their own tribe is it considered a sin. Even the prophet Samuel commands genocide: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Samuel 15:3). Then when Saul shows mercy to King Agag after the slaughter, Samuel hacks the captive king up into little pieces.

Whether these Old Testament historical accounts written centuries later were fictional or not can be debated by scholars, but what is not debatable is Israel's willingness to take God's name in vain to justify all sorts of atrocities. Their warrior God fashioned in the imagination of both secular and spiritual leaders was challenged by voices arising from the wilderness warning of "prophets that teacheth lies . . . leaders of the people [who] lead them to err" (Isaiah 9:15–16), "prophets prophesying falsely" (Jeremiah 5:31), and "priests ruled by their own authority" (Zephaniah 3:4). These oracles prophesied of a Messiah who would

come not in worldly power but descend below all: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . . He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter" (Isaiah 53:3, 7).

A New Way

In the midst of perpetual violence, holy men heard the voice of God and spoke of a Messiah who would come. They taught that when he came in the flesh, "the things which he shall say unto you shall ye observe to do" (2 Nephi 32:5).

Jesus came into mortality to show what he and my father are *really like* and how the kingdom of God can be on the earth: "Love your enemies, do good to those that hate you" (Matthew 5:38–39; Luke 6:27–28); "resist not evil" (Matthew 5:39); "Put your sword back in its place . . . for all who draw the sword will die by the sword" (Matthew 26:52); and "blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9).

His life was the message. Refusing the zealot option and prophesying of its futility, Jesus' very entrance into Jerusalem from the eastern gate on a donkey exemplified a new kingdom in juxtaposition to the imperial procession of Pontius Pilate from the west gate holding the keys to the political and financial power of the Pax Romana buttressed by its war chariots.[4]

Even in his last breath Jesus showed us the way as he blessed and forgave his enemies. He demonstrated that a child of God refuses to engage in any form of retributive violence. He then invited us to "come follow him" even unto the cross.

The words and example of Christ left such an indelible imprint on his disciples that for three centuries the early Christians were known for their rejection of all forms of violence. Specifically, they renounced

4. J. Madson, "Holy Week," *The Mormon Worker* (blog), Apr. 7, 2009, https://themormonworker.wordpress.com/2009/04/07/holy-week.

all forms of state-sponsored militarism, and there are scant records of any Christians serving in any nation's army.

While scholars have debated the degree to which the early Christians practiced pure pacifism, there is no doubt that the early church fathers interpreted the words and example of Christ to support the following church policies:

> For from Jerusalem there went out into the world, men, twelve in number, and these illiterate, of no ability in speaking: but by the power of God they proclaimed to every race of men that they were sent by Christ to teach to all the word of God; and we who formerly used to murder one another do not only now refrain from making war upon our enemies, but also . . . willingly die confessing Christ.[5] A believer who seeks to become a soldier, he must be rejected, for he has despised God.[6] But how will a Christian man war, nay how will he serve even in peace, without a sword, which the Lord has taken away? The Lord in disarming Peter, unbelted every soldier.[7] We do not arm ourselves against any nation. We do not learn the art of war because, through Jesus Christ, we have become the children of peace.[8]

For the first Christians, Jesus was the center of their allegiance and the empire was at its margins. Christians became an affront to the empires of this world when they, by taking upon themselves the full and literal weight of the cross even unto death, channeled an unearthly power that would draw millions to their message.

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5. Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 39:1–3 (155–57 CE), available at http://early-christianwritings.com/text/justinmartyr-firstapology.html.

6. John W. Coakley and Andrea Sterk, eds., *Readings in World Christian History,* vol. 1, *Earliest Christianity to 1453* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2013), 22.

7. C. John Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War* (London: Headley, 1919), 55, citing Tertullian's *De Idololatria* (198–203 CE).

8. Origen of Alexandria, *Contra Celsum,* book 5, chap. 33, available at *New Advent,* http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/04165.htm.

The Constantine Shift

In 312 CE, civil war was raging in Rome, with Constantine and Maxentius both making claims to be the next emperor of Rome. Being considerably outnumbered, Constantine had a dream wherein he was told to "mark the heavenly sign of God on the shields of the soldiers. . . . [B]y means of a slanted letter X with the top of its head bent round, he marked Christ on their shields."[9] Then the next night he dreamed he saw Christ appear with the same heavenly sign. Constantine then defeated Maxentius and became the next emperor of Rome. One year later, Constantine issued an edict for toleration of Christian believers, and finally Christianity was able to come out of the shadows and merge with the power structures of Rome. In just one generation during the reign of Emperor Constantine, Christianity was seduced by the desire to be accepted by the Roman Empire to the point that they rapidly began to find the necessary rationales to merge their beliefs with the objectives of the state. The shift was so complete that, "In 416 [CE] an order was decreed with the result that pagans were not admitted to the army. All the soldiers had become Christians; or, in other words, all the Christians had, with few exceptions, denied Christ."[10] Where Christians had placed their allegiance to Christ above all earthly powers, now with the Constantine shift complete, Christians pledged their allegiance to their host nation so that now they believed it was their duty to support and justify the wars of the Roman Empire.

It was only a matter of time until the legal inheritors of Saint Peter's chief seat issued edicts that it was the duty of Christians to fight when called upon by their nation to free the "holy" lands from the heathen Muslims, and those who did so were not only absolved from sin but told

9. Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum* 44.4–6, in *Lactantius: De Mortibus Persecutorum,* edited and translated by J. L. Creed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), quoted in Noel Lenski, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 71.

10. Leo Tolstoy, *The Law of Love and The Law of Violence* (New York: Dover, 2010), 63.

that their sacrifice would be honored. In 1095 CE, Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont inspired the First Crusade by issuing what came to be known as the "war indulgence": "All who die in battle against the pagan shall have immediate remission of sins. This I grant through the power of God with which I am invested."[11]

Through the dark centuries that followed, papal endorsement of state-sponsored wars was supported by church apologists who articulated various "just war" doctrines. However, in stark contrast, there were those resilient faiths and orders, such as the Anabaptists and their progeny, who have continued to this day to renounce all forms of violence.

Christ's Covenant of Peace with a New People

In this dispensation, the Lord chose to mediate through a young prophet, Joseph Smith, a vision of what his kingdom was once and now could be. Gathering in Missouri, persecutions began as the Saints were driven from their homes with threats of continued violence. Remarkably, there was little resistance on the part of the Saints: "Here let me remark, that up to this time the Mormons had not so much as lifted a finger, even in their own defence [*sic*], so tenacious were they for the precepts of the gospel—'turn the other cheek.'"[12]

In the throes of these persecutions, on August 6, 1833, Joseph Smith received a revelation now known as Doctrine and Covenants section 98. This revelation is not a mere collection of peace platitudes but rather concise, almost statutory, instructions from the Lord cloaked in covenantal language that cannot be misunderstood. In this revelation, the Lord commands his people to "renounce war." He commands them to not retaliate against their enemies when harmed or attacked but to

11. The "Liber Lamberti," a source based on the notes of Bishop Lambert of Arras who attended the Council, indicates that Urban offered the remission of all penance due from sins, what later came to be called a war indulgence.

12. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984), 1:391.

immediately "raise a standard of peace." The Saints are commanded to endure two additional attacks without responding in kind. Then, if a fourth attack occurs, the Saints are "justified" in responding in kind, but the Lord then makes it perfectly clear that like "unto mine ancients" we are commanded that we "should not go out unto battle against any nation, kindred, tongue, or people, save I, the Lord, commanded them" (D&C 98:33). This law is consistent with Mormon's final warning: "Know ye not that ye must lay down your weapons of war, and delight no more in the shedding of blood, and take them not again, save it be that God shall command you" (Mormon 7:4).

Missouri War of 1838: Why We Lost Zion

From July through the late fall of 1833, the Saints were chased out of Jackson County, Missouri and relocated in the northern counties of Missouri. Because they did not retaliate to threats and actual violence, but instead left Jackson County peacefully, they were seen for the most part as victims of unjust persecution and were welcomed by the citizens and leaders of these northern counties. Public opinion was turning in their favor.[13] Their patience was being rewarded, but would their resolve endure?

After nearly five years of relative peace, there arose competition for land rights in the northwest Missouri counties tied to the upcoming fall elections in 1838. Old fears and prejudices began to arise. Past grievances were publicly declared by Church leadership, and the desire for retribution was fueled by hyperbolic rhetoric that coalesced in the formation of the Mormon Danites. This environment of fear and anger was further spurred on by the now infamous salt sermon given by Sidney Rigdon on

13. A number of Clay County leaders, including David Atchison, Alexander Doniphan, and Judge Cameron, sympathized with the Mormons, whom they believed had been unjustly persecuted. And as recorded in the *Elders' Journal,* "the Saints here are at perfect peace with all the surrounding inhabitants," and many Missourians reached out to assist their Mormon neighbors with goods, land, and employment. See Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 18–24.

June 17, 1838.[14] Shortly thereafter, Rigdon gave an address now called the Fourth of July speech in which he conjoined religious zeal with patriotic language to justify "exterminating" all that opposed their establishment of Zion.[15] The contagion grew from some to many, including key leaders of the Church who began endorsing vengeance. Certain members—notably John Corrill, David Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and Thomas Marsh—dissented to the rising tide of voices demanding complete allegiance to Church leadership, including the call to exterminate anyone who opposed them, Mormon and non-Mormon alike.

With reports of injustices done to certain Mormon settlements, the newly-formed Mormon army moved from words to actions when in mid-October they chose to make preemptive attacks against the Daviess County towns of Gallatin, Grindstone Fork, Splawn's Ridge, and Milport—chasing out the non-Mormons, looting and stealing their belongings, taking it to the bishops' storehouse, and then burning their homes. This went on for at least two weeks in Daviess County. Most of the Mormon militia relished[16] in it, though some were sickened.[17] But the pillaging in Daviess County was not enough

14. Part of Sidney Rigdon's salt sermon reads, "And that mob that comes on to disturb us, it shall be between us and them a war of extermination, for we will follow them, till the last drop of blood is spilled . . . for we will carry the seat of war to their own houses, and their own families, and one party of the other shall be utterly destroyed."

15. See F. Mark McKiernan, "Sidney Rigdon's Missouri Speeches," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 1 (1971): 1–3.

16. On the one hand, John Corrill wrote, "It appeared to me also that the love of pillage grew upon them very fast" (*A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints* [St. Louis: N.P., 1839], 38). On the other hand, future apostle Lyman Wight informed his men that they must pray that "God would damn them [Missourians] and give us power to kill them" (Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* [Independence, Mo.: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1947], available at Joseph Smith Foundation, https://josephsmithfoundation.org/autobiography-of-benjamin-f-johnson-1818-1905).

17. "I might say there was almost a trial of my faith in my pity for our enemies, even those who were plotting our destruction. . . . While others were doing the

for the Mormon militia seeking to "defend" themselves. Led by apostle David Patten, they targeted a state militia under the command of Captain Bogart that was encamped at Crooked River on the border between Caldwell and Ray County to the south. The Mormon army considered this state militia a mob, while the militia saw themselves as the protectors of Ray County from the Mormon army that had already invaded Daviess County. Shouting "God and country," the Mormon militia attacked Bogart's company. One in Bogart's militia was killed, and another mutilated as he lay wounded and defenseless on the ground. Bogart's Crooked River militia fled in terror. Upon hearing of these attacks, general public opinion in Missouri swung abruptly against the Mormons. Governor Boggs ordered all available state militia in defense of the surrounding towns and counties, then issued his infamous extermination order in imitation of Sidney Rigdon's previously-issued extermination threat. The conflict was now full-blown as hundreds who had previously supported the Mormons were volunteering to defend themselves from what they now saw as a Mormon insurrection.[18] Previously cooperative Generals Doniphan and Atchison no longer made any attempt to contact the Mormon leaders as they prepared for war. Mirroring the Mormon militia's logic of preemptive war, and further based on hysteria-induced testimony that the Mormons at Haun's Mill were planning an invasion, a mob decided that they were justified in attacking the Mormons at Haun's Mill. Legislator Charles Ashby, a participant in that slaughter, told the

burning and plunder, my mission was of mercy" (Johnson, *My Life's Review*).

18. "I did not first approve of the vigilantes, but I finally believed they were right and I joined with them. I am convinced that history does not afford a deeper laid scheme of villainy than that which has just developed itself in regard to the course pursued by that sect" (Arthur Bradford to Major Bradford, Nov. 13, 1838, as quoted in LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri,* 146).

Missouri legislature: "We thought it best to attack them first. What we did was in our own self-defense, and we had a right to do it."[19]

Reacting to Mormon aggressions, Governor Boggs marshaled the state militias who came in overwhelming force to Far West, where most of the Mormons were preparing for what they described as a final grand conflict where the power of the Lord would be manifest as they subdued their enemies. However, seeing the futility of resistance, Joseph and the Mormon militia were persuaded to surrender, have their arms confiscated, and enter into an agreement that the Mormons would commence leaving Missouri altogether. Zion was lost, and the Saints did not prevail against their "enemies."

During this entire conflict, remarkably very little if any reference was made by Church leaders to the Lord's "immutable" covenant found in Doctrine and Covenants section 98 (published in 1835) during the build-up, promotion, and final decision to attack these non-Mormon settlements. It was as if the scripture never existed. Those who actually renounced this war and made a plea for peace were silenced, threatened, and, in some cases, cut off from the Church. Two apostles, Thomas Marsh and Orson Hyde, swore out affidavits condemning what they considered acts of aggression by the Mormons. Lorenzo Snow thought Marsh was guilty of supporting the enemy: "He [Marsh] expresses unbounded charity for our enemies—said he did not think they intended us much harm—they were not naturally inclined to wickedness."[20] For this, Thomas Marsh was threatened, causing him and his and his family to flee for safety. He was then excommunicated in absentia.

Edward Partridge, John Corrill, Thomas Marsh, and several others got it right from the beginning during the first conflict that our religious community was confronted with in 1838. They refused to retaliate against

19. Daniel Ashby, quoted in "Letter from the Editor," *Missouri Republican Daily,* Dec. 24, 1838, 2.

20. As quoted in Eliza R. Snow, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Company, 1884), 31.

their "enemies" even if it cost, for some of them, being marginalized or cast out of their faith community. Other Saints took longer to reach such clarity—most never did. One Mormon militia member, Ebenezer Robinson, sought to tutor us from a lesson he and others learned through tribulation:

> Within the short space of four months from the time the church made that threatening boast that if a mob should come upon us again, 'we would carry the war to their own houses, and one party or the other should be utterly destroyed,' we found ourselves prisoners of war, our property confiscated, our leaders in close confinement, and the entire church required to leave the state or be exterminated. We admonish all [C]hristian people to let this be a solemn warning to never suffer themselves to make a threatening boast of what they would do under certain circumstances, as we are not our own keepers, and we feel certain the Lord will not help us fight any such battles.[21]

The non-Mormons persecuted the Saints in 1833 and then, even after receiving this "immutable" covenant with a promise of peace, the Saints chose to ignore the words of the Lord and took matters into their own hands five years later. As God's covenant people, we do not lose Zion because the power of the devil is greater than the Lord's power, but we always forfeit Zion when we reject the words of the Lord. The Saints were exiled, and Joseph, with a few others, was sent to Liberty Jail. But the Lord was merciful to Joseph Smith—as he is to all of us—by continuing to speak to him in his deepest despair. There in Liberty Jail, Joseph received further tutoring as to what constituted the proper exercise of the priesthood in the incomparable section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants—not just with those in the covenant but with all of God's children.

21. "Items of Personal History of the Editor," *The Return* 2, no. 2, Feb. 14, 1890, 210, available at http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/RigWrit/M&A/Return1.htm#14-9002a.

To What Extent Have We Renounced War Since 1838?

In 1890, the Church abandoned polygamy, and then six years later Utah obtained statehood. Prior to that we had practiced "selective pacifism" in that we retained the right to participate or not in any given conflict. However, two years after statehood, "the elimination of selective pacifism was abandoned following an internal conflict in the church over the participation in the Spanish-American War."[22] Consequently, the Spanish-American War of 1898 was the first major conflict in which large numbers of Mormons served in the US military:

> For many Americans the first serious test of Mormon "patriotism" occurred with the outbreak of the Spanish-American War. Although a few Mormons, notably Brigham Young, Jr. spoke out against the war, most Latter-day Saints, like other Americans, gave it their enthusiastic support. With official encouragement from church leaders, several hundred young Mormons enlisted. There were cheers and waving of flags as the young men marched through the streets of Salt Lake City before boarding the train that would take them to their destination. . . . Although it may not have been precisely the war they would have preferred, Mormons responded with general enthusiasm to an opportunity to demonstrate their national loyalty.[23]

This patriotic fervor carried over into World War I as twenty-four thousand LDS served, and many more in World War II. "The Saints had become Americans 'lock, stock, and barrel.'"[24] Nevertheless, the issue of whether Mormons should or should not be considered conscientious objectors continued to be debated as many Latter-day Saints declared

22. D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Church and the Spanish-American War: An End to Selective Pacifism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17, no. 4 (1984): 11–16.

23. Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Knopf, 1979), 251.

24. Arrington and Bitton, *The Mormon Experience,* 252.

conscientious objector status during WWI.[25] At the conclusion of those two great and terrible conflicts, the United States called to establish compulsory and universal military training as well as to create a standing army for the nation's protection. Observing the crushing spiritual harm done to young men participating in the horrors of war as well as the deleterious spiritual effects of being trained to kill, the First Presidency issued a letter dissenting from such a policy, outlining seventeen reasons why members of the faith should avoid enlisting in the military. [26]

The proclamation of 1947 was ignored twenty years later during the Vietnam conflict and replaced with this policy: "We make no statement on how this country can or should try to disengage itself from the present regrettable war in Vietnam; that is a problem . . . which must be solved by our governmental officials in whom we have complete confidence. We believe our young men should hold themselves in readiness to respond to the call of their government to serve in the armed forces when called upon. . . . [W]e believe in honoring, sustaining, and upholding the law."[27]

Before Vietnam, very little was said by Church leaders in regard to one seeking conscientious objector status. However, as the truth of the causes and prosecution of this war was uncovered—such as when the Pentagon Papers were dramatically released—there was an increasing consciousness of the realities of the immorality of our nation's involvement in this conflict and the deliberate deceit involved in creating public support to enter this war. There was a growing minority of Latter-day Saints who joined in protesting our occupation of Vietnam as an unjust and even immoral war effort. Consequently, a letter was circulated by the office of the First Presidency stating that while membership alone

25. George W. Givens, *500 More Little-Known Facts in Mormon History* (Springville, Utah: Bonneville Books, 2004), 229.

26. James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,* 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 6:239–42.

27. "First Presidency Takes a Stand on Vietnam War," *Deseret News,* May 24, 1969, 12.

did not make one a conscientious objector, individual members could avail themselves of the exemption provided by law: "[M]embership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not make one a conscientious objector. . . . As the brethren understand, the existing law provides that men who have conscientious objection may be excused from combat service. There would seem to be no objection, therefore, to a man availing himself on a personal basis of the exemptions provided by law."[28]

Revelations during and subsequent to the Vietnam War had a sobering effect on our nation for those who saw the deceit leading us into war, and then the abhorrent evil and futility associated with that war. Parallel to the First Presidency statement just months after the end of World War II, where they renounced the creation of a compulsory draft and the buildup of a standing army, the prophetic voice of President Spencer W. Kimball invited us to trust in the Lord rather than the arm of flesh:

> We are a warlike people, easily distracted from our assignment of preparing for the coming of the Lord. When enemies rise up, we commit vast resources to the fabrication of gods of stone and steel—ships, planes, missiles, fortifications—and depend on them for protection and deliverance. When threatened, we become anti-enemy instead of pro-kingdom of God; we train a man in the art of war and call him a patriot, thus, in the manner of Satan's counterfeit of true patriotism, perverting the Savior's teaching: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). . . . We must leave off the worship of modern-day idols and a reliance on the "arm of flesh," for the Lord has said to all the world in our day, "I will not spare any that remain in Babylon" (D&C 64:24).[29]

28. Letter to Eugene England signed by Joseph Anderson, Secretary to the First Presidency, reprinted in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1968): 8.

29. Spencer W. Kimball, "The False Gods We Worship," *Ensign,* Jun. 1976.

This statement by President Kimball approaches what "renouncing war" sounds like but without specificity (e.g., "We renounce the United States' intervention in the Vietnam War") or prophetic timeliness; it would have been more powerful to issue this statement at the time of the event rather than a year after the conflict ended and the loss was irretrievably complete for millions. With each passing year and the release of information through the Freedom of Information Act (an oxymoron given that we have to wait twenty-five years after the fact), the unrelenting protests by both Christian and secular voices during the Vietnam conflict and the statement by President Kimball in 1976 have been vindicated in that our reliance on the "arm of the flesh" has been proven to be not only futile but has placed us in a position of contributing to unjustified and immoral warfare.

9/11: A Failed Chance to Get it Right

In the decade leading up to 2001, the United States military dropped hundreds of bombs on civilian populations in the Middle East only to see those people increase in their hatred and desire for retribution, culminating in the horrific 9/11 attacks. How would we as a nation respond and, in particular, how would we as Latter-day Saints react? What doctrine and deeply-held beliefs would govern us?

We know how the US government responded. On September 15, 2001, Congress approved a resolution authorizing President Bush to use "all necessary and appropriate force" against anyone associated with the terrorist attacks of September 11. The measure passed 98–0 in the Senate and 420–1 in the House. This broad resolution to use force against anyone associated—or believed to be associated—with these attacks became known as the Bush Doctrine, which authorized the initiation

of preemptive war: "the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively in exercising our inherent right to self-defense."[30]

If ever there was a war that had crossed over every doctrinal and ethical line of our Latter-day Saint religious belief, it was the United States' invasion into Afghanistan and Iraq. The Book of Mormon could not be clearer that the very moment we begin to take the war to our enemies and invade their lands, we have become the very evil we deplore—especially when we wage war against those who have never attacked us. As required by the Lord's immutable covenant of peace found in section 98 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

- Did we as a faith specifically "renounce" the invasion of Afghanistan or Iraq?
- Did we renounce those voices that called for vengeance and promised retribution?
- Did we accept either Afghanistan's or Iraq's own standard of peace when they claimed that they had not attacked us nor would they ever attack us in the future?
- Did we accept their "prayer for peace" and forgive them "seventy times seven" (D&C 98:40)?
- Did we consider living a higher law and not seeking retribution?

Was revelation sought for and obtained before choosing to invade these countries?

30. The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, Sept. 17, 2002, https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf. The full paragraph reads: "To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively in exercising our inherent right of self-defense. The United States will not resort to force in all cases to preempt emerging threats. And no country should ever use preemption as a pretext for aggression." This author might add that what the Bush Doctrine was trying to tell us was that no country should use preemption as a pretext for aggression other than the United States.

Just after the United States and its allied forces invaded Afghanistan and were making a case to invade Iraq, then apostle Russell M. Nelson in the October general conference taught that section 98 requires us to "renounce war and proclaim peace."[31] Picking up on this address, CNN reported that the LDS Church had issued a strong anti-war message regarding "current hostilities"—Afghanistan and the proposed invasion of Iraq.[32] The Church's public relations department immediately responded that the talk had been misinterpreted as being applicable to "current hostilities" and that "the Church itself, as such, has no responsibility for these policies, other than urging its members fully to render loyalty to their country."[33]

The following spring and just days after our invasion of Iraq, President Gordon B. Hinckley addressed war and peace issues: "Modern revelation states that we are to 'renounce war and proclaim peace.'"[34] However, unlike Elder Nelson's address, President Hinckley's statements could not have been misinterpreted as an anti-war message regarding

31. Russell M. Nelson, "Blessed Are the Peacemakers," Oct. 2002, https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2002/10/blessed-are-the-peacemakers?lang=eng.

32. As the Associated Press reported: "The Mormon Church issued a strong anti-war message at its semiannual General Conference, clearly referring to current hostilities in the Middle East, advocating patience and negotiations, and urging the faithful to be peacemakers." Also included in the report was this characterization of Nelson's remarks: "The Golden Rule's prohibition of one interfering with the rights of others was equally binding on nations and associations and left no room for retaliatory reactions, Nelson said at the meeting Saturday" ("Mormon Church Takes Anti-War Stance," World-Wide Religious News, Oct. 6, 2002, https://wwrn.org/articles/5993).

33. "Message of Peace Misinterpreted," Mormon Newsroom, Oct. 7, 2002, http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/message-of-peace-misinterpreted. Note that the page is still available but the statement is no longer published there.

34. Gordon B. Hinckley, "War and Peace," Apr. 2003, https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2003/04/war-and-peace?lang=eng.

"current hostilities."[35] Rather, he made several non-qualified statements regarding how everyone is "under the direction of our respective national leaders" and "subject to the laws of our government," especially soldiers: "Those in the armed services are under obligation to their respective governments to execute the will of the sovereign. When they joined the military, they entered into a contract by which they are presently bound and to which they have dutifully responded."[36]

President Hinckley's reliance on political leaders' judgment was not only based on national allegiance, but also on his belief that "[t]hey have access to greater political and military intelligence than do the people generally."[37] He then shared his "personal feelings" and "dictates" of his "personal loyalties" in the present situation, which rested on the belief that the invasion of these countries was analogous to the Nephites' defending their families and their liberty. And finally, similar to papal decrees during the Crusades, he offered a latter-day war indulgence: "God will not hold men and women in uniform responsible as agents of their government in carrying forward that which they are legally obligated to do. It may even be that He will hold us responsible if we try to impede or hedge up the way of those who are involved in a contest with forces of evil and repression."[38]

Despite then Elder Nelson's timely address and the principles outlined in section 98, the words and example of Jesus were then and continue

35. Renouncing war demands that we go further than simply stating that war is not nice. Rather, it is declaring a resolute "No!" as to a particular war. As Hugh Nibley put it: "'Renounce' is a strong word: we are not to try to win peace by war, or merely to call a truce, but to renounce war itself, to disclaim it as a policy while proclaiming . . . peace without reservation" ("Renounce War," Letter to the Editor, *Daily Universe,* Mar. 26, 1971, available at https://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=1094&index=11).

36. Hinckley, "War and Peace."

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

to be marginalized, if not wholly ignored, in favor of being "under the direction of our national leaders." Just as we did in 1838 in Missouri, the voices of dissent to preemptive strikes in these contemporary wars were condemned as not being patriotic, reports of grievances were once again exaggerated or fabricated, and in the end, many innocent have perished and will perish on both sides of the conflict as we pursue these wars of aggression. Nothing has changed other than sealing our condemnation for treating lightly the words of Christ "to do according to that which I [the Lord] have written" (D&C 84:54–58). We have adopted our own Constantinian shift.

Conscientious Objection

The United States Department of Defense sets forth the criteria for classification as a conscientious objector. They declare that conscientious objector status may be approved for any individual:

> a. Who is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form.
>
> b. Whose opposition is based on a moral, ethical, or religious belief.
>
> c. Whose position is firm, fixed, sincere, and deeply held.[39]

They further clarify that "[a] Service member's objection may be founded on religious training or belief; it may also be based on personal beliefs that are purely moral or ethical in source or content and occupy to the Service member a place parallel to that filled by more traditional religious convictions."[40]

How are we perceived as a faith community and culture when it comes to religious training or belief? Are we known as taking upon us the name of Christ and being one with him? If so, in what ways? When one thinks about the Amish, Quaker, or Mennonite communities, one

39. DoD Instruction 1300.06, "Conscientious Objectors," section 3.1, Jul. 12, 2017, 4, available for download at https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=802711.

40. Ibid., 5.

associates these faiths with non-violent pacifism. What about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints? One typically thinks of strict dietary laws, family values, service, and clean living. But those virtues can be found in many cultures and organizations, both religious and secular. As Latter-day "Saints," the voices of saints of the past are calling us to be much more. We have the words of Christ in all our sacred texts inviting us to renounce all wars and follow his example. If the words and example of Christ in our sacred texts are not enough to convince us to renounce all wars, or if we have found a rationalization to "justify" rejecting the call to renounce all wars, then nothing changes. But if we have a desire to do so, then how do we "renounce" all wars and communicate that message to family, friends, community, and the world? I would argue we could do so by individually and as a faith community qualifying for conscientious objector status as part of our religious belief, training, and policy—not just for now but for our children, grandchildren, and our posterity to come.

While adopting a conscientious objection to all wars as part of our religious training and belief may be considered extreme or even impractical, I believe that once it is understood what conscientious objection requires—and, equally importantly, what it does not require—we will find that do so is not only practical, but perfectly consistent with the religious training and belief that have always been a necessary part of the full restoration of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. An individual and faith community can maintain a conscientious objector status while reserving the right to defend oneself, family, community, and even one's nation from direct and immediate personal harm

Conscientious objection is not pure pacifism, as was practiced by the first Christians and some Christian faiths today. One can obtain conscientious objector status while still maintaining the belief and practice of reserving the right to use force in cases of direct physical threats to self, family, community, or nation. In the seminal conscientious objection case of *Gillette v. United States,* the US Supreme Court so clarified: "A

further word may be said to clarify our statutory holding. Apart from abstract theological reservations, two other sorts of reservations concerning use of force have been thought by lower courts not to defeat a conscientious objector claim. Willingness to use force in self-defense, in defense of home and family, or in defense against immediate acts of aggressive violence toward other persons in the community, has not been regarded as inconsistent with a claim of conscientious objection to war as such."[41]

Conscientious objection allows a theocratic exception, i.e., a person and faith community can choose to participate in a war where they claim to have received a direct personal revelation from God to do so while still maintaining conscientious objector status as to any future conflicts or wars.

Furthermore, while the religious training and belief of a faith community requires one have an objection to "war in any form," meaning all wars, again the United States Supreme Court in *Sicurella v. United States* ruled that those who obtained conscientious objection to participation in all "secular" wars in general based on their religious training could believe and in fact participate in a "theocratic war" if so commanded to them by their god.[42]

As set forth in these Supreme Court decisions, the current conscientious objector status based on "religious training or belief" in the United States is perfectly aligned with the unmistakable message of the Book of Mormon that no war should be engaged in unless it involves actual self-defense of one's family and community *and* revelation from God to engage in the same (Mormon 7:3–4) and the Lord's repeated admonitions throughout the Doctrine and Covenants and in particular his "immutable covenant" of peace given in section 98 of the Doctrine

41. Gillette v. United States, 401 U.S. 437 (1971), 447–48, available at https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/401/437.

42. Sicurella v. United States, 348 U.S. 385 (1955).

and Covenants.[43] If the Church were to adopt a policy of conscientious objection to all wars then:

> • We would send a message to the world that we "renounce war and proclaim peace" as it pertains to current conflicts where our dissent can make a real difference when it counts.
>
> • We would reverse our current policy where we have a default position of having a duty to support our respective nations at time of war, right or wrong, to a default position of rejecting our nation's invitation to any war as a matter of policy unless we receive revelation directly from the Lord to participate. By this reversal, we would be placing on our sovereign host nation the burden to demonstrate that any war it invites us to participate in is consistent with our beliefs and personal revelation before supporting any war, rather than our current policy that neither requires questioning nor revelation.
>
> • We would be a voice and example of peace to our children and posterity that we are willing to literally take upon ourselves the words and example of Jesus by renouncing real wars and not just parroting empty platitudes that we "hate war and love peace" while finding a justification to march off to every war that comes along—only to find out over and over again that it was based on fraud and ended in untold unnecessary suffering.

During the Vietnam conflict, the draft boards recognized certain faiths as having well-established religious training or belief in rejecting conscription to wars, but the LDS Church was not one of them, nor is it now. This can and must change. Where do we begin? Currently, there is no draft in the US conscripting our young men into the military, but we can commence individually to give our voice to such religious training. It begins when we teach our children that discipleship invites us to renounce all wars and to take upon ourselves a full restoration of Jesus' peace covenant.

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43. Note: The scope of this essay does not include an analysis of the conscientious objection laws of any nation outside of the United States, but most nations provide for the same or similar protection for those whose religious training requires non-participation in the military or wars.

In my personal case, my father, who served in Patton's infantry during World War II, taught me that there is always another alternative to war if we really believe in and trust the Lord. This legacy of peace continues when my oldest son argues in his writings and lectures that all our sacred texts are inviting us to be like the Anti-Nephi-Lehies in their refusal to take arms against even their enemies and to reject all wars. It continues when my youngest son posts on social media that his heroes are Gandhi and Noble Peace Prize recipient Liu Xiaobo and writes a paper on Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* renouncing the folly of war. It continues when we decide to create a petition for members of our faith community to individually declare themselves conscientious objectors to all wars.[44] All these declarations and actions begin to build a new, or rather a restored, Christian faith that follows Jesus' example of renouncing all wars and uses of violence.

Renounce War Even When All Those around You Remain Silent

What difference will it make if we stand up and renounce a war that is popular not only among our fellow citizens but also our own faith community? Two stories during the Third Reich can be instructive. First, Helmuth Hübener, who as a young seventeen-year-old LDS German youth spoke out against Hitler and the Third Reich. He with two even younger LDS friends courageously distributed pamphlets warning about the evil being perpetuated by their own country during the rise of Nazism. For this, Helmuth was excommunicated by his local ward and tried and executed by the German government. In the end, he stood alone and joined the ranks of the Christian martyrs who, though

44. "Latter-Day Saints Renouncing War," declaration, http://ldsrenouncewar.org.

rejected by country and, in this case, even church, will be forever in our memories and in the final judgment vindicated.[45]

The second story, which is less known, is even more instructive of what can happen when even small groups of people stand together. When all other voices in Germany, including the clergy at the highest levels, had become silent to the rise and brutality of the Third Reich and even pledged their duty to support their nation at war, in early 1943, hundreds of German women did the unthinkable—they confronted machine gun–wielding Gestapo agents and demanded the release of their Jewish husbands, who were part of Hitler's final roundup of Jews to be transported to Auschwitz. Even more remarkably, their Jewish husbands (approximately 1,700 in number) were released. This incident, now known as the Rosenstrasse protest, was appropriately dubbed "The Day Hitler Blinked."[46] This story has, until recently, been largely ignored by Germans because the consensus has been and remains that the average German was powerless against their government and its anti-Semitic policies. Such thinking appears to be confirmed, as a practical matter, when focusing on individual martyrs such as Helmuth Hübener and the occasional principled monk, priest, or clergyman who defied his government's policies of war, torture, and genocide. However, what set the Rosenstrasse act of civil disobedience apart from isolated protests is that these women collectively stood together, showing that even a small group standing on higher moral ground can cause even the most formidable powers to recoil. And if these fearless women could make a difference, think of what millions of united voices in a faith community could do.

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45. Blair Holmes and Alan Frank Keele, *When Truth was Treason: German Youth Against Hitler: The Story of the Helmuth Hübener Group* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

46. Hilary Potter, *Remembering Rosenstrasse: History, Memory, and Identity in Contemporary Germany* (Pieterlen, Switzerland: Peter Lang AG, 2018).

There comes a time when each of us must decide if we are going to live to the full measure of our faith by renouncing all state-sponsored wars. To "renounce" is an active verb requiring us to do so publicly—no matter how few join with us. For some of us, that personal decision was made a long time ago whether others join in or whether it appears we made a difference or not. We are witnessing to an audience beyond this veil whose approbation means everything in the final spiritual equation.

What if the next time we are asked to send our sons, daughters, husbands, and wives to war, we exercise the same courage as the women in Rosenstrasse did by defiantly protesting? What if this time hundreds, even thousands, in our faith community, in moral outrage, say "no more of our sons, our daughters, our fathers, our mothers, our husbands, our wives will be placed on your war altars"? Could we as a faith community have an impact? Would we compel our national leaders to "blink"? Would our refusal to give the Mormon stamp of approval to the next promoted war cause some of our fellow citizens to join us in creating a wave of protest that might just prevent the next war, or at least pause the war momentum long enough to discover that there were, for example, no "weapons of mass destruction"—that we were being once again deceived into waging another war of aggression? Could we convince them to think long and hard before offering up any more of their own children to altars of Moloch? In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "there comes a time when silence is betrayal."[47]

It is not hard to imagine that after 9/11, with clear vision and trusting in the words of Christ, our pulpits could have been ringing with a clear message renouncing our invasion into Iraq. Think of the message that would have sent to this nation: that we really believe that vengeance thinly veiled as "justice" is what all Christians should renounce. And while withholding support, who knows but what our example would

47. Martin Luther King Jr., "Beyond Vietnam," Apr. 4, 1967, The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, Stanford University, https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/documents/beyond-vietnam.

inspire other faiths to pause and place the burden on our government to prove the absolute necessity and morality for such a war.

The Lord prophesied about a future day of peace: "And it shall come to pass among the wicked, that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor must needs flee unto Zion for safety. And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven; and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another" (D&C 45:68–69). We can choose to obey the Lord's covenant of peace and publicly renounce all wars so as to qualify individually and as a faith community as conscientious objectors as an integral part of our religious training and belief. I believe it will make all the difference in restoring the Lord's kingdom on earth. The invitation to become as the city of Enoch has always been there. When will the Lord return? He comes again when we are ready to receive his kingdom within ourselves and trust in him alone and "learn war no more."[48]

48. From the anti-war song "The Vine and the Fig Tree," based on Isaiah 2:4.

Rebecca Wagstaff
Passageways
oil on canvas, 48x48, 2009

PEDAGOGY OF PERFECTION: JOSEPH SMITH'S PERFECTIONISM, HOW IT WAS TAUGHT IN THE EARLY LDS CHURCH, AND ITS CONTEMPORARY APPLICABILITY

Richard Sleegers

> *It is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times, which dispensation is now beginning to usher in, that a whole and complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time. And not only this, but those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times.*[1]

The Nauvoo period in LDS history was a time of "welding" for Joseph Smith: bringing together previous revelatory teachings and actively shaping rituals into "a whole and complete and perfect union."[2] He believed he was opening a "dispensation," or a pouring out of knowledge and authority from heaven, and was anxious to finish it. He had a vision—at

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1. From a letter by Joseph Smith "to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," Sept. 6 1842, [D&C 128:18].

2. Ibid.

least in the down-to-earth sense of a "goal"—of *all* Saints being educated in the knowledge prerequisite for a salvation he coined "exaltation."

This exaltation can be seen as a unique form of Christian "perfectionism."[3] Most early-nineteenth-century Christian denominations were seeking after salvation, differing in forms and degrees, but united in their desire for certainty. Denominations based on Calvinism found it in God-given grace to a *select* few, while Arminian-based theologies like that found in Methodism believed that *all who chose* Christ as their Savior *could* be saved. Universalists, like Joseph Smith's grandfather,[4] went the furthest in their belief Christ would save *all*. The basic premise of Christian theology—forgiveness of sins through Christ's atonement—seemed undebated, though. Each acknowledged that a power went forth from the atoning sacrifice of Christ. The debate was on *how* to *access* that power; *how* one could be certain that power was manifest, and hence whether salvation was *sure*.[5] Joseph Smith went about revolutionizing the idea of and prerequisites for salvific surety into a perfectionism that was both concrete and attainable, but to most quite unimaginable: becoming as God, or becoming gods.[6] The rationale is that to be certain one can re-enter the presence of God, one

3. For an extensive treatise of precedents to LDS perfectionism (or "theosis"), see Terryl L. Givens, *Wrestling the Angel: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Cosmos, God, Humanity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), chap. 21.

4. Richard L. Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage,* rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2003), 162, 133–35.

5. Steven C. Harper, "First Vision Accounts: Joseph Smith History, circa summer 1832," YouTube video, posted by LDS Church History, Apr. 15, 2015, https://youtu.be/IobA9THKx-M.

6. It is to this day the singular most-contested doctrine upon which mainstream Christianity disavows the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints as a Christian religion. An example is: "Response to the 1982 anti-Mormon film *The God Makers,*" *FairMormon,* https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Criticism_of_Mormonism/Video/The_God_Makers.

should strive to know or see God and progress to be like him.[7] In other words: he saw theophany as a precursor to theosis. Where was this to take place? In God's temple.

But what was Joseph Smith's pedagogy? What educational means did Smith and his contemporaries devise to make this perfectionism comprehensible and tangible? And how has that teaching continued into the present day? Are all educational means still intact and accessible? And what is needed in our time of ongoing secularization to teach this perfectionism effectively? Finally, what happens or can happen to the "temperature" (degree of devotion)[8] of Saints, when this great end goal of perfection is no longer taught as concrete and attainable, as Joseph did?

In this paper, I will answer these questions by first sketching the cultural religious context within which this perfectionism took shape. Next, I will draw from Joseph's teachings about gaining certainty of exaltation from his revelations, public sermons, and more private teachings.[9] Third, I will examine the pedagogy, the modes of teaching, and the associated ordinances Joseph Smith devised. Fourth, I will sketch briefly the most important developments in dispensing those modes of teaching to all the Saints to this day. Finally, I will draw some conclusions, make suggestions, and raise questions about how to go about teaching perfection in our day.

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7. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, "April 10, 1842 Wilford Woodruff Journal," in *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo: Grandin Book Company, 1991), 113.

8. In his Revelation (3:15–16) John writes to the Saints in Laodicea: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." A psychological commonplace is that when people lose track of their end goal, motivation decreases.

9. I used the most original sources available: The Joseph Smith papers, or Andrew Ehat and Lyndon Cook's *Words of Joseph Smith*, or other sources like Wilford Woodruff's diary. Regarding the revelations, when no serious change was found, I refer to the LDS standard works.

Conceptual Notes

Speaking about "certainty" and its synonyms quickly leads to a debate on epistemology, especially when the terms "certain" or "sure" are coupled with "knowledge," pointing to "truth" or "true knowledge." All of these terms are found in Joseph Smith's teachings (and many of his contemporaries), but most epistemological claims Smith makes refer to revelation as the ultimate source of truth. Even though Joseph and early Church leaders sought knowledge in original scripture, languages, "best books" (D&C 88:118), and Masonic temple rites, these insights had to be confirmed by revelation, either personal revelation or public revelation from the prophet himself. A great focus lay on the *applicability of that knowledge* to bring about salvation.

The differing Protestant (Puritan Presbyterian, Wesleyan Methodist, Universalist Unitarian, etc.) concepts of justification, sanctification, and perfection are too intricate to be discussed in full in this short paper. Instead, I will focus mainly on the division between the *underlying* Calvinistic, Arminian, and Universalist *theologies* and compare them to Joseph Smith's perfectionism.

I will distinguish *two "lines" of certainty*: The first is about believers who looked for *certainty* that the power of God was present, and that by that presence God showed his acceptance of the exercise of their faith. In other words, that their *religious acts or rites* were recognized by God, and that they administered them—as a church—with (a degree of) *authority*. The second "line" is about *surety of salvation*, expanding on the first line because it has to do with reassurances received in this life about our *ability to transfer to the next life* in a "saved state." We will see that the definition of that "saved state" determines a lot about these reassurances and the authority needed. We will now go into these concepts more specifically, contrasting Calvinist, Universalist, (mainly) Methodist, and LDS theologies about them.

1: Historical Context: Protestant View of Perfectionism; Search for Certainty of Salvation

Joseph Smith's contemporary religious teachers and reformers were united in their search for salvific certainty. One could say that, as Protestants, they had left the security of Catholic sacramentalism behind and had all proposed different substitute doctrines for achieving that goal.[10] Joseph himself describes the Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists as three of the main sects he and his family were in contact with. He said he "attended their several meetings as occasion would permit" and that his "mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect."[11] This begs the question: how much did Methodist (and others') soteriology influence or even shape Smith's own search for a—personal and later doctrinal—surety of salvation? Despite the doctrinal differences of these Christian sects, there was some consensus on the idea that humanity's fallen and sinful state had to be overcome through the mediation and power of Jesus Christ's atoning sacrifice. As mentioned earlier, the debate was focused on how to access that power and how one could be certain that power was manifest and hence salvation was sure.[12]

Steven Harper describes the sectarian landscape as divided over the question of individual choice in salvation. For Calvinistic Presbyterians, there was no choice: God had to elect you and make it known

10. There is nuance that must be maintained here: not all Protestants left sacramentalism. Some reformists like Calvin and followers (e.g., Beza, Turrettini) viewed "sacraments" as instruments of grace (albeit not in the same way as Catholicism [e.g., the Council of Trent]).

11. Joseph Smith History, vol. A-1, 2, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed Dec. 10, 2018, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/2.

12. Steven C. Harper, in "First Vision Accounts: Joseph Smith History circa Summer 1832," remarks "There is a serious concern, among Joseph Smith and so many others, about how to overcome fallenness. Everybody knows that you overcome fallenness by accessing the atonement of Jesus Christ. The big contention is, how do you access the atonement of Jesus Christ?" (1.42–2:00).

in a spiritual outpouring of grace. For Arminian-Wesleyan Methodists, individuals could choose to accept Christ's atonement and exercise faith to bring about good works and confirming spiritual experiences. For Universalists, no choice existed, for all were saved. The divide was present in Joseph Smith's own family, where mother, brothers, and older sister joined the Presbyterian Church and father turned from a Universalist to a more neutral standpoint and didn't then adhere to a particular church.[13] Joseph was most likely sparked by a Methodist camp meeting to an individual endeavor to gain certainty of forgiveness for his sins and was deciding on which church to join in pursuit of that. He attended meetings but didn't seem to have the same level of excitement, nor experience the physical sensations that others had. This set Joseph in dire need of a different confirmation or source of certainty.[14]

Methodists looked for certainty through scripture,[15] full devotion to a Christian life, and receiving spiritual manifestations of different kinds. These were commonly sought after and celebrated when received, confirming to faithful seekers that God corroborated their efforts with an "outpouring" of his power. The most well-known spiritual manifestations, mainly derived from biblical reports, were speaking in tongues, healings, dreams, and visions. Also, very physical effects were seen, like "people [who] went into trances, jerked, rolled and crawled on the ground," or were, in Joseph Smith's time, at least "crying, mourning,

13. Joseph Smith History, vol. A-1, 2, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed Dec. 10, 2018, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/2; Steven C. Harper, *Joseph Smith's First Vision: A Guide to the Historical Accounts* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012), 14–21.

14. Harper, *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, 23–25.

15. Methodist also clung to *sola scriptura*; whatever "revelation" received, it must be in accordance with scripture.

and sighing."[16] The feeling of being "touched upon" or "recognized" or "accepted" by God was mostly a communal experience. Among the Methodists, camp meetings were predominant in bringing about this communal excitement, aimed at a "revival" or bringing souls "from darkness to light, and from bondage of iniquity to the glorious liberty of the sons of God . . . attended with an awakening sense of sin and with a change of temper and conduct, which cannot be easily concealed."[17]

This begs the question: once such an "acceptance" took place, did those in the congregation who were part of this group experience feel secure about their stance before God; did they feel were they "forgiven of their sins"? If so, this must have been more of an individual certainty, for not all present experienced it. The ecclesiastical counterpart of that experience was the "power" or "authority" of a church to extend the right doctrines and means whereby its adherents could have these reviving experiences.[18] If false doctrine were preached or one adhered to a corrupt faith, there was danger of damnation, or at least, such things were being preached in an effort to dissuade converts from one sect to another.[19]

Christopher Jones, in his thesis, points out that Methodists were very likely to accept dreams and visions, like Joseph Smith's First Vision, to be authoritative revelations from God. Joseph's vision, seen through a Methodist lens, can be seen as a conversion experience whereby God answers a prayer by an apparition of sorts, invoking spiritual gifts and/

16. Milton V. Backman Jr., "Awakenings in the Burned-Over District: New Light on the Historical Setting of the First Vision," in *Exploring the First Vision*, edited by Samuel Alonzo Dodge and Steven C. Harper (Salt Lake City: Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book Company, 2012), 177–78.

17. William Neill, "Thoughts on Revivals of Religion," *Christian Herald*, Apr. 7, 1821, 708–11, in Backman, "Awakenings," 186.

18. The partaking of the sacrament in LDS theology can also be seen as a weekly "reviving" spiritual experience.

19. Joseph Smith History, vol. A-1, 2, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed Dec. 10, 2018, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/2.

or forgiving sins. Phineas Young, a Methodist who later converted to the LDS Church, had a similar experience as Joseph when he prayed to be "made holy" to fulfil his recent calling.[20] From the earliest account of Joseph Smith's First Vision we learn that his initial effort was indeed a search for confirmation of forgiveness of personal sin. His prayer, he writes, was answered by God appearing and saying: "Joseph, my son, thy sins are forgiven thee."[21] This was the first certainty Joseph looked for.

Pertaining to authority as a church, Joseph sought additional certainty about which church to join, a church that would be "accepted of God." Wesleyan teachings on power derived from "spiritual witness" were indicative of the certainty needed to be a *living* church. When denied, he taught, "there is a danger lest our religion degenerate into mere formality; lest, 'having a form of godliness,' we neglect if not 'deny,

20. The similarities are quite striking: in Young's own words: "I prayed continually to God to make me holy, and give me power to do good. While in this state of mind I had a very singular manifestation. . . . when all of a sudden I saw the Heavens open and a body of light above the brightness of the sun descending towards me, in a moment it filled me with joy unutterable, every part of my system was perfectly light, and perfectly happy; I soon arose and spoke of things of the Kingdom of God as I never spoke before. I then felt satisfied that the Lord had heard my prayers and my sins were forgiven" (Young, "Life of Phinehas Howe Young," L. Tom Perry Special Collections, HBLL, quoted in Christopher C. Jones, "'We Latter-day Saints are Methodists: The Influence of Methodism on Early Mormon Religiosity," MA Thesis, Brigham Young University, 2009. Harold B. Lee Library, All Theses and Dissertations, Paper 1747, 33, available at https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd/1747/).

21. "History, circa Summer 1832," in Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, The Joseph Smith Papers, 3, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letterbook-1/9. Shortly before on page 2 Joseph states the reason for his inquiry: "my mind become excedingly distressed for I became convicted of my sins and by searching the scriptures I found that mand <mankind> did not come unto the Lord but that they had apostatised from the true and liveing faith and there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the new testament and I felt to mourn for my own sins and for the sins of the world."

the power of it.'"[22] This resembles a statement of the Lord in Joseph Smith's 1838 account of his First Vision, and was part of the answer and instruction Joseph received to join none of the churches he was in contact with.[23] What was truly remarkable and very decisive for his later perfectionism—as we will see below—is that Joseph professed to receive these confirmations by God the Father and Jesus Christ *in person.* The accompanying conclusion, one that up to this day maybe is the greatest kick to the shins of other Christian denominations, is that the church Joseph was asked to organize was not his own, but the Lord's, and the gospel he proclaimed was not his own, but restored by the Lord himself.

With regard to perfectionism among Methodists, John Wesley wrote three works with "perfection" prominent in their title.[24] In his treatise on perfection he defines it as follows:

> that habitual disposition of the soul which, in the sacred writings, is termed holiness; and which directly implies being cleansed from sin, "from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit"; and, by consequence, being endued with those virtues which were in Christ Jesus; being so

22. Wesley, "Sermon 11, The Witness of the Spirit II" 1, no. 2, (1767) in *The Works of John Wesley* vol. 1 edited by Thomas Jackson (1872), 285, quoted in Christopher C. Jones, "We Latter-day Saints are Methodists," 42.

23. "My object in going to enquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. . . . I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the Personage who addressed me said that all their Creeds were an abomination in his sight, that those professors were all corrupt, that 'they draw near to me to with their lips but their hearts are far from me, They teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of Godliness but they deny the power thereof'" (Joseph Smith History, vol. A-1, 3, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed Dec. 10, 2018, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-a-1-23-december-1805-30-august-1834/3; see also Isa. 29:13, Matt. 15:9).

24. *On Perfection* (Sermon 40, 1739), *Christian Perfection* (Sermon 76, 1784). These were sermons on sanctification, which hints at how Wesley understood "perfection." Also see *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (treatise, 1739).

> "renewed in the image of our mind," as to be "perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect."[25]

And:

> "A restoration not only to the favour, but likewise to the image of God, implying not barely deliverance from sin, but the being filled with the fullness of God"[26]

"Holy," "cleansed from sin," "endued with Christlike virtues," "renewed in mind" all imply a change brought about by the exercise of faith and the working of grace, but which makes the human only "as to be" perfect as God. Receiving "the image" of God or being filled with his "fullness" seem to point more to a refinement of Christian character, not to the more literal sense of "becoming a god" Joseph Smith adopted. Methodist perfection can more readily be incorporated with their teaching of "entire" sanctification, as shown in two other quotes from Wesley, stating that perfection is "deliverance from inward as well as from outward sin" and "a Christian is so far perfect as not to commit sin."[27] These could be taken as prerequisites to Joseph's idea of perfection (see §2).

A lesser known influence on Joseph Smith was that of the Universalist Society, originating in Boston but present in most of New England and to which Joseph's grandfather and father adhered,[28] or the related

25. John Wesley, "A Plain Account on Christian Perfection," in *The Works of John Wesley* 11, no. 29, edited by Thomas Jackson (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1872), 366–446.

26. John Wesley, "The End of Christ's Coming" (Sermon 62), Wesley Center, available at http://wesley.nnu.edu/john-wesley/the-sermons-of-john-wesley-1872-edition/sermon-62-the-end-of-christs-coming/.

27. John Wesley, "A Plain Account on Christian Perfection," 36–446.

28. Steven C. Harper, *Joseph Smith's First Vision*, 17. Also, Richard L. Bushman makes a strong claim of Universalism present in the New England area and influence on Asael Smith's religious beliefs, in Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: Illinois University Press, 1984), 27–28.

Unitarians. Terryl Givens quotes William Ellery Channing, the latter movement's dominant minister, teaching that "likeness to God is a good so unutterably surpassing all other good, that whoever admits it as attainable, must acknowledge it to be the chief aim of life."[29] It is unclear how much of this teaching passed from Joseph's grandfather and father to him. One Universalist idea Asael Smith certainly taught that can be recognized in Joseph's soteriology is its anti-Calvinistic conception of God's universal salvific love: a desire to save all his children.[30] It is likely that Joseph accepted this desire that God *could* save all, but also adhered to the Methodist requisite of agency and exercise of faith to bring about saving grace. We will now investigate how Joseph situated this reciprocal desire for human and God to reunite in perfect unity in an almost Catholic sacramental "covenant" theology and with accompanying temple ordinances.

2: Joseph Smith's Own View on Certainty and Perfection: The Pinnacle of Salvation

> *If you wish to go where God is, you must be like God, or possess the principles which God possesses. . . . A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge, ... Hence [we] need revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God.*[31]

Church history scholars have argued about the doctrinal differences of the Kirtland/Missouri and Nauvoo eras. There seems to be both a continuum and a split. One general observation that we can make is that there was a shifting focus: from a literal *city of Zion* and urgent

29. Terryl L. Givens, *Wrestling the Angel: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Cosmos, God, Humanity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 263.

30. Richard L. Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 136.

31. Sermon delivered at Nauvoo, Ill. on Sunday Apr. 10, 1842, Wilford Woodruff Journal. In: Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds. *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo: Grandin Book Company, 1991), 113.

millennialism, to a more spiritualized seeking for a *Zion society* and preparing to meet God in the *temple*.[32] Nevertheless, many teachings on principles later incorporated in the temple ordinances can be traced back to earlier times, and just as many new teachings evolved in the last three years of Joseph's life, as David Buerger and Andrew Ehat have abundantly shown.[33] What occurred after the shift can be described by the concepts *consolidation* and *dissemination.*[34] The bringing together (*con*) of principles of salvation into tangible (*solid*) ordinances that can be experienced, and teaching them to more and more of the saints (*dis*) to eventually bear much fruit (*seminate*). The Nauvoo Temple was built and a "Quorum of the Anointed" established to fit these purposes.

I argue that the *two lines of certainty*, mentioned in the introduction and §1, also came together: 1) The power of God present, acceptance by God, authority 2) Surety of salvation.

As for the first, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, while translating the Book of Mormon, described how they had received priesthood from heavenly messengers: the Aaronic Priesthood from John the Baptist and the Melchizedek Priesthood from Peter, James, and John. A revelation received just before the Church was organized (now D&C 20) explains the several offices in those priesthoods. People were baptized, confirmed, the sacrament performed, using these priesthoods to do it with authority.

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32. Terryl L. Givens argued that the failed Zion's camp can be seen as a turning point for this shift in focus. The argument was communicated orally in a group discussion during the 2015 Summer Seminar on Mormon Culture.

33. For my description of Joseph Smith's "pedagogy of perfection" pertaining to the doctrinal origins of the temple ordinances, I drew much from their extensive work, for which I like to express my appreciation and thanks. See David John Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994 / 2003), 5; and Andrew F. Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances and the 1844 Mormon Succession Question" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1982)..

34. This term is not meant to be associated with the later evolving practice of plural marriage.

In Kirtland, however, at Sidney Rigdon's initial suggestion, a new and higher office in the priesthood was installed—after the order of the ancients—namely the High Priesthood.[35] David Buerger illustrates how the innovation of the High Priesthood allowed Joseph and the Twelve to "seal [people] up to eternal life" (D&C 68:2, 12 also 1:8–9), introducing ordinances that were later incorporated in the temple endowment,[36] and thus to do what "strict Calvinists reserved solely to God."[37] "Sealing" is another word connoting certainty and can be seen in connection with the sealing or binding power Peter and Nephi received "to bind on earth as in heaven" and later the receiving of the sealing keys of Elijah in the Kirtland Temple.[38] Zebedee Coltrin in 1831, Jared Carter in 1832, and Orson Pratt in 1833 all testify of the outpourings of the Spirit, not only on individuals, but on whole groups that Joseph gathered in his School of the Prophets, to "seal them up" "to the Lord" "unto eternal life" "by the power of the Holy Ghost."[39] These much resembled Methodist

35. This was not without controversy though, since some opposed it as being imagined by Rigdon. Eventually Joseph confirmed this addition by explaining this "order of the High priesthood" as the "power given them to seal up the Saints unto eternal life. And said it was the privilege of every Elder present to be ordained to the High Priesthood" ("Far West Record," Oct. 25, 1931, Church History Library). (Thanks to David Buerger, see note 40).

36. This "Kirtland endowment" included washings and anointings of kinds (see *History of the Church* 2:379–82), the washing of feet (and face) and the sacrament (see *History of the Church* 2:410–30), as found in D&C 88:127–41.

37. Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness*, 5. He further explains: "Key players in the sixteenth-century Reformation used many of these sealing passages [in the Bible] as evidence for their belief in predestination. Liberal reaction to Calvinist doctrine arose early in the seventeenth century when Arminians rejected this view, asserting that God's sovereignty and human free will were compatible, that such sealings depended on choices of the individual believer."

38. See Matthew 16:19, Helaman 10:4–7, and D&C 110:13–16; and Joseph Smith's explanation in D&C 128:5–18.

39. See Zebedee Coltrin Diary, Nov. 15, 1831, Church History Library; Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Sept. 27, 1832,

communal outpourings, but in a completely new doctrinal context of apostles and "prophets"[40] being called to the ministry (D&C 95:4–5).

As for the second, Joseph Smith's first quest for personal salvation was answered by a personal visitation[41] of the Father and the Son, which is exactly the theophany that he later posed as the end goal of temple practice. I say "practice" because the *gaining of knowledge*, *exercise* of faith, and accompanying *works*, Joseph melted together in a *development* toward perfection or godhood. The temple was a place to meet God and "a place of *learning*" in preparation for that.[42] These can be seen as original additions to the Methodist "faith and works" required for spiritual approval from God: searching for the mysteries of God(liness) "by *study* and by faith," made *education* into a mode of *worship*. We could rephrase the word worship now as "a mode to approach God," a reciprocal act to return to him.[43] Joseph started this early on by erecting (on divine

Church History Library; and Journal of Orson Pratt, Aug. 26, Sept. 8, 1833, Church History Library.

40. The name for the school was received in a revelation (D&C 88:127–38), and it is interesting to see that all participants were thus seen as "prophets," or in any case Saints that were being trained to be prophet-like ministers.

41. Actually several visitations, because three years after his First Vision he again prayed to know his standing before God, and as an answer angel Moroni appeared: "I often felt condemned for my weakness and imperfections; when on the evening of the above mentioned twenty first of September, after I had retired to my bed for the night I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies, and also for a manifestation to me that I might know of my state and standing before him. For I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation as I had previously had one" (History, circa June 1839–circa 1841 [Draft 2], 5).

42. D&C 88:118–19, 67–68.

43. A well-known quote by Joseph is: "A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge" (Apr. 10, 1842, Wilford Woodruff Journal, in Ehat and Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 113). See also the opening quote of this section. Being brought back into God's presence by gaining knowledge is an idea found in the Book of Mormon: "And because of the knowledge of this man [Brother

command) the previously mentioned *School* of the Prophets in Kirtland. It was in this school, and later—upon completion—in the Kirtland Temple, that he started preparing others to meet the Lord, preparatory for their missions as—literal—witnesses of Christ. He taught them:

> How do men obtain a knowledge of the glory of God, his perfections and attributes? By devoting themselves to his service, through prayer and supplication incessantly strengthening their faith in him, *until*, like Enoch, the Brother of Jared, and Moses, they obtain a *manifestation* of God to themselves.[44]

This resembles the Methodist method to come to entire sanctification, up until the word "*until*" appears, after which Joseph refers to other prophets in the scriptures who were called by God in person.

To make that viable, the Kirtland Temple needed to be built. The twelve apostles Joseph Smith had chosen were charged "not to go to other nations . . . [but to] tarry at Kirtland until [they were] endowed with power from on high."[45] Oliver Cowdery gave them this "charge":

> The ancients passed through the same. They had this testimony, that they had *seen* the Saviour after he rose from the dead. . . . You must bear the same testimony, that there is [p. 156[a]] but *one God and one Mediator*; he that has *seen* him will *know* him and *testify* of him." . . . You have been indebted to other men in the first instance for *evidence*, on that you have acted. But . . . [p. 159] You will, therefore see the necessity of getting this testimony from Heaven. Never cease striving until you have seen God, face to face. Strengthen your faith, cast off your doubts, your sins and all your unbelief and *nothing can prevent*

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of Jared] he could not be kept from beholding within the veil . . . wherefore, having this perfect knowledge of God, he could not be kept from within the veil; therefore he saw Jesus; and He did minister unto him" (Ether 3:19–20).

44. Lectures on Faith, Second lecture, as found in Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams & Co., 1835), 25. Italics mine.

45. "Minute Book 1, [ca. 3 Dec. 1832–30 Nov. 1837]," Church History Library, Feb. 21, 1835, 162. Note the resemblance with Luke 24:49.

> *you from coming to God.* Your *ordination* is not *full and complete* till *God* has *laid his hand upon you*." [46]

This "ordination" refers to the "fullness of the priesthood," which flows from having seen God. In other words, the Twelve had to make their "calling and election"—as apostles—sure, just like Joseph was called in the grove in 1820. The event of seeing God the Father and his Son occurred (at least for most of the Twelve[47]) "at one of these meetings after the organization of the school, (the school being organized on the 23rd of January, 1833)."[48] Afterwards the prophet Joseph said: "Brethren, now you are prepared to be the apostles of Jesus Christ, for you have seen both the Father and the Son and know that they exist and that they are two separate personages."[49] So the same surety of "calling" he personally received in Palmyra, he also deemed necessary for the Twelve and others sent out to the ministry in Kirtland. It is interesting to see that many also received a blessing by the laying on of hands whereby their "sins were forgiven them."[50]

Here we see a complete unity of the two lines of authority in Joseph's conception of perfection: 1) three priesthoods were restored, including the sealing power, and 2) the most sure you can get of your salvation is

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46. "Minute Book 1, [ca. 3 Dec. 1832–30 Nov. 1837]," Church History Library, 156a–b; 159; 162.

47. "There were members as follows: Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, William Smith, Frederick G. Williams, Orson Hyde (who had the charge of the school), Zebedee Coltrin, Sylvester Smith, Joseph Smith, Sr., Levi Hancock, Martin Harris, Sidney Rigdon, Newel K. Whitney, Samuel H. Smith, John Murdock, Lyman Johnson and Ezra Thayer." As related by Zebedee Coltrin in "Minutes, Salt Lake City School of the Prophets," Oct. 3, 1883.

48. This remark by Zebedee Coltrin obscures the date when this took place. He doesn't state the date, only the date of the organization of the School. The apostolic charge was given in 1835 and the temple dedicated Mar. 27, 1836.

49. As related by Zebedee Coltrin in "Minutes, Salt Lake City School of the Prophets," Oct. 3, 1883.

50. "Minute Book 1, [ca. 3 Dec. 1832–30 Nov. 1837]," Church History Library, 154.

by meeting God, but this was also a way of having the apostles' "calling and election" made sure; to be able to teach with authority as witnesses of Christ. Nevertheless, this theophany to the Twelve in preparation of their ministry was only a precursor to what was about to come. Their "calling and election" had *not explicitly* to do with surety of salvation. The leadership were still learning, and repenting, confessing their sins to one another, bearing one another up. Theophany as a means whereby one could be sure of salvation, being sealed unto eternal life or exaltation, Joseph started to teach, to all, in Nauvoo.

In a sermon delivered at the Nauvoo Temple grounds on Friday, May 12, 1844 Joseph pleaded with all Saints present there: "I am going on in my progress for eternal life, ... Oh! I beseech you to go forward, go forward and make your calling and election sure."[51] Surely Joseph had been adamant in his search for knowledge: the inspired or explanatory translation of the Old and New Testaments, the discussions in the School of the Prophets, the ongoing revelations, receiving the sealing keys of Elijah, the discovery of the Abraham papyri, and entering the Masonic Lodge, were all sources of knowledge—ancient and new—Joseph employed to construct his theology of exaltation. All were coming together: the knowledge and principles needed to guide all Saints to meet God in his temple and thus be sure of salvation. This surety of salvation he named after Peter's "calling and election made sure" (2 Pet. 1:10, 19). Joseph explained in May 17, 1843, "The more sure word of prophecy means a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood" (D&C 131:5–6). Now the Protestants around him used these scriptures too, e.g., Calvinists talked about them, using scriptures on "sealing" to corroborate their doctrine of predestination. Methodists, like John Wesley, as we saw above, had teachings on sanctification and even perfection. But none went as far in teaching perfectionism as becoming as God.

51. Thomas Bullock report, Friday, May 12, 1844, Book of Abraham Project, available at http://www.boap.org/LDS/Parallel/1844/12May44.html.

Now Joseph made one more addition, unique to LDS theology, to his concept of "exaltation": eternal marriage, and for some plural marriage.

One day before this explanation on the more sure word of prophecy, Joseph taught:

> In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; and in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; and if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom: he cannot have an increase.[52]

Joseph, who already divided the heavens up in three kingdoms of glory in his vision of February 1832 (D&C 76), now divided up the celestial glory into three degrees. The "increase" mentioned, points to similar blessings Abraham received pertaining to his posterity, "both in the world and out of this world" (D&C 132:30).[53] This revelation on both the sealing power and on the covenant of eternal (and plural) marriage, made exaltation and perfection—becoming gods—more explicit: all gods are married—or sealed to one another—and continue in procreation in the eternities. Any lesser form of salvation ("saved state"), would be a limitation to eternal progression:

> For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever. (D&C 132:17)

Later on in this revelation it seems to show that to have those blessings confirmed or sealed upon you while "in this world" is prerequisite for exaltation:

> For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the *exaltation and continuation of the lives*, and few there be that find it, because ye

52. Joseph Smith History, vol. D-1, 1551, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed Dec. 10, 2018, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-d-1-1-august-1842-1-july-1843/194.

53. See also Abraham 2:11.

> receive me not *in the world* neither do ye *know me*. But if ye receive me *in the world*, then shall ye *know me*, and shall receive your *exaltation*; that where I am ye shall be also.[54]

Joseph was now doctrinally prepared to make these highest of blessing available to all who were "Spiritual minded" and "prepared to receive" them.[55] And he wanted to make haste, as he expected to be taken from this world and needed "to instruct the Society and point out the way for them to conduct, that they might act according to the will of God . . . delivering the keys to this society and the church."[56] This "society" was the Nauvoo Relief Society, but it was also an allusion to the Quorum of the Anointed, in which—logically—women played an equal part, because that is where he eventually revealed all these ordinances of exaltation. Joseph started with the initiation of a select few, twenty-four couples and seventeen others to be exact,[57] but with a broader view ahead:

> In this Council [Quorum] was instituted the Ancient order of things for the first time in these last days. . . . and there was nothing made known to these men, but what will be made known to all <the> Saints of the last days, so soon as they are prepared to receive, and a proper place is prepared to communicate them, even to the weakest of the Saints.[58]

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54. D&C 132:22–23, italics mine. This assertion can be debated, for these ordinances were and are performed also for the dead. See pp. 128–29 and note 73 further on in this paper for additional arguments on this question.

55. Joseph Smith History, vol. C-1, 1328, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed Dec. 10, 2018, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842/502.

56. "Nauvoo Relief Society Minutes," *The Words of Joseph Smith*, eds. Ehat and Cook, Apr. 28, 1842, 116.

57. See table with list of initiated in Ehat, "Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances."

58. Joseph Smith History, vol. C-1, 1328, The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed Dec. 10, 2018, https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842/502.

That proper place was the (Nauvoo) temple, but it was still under construction, so Joseph went ahead and set up the upper room of his red brick store to serve as an ordinance room. By this last addition of marriage, the gospel of Adam and Eve one could say, the full meaning of the word "sealing" was established: this sealing of couples to one another and to God, now extended—through the Abrahamic covenant and the keys of the sealing power of Elijah (D&C 110:13–16)—to all progenitors and posterity, *both living and dead*, so that the entire human family could be bound together on earth and in heaven. And this led to another addition to the idea of perfection: that we "without our dead cannot be made perfect."[59] Hence, all the ordinances that Joseph had installed were able to be performed by proxy for ancestors. The outward forms and their role in teaching perfectionism to the Saints we will discuss next.

3: Outward Forms: Joseph Smith's Search for Fitting Ordinances: A Pedagogy of Perfection

> *And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; for without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.* (D&C 84:21–22)
>
> *The question is frequently asked: Can we not be saved without going through with all these ordinances &c. I would answer: No, not the fullness of Salvation, any person who is exalted to the highest mansion has to abide a Celestial law & the whole law to.*[60]

Now that the doctrines were in place, consolidated, they were ready to be passed on, disseminated. How? Orally. An oral canon of scripture was about to be opened, expounded upon, and fitted to the envisioned purpose: to have every Saint who was ready to receive it meet God in person

59. See Doctrine and Covenants 128:15 and Hebrews 11:40.

60. Sermon delivered at Nauvoo, Ill. on Jan. 21, 1844, in *Wilford Woodruff's Journal: 1833–1898, Typescript Volumes 1–9*, edited by Scott G. Kenney (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983).

and be assured of exaltation. Oral transmission of sacred truths, which were "not to be riten,"[61] serves several important purposes. It was done by the Jews, Egyptians, Masons, and, as far as we can infer from the limited canon of the New Testament, also in the days of the early apostles.[62] Joseph considered many plain and precious things from the gospel to have been lost,[63] mostly from scripture, but much, he believed, had been preserved in oral traditions. Joseph's discovery of the Egyptian papyri, his involvement in the Masonic temple, and his own revelations received while reading the Old and New Testaments in their original languages had helped him discover precious parts of that lost tradition. Following his pattern of dissemination, he introduced them to the Twelve and others and expounded on them in his public sermons. Then, in Nauvoo, he urged the Twelve and hundreds of others to join the Masonic lodge[64] to learn what he had learned and help him bring it into one revealed whole.

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61. From Heber C. Kimball, in a letter to Parley and Mary Ann Pratt, dated Jun. 17, 1842, Church History Library. "We received some pressious things though the Prophet on the preasthood that would caus your Soul to rejoice. I can not give them to you on paper fore *they are not to be riten*. So you must come and get them fore your Self. We have organized a Lodge here. Of Masons. Since we obtained a Charter. That was in March since that thare has near two hundred been made masons Br Joseph and Sidny was the first that was Received in to the Lodg. All of the twelve have become members Exept Orson P. . . . thare is a similarity of preast Hood in Masonry. Bro Joseph ses masonry was taken from preasthood but had become degenerated but menny things are perfect" (italics mine).

62. A complete study of aspects of the LDS temple ritual that can be traced back to Jewish, Egyptian, Masonic, and the early apostles lies far beyond the scope of this paper. Hugh Nibley's extensive work on this can be consulted. I have focused, for the latter part of this paper, on the intended purposes of the mode of teaching that was devised.

63. See 1 Nephi 13:20–29. Verse 26b says: "for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away."

64. Also from Heber C. Kimball's letter to Parley P. Pratt dated Jun. 17, 1842, Church History Library. See note 61.

The next step Joseph took was to fit all these saving principles into a mode of teaching that would, on the one hand, be instrumental in *revealing* unto the participant all knowledge necessary to re-enter God's presence. On the other hand, since it was *sacred* knowledge, he had to *safeguard* it. This put Joseph in a delicate position, and the way he went about it was to create an oral tradition of *knowledge by initiation*. The Masonic temple rites are the most exemplary for this mode of teaching.[65] The point I want to make about this *mode of teaching* is how Joseph Smith envisioned it and its purposes. It is a mode of teaching that resembles Jesus' usage of parables: to communicate "hidden" knowledge to those who had "ears to hear," but conceal at the same time the "pearls from the swine."

Education[66] and pedagogy[67] are in their Latin and Greek roots almost interchangeable. "Educare" (leading out) is mostly associated with training

65. There are many excellent books on the comparison and evolvement of Masonic and LDS temple ordinances, e.g., Buerger compares them in *The Mysteries of Godliness*, 1994 / 2003), there is Matthew B. Brown's book *Exploring the Connection Between Mormons and Masons* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2009), a recent article by Jeff Bradshaw, "Freemasonry and the Origins of Modern Temple Ordinances," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 15 (2015): 159–237, and again Hugh Nibley, e.g., *Temple and Cosmos* (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992).

66. educate (v.) mid-15c., "bring up (children), to train," from Latin *educatus*, past participle of *educare* "bring up, rear, educate," which is a frequentative of or otherwise related to *educere* "bring out, lead forth," from *ex-* "out" (see ex-) + *ducere* "to lead" (see duke (n.)). Meaning "provide schooling" is first attested 1580s. Related: Educated; *educating*. According to "Century Dictionary," *educere*, of a child, is "usually with reference to bodily nurture or support, while *educare* refers more frequently to the mind," and, "There is no authority for the common statement that the primary sense of *education* is to 'draw out or unfold the powers of the mind'" (from: http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=educate&allowed_in_frame=0).

67. pedagogue (n.) late 14c., "schoolmaster, teacher," from Old French *pedagoge* "teacher of children" (14c.), from Latin *paedagogus*, from Greek *paidagogos* "slave who escorts boys to school and generally supervises them," later "a teacher," from *pais* (genitive *paidos*) "child" (see pedo-) + *agogos* "leader,"

the powers of the mind, oriented more at the *transmittal* and sharing of *knowledge*. "Παιδαγογία" or paidagōgía (leading a child) is more relational, associated with *mentoring* and the *development* of a child. In the combination of these concepts we can find the need for both teaching of *principles* and *knowledge*, and the leading, guiding, or mentoring that is part of *initiation* and catering to certain *experiences* necessary for *development*.

"Hidden" knowledge of principles, and the experiences necessary to internalize these principles "deeply into the bone," are made into a whole by initiation into ordinances or rituals. Ordinances are tools in teaching, but not only that, they are—like Catholic sacraments—binding rituals designed to bring about salvation. One can view the temple ritual in both Methodist and Calvinist senses of perfection: it can be instrumental in receiving spiritual outpourings and confirming one's holiness or standing before God. "Binding" or "sealing" are both terms referring to a *covenant relationship* between humans and God, meant to bridge the gap between them. Another Methodist element, one could say, is that the relationship is entered into of one's own free will and choice. A ritual can be defined as a symbolic act, meant to "bridge a distance," to initiate a "passage" or symbolize a relationship of "belonging."[68] All these can be applied to the temple ordinances, which for Joseph Smith and the early leaders were seen as parts of one ritual. Maybe with the exception of baptism for the living—the first initiation rite to become a member of the Church—all other ordinances were done in temple setting: sacrament,[69] washings and anointings, endowment, marriage

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from *agein* "to lead" (see act (n.)) (from: http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=pedagogue&allowed_in_frame=0).

68. Ronald L. Grimes, *Deeply into the Bone: Re-inventing Rites of Passage* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2000), 16 and 121.

69. The sacrament of course was also performed outside of the temple, in regular Sunday meetings. It seems to have been an ordinance to remember Christ's sacrifice on any occasion the early brethren seemed fit. For an extensive treatise on the sacrament see Ugo A. Perego, "The Changing Forms of the Sacrament,"

sealing, washing of feet, etc. (D&C 88:75; 138–41). The same pattern of dissemination emerged: all ordinances were revealed by Joseph, done or "tested" with the Twelve in Kirtland,[70] and then shared with selected men and women in the Quorum of the Anointed in Nauvoo.

The "testing" for the new (Nauvoo) additions to the endowment and marriage ordinances was done in the upper room of Joseph's red brick store. He had asked five men who were masons to prepare the room according to his instructions. Eight people were the first to receive this improvised endowment on May 4, 1842. It is illustrative to consider how Joseph later apologized for the improvised quarters, saying to Brigham Young:

> this is not arranged right, but, we have done the best we could under the circumstances in which we are placed, and I wish you take this matter in hand . . . organize and systematize all these ceremonies . . . [Brigham Young:] We performed the ordinances under Joseph's supervision numerous times and each time I got something more so that when we went through the Temple at Nauvoo I understood and knew how to place them there. We had our ceremonies pretty correct.[71]

It was an evolving ceremony, and frankly, it has been evolving ever since,[72] which tells us something about its instrumental nature. Symbols,

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Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture 22 (2016): 1–16, https://www.mormoninterpreter.com/the-changing-forms-of-the-latter-day-saint-sacrament/.

70. Except of course the new elements of the endowment ceremony and marriage ceremonies devised in Nauvoo.

71. L. John Nuttall, diary, typescript entry for Feb. 7, 1877 (Provo: Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University).

72. As the publication of this article was pending, the First Presidency announced new changes to the temple using these words: "Over these many centuries, details associated with temple work have been adjusted periodically (. . .). Prophets have taught that there will be no end to such adjustments as directed by the Lord to His servants" (First Presidency Statement on Temples, Jan. 2, 2019, available at https://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/temple-worship). The last major changes in the endowment date from 1990, some minor changes in

by their metaphorical nature, are meant to "carry over" (μετα-φέρειν) meaning from one realm of reality to another. For example, the story of Adam and Eve can have meaning within the context of their dealings with God, but at the same time carry over meaning for all (married) men and women going through mortal life. The portrayal of the stories and symbols—with exception of some key elements—does not have to be exact every time. There is constant interpretation: some (though little) by the persons portraying the symbols (live performance) and even more by the persons receiving them. In fact, every individual receiving them can make his or her own interpretations and apply them in his or her life.

Now let us look a bit closer to how these ordinances of the gospel, by initiation into higher knowledge and ritual experiences, work toward meeting God and becoming like God. Baptism is the first initiation ordinance and already points to the end from the beginning. It is symbolic of birth and death, rebirth and a new life in the resurrection. In Nephi's words:

> And now, my beloved brethren, after ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path [i.e. by baptism], I would ask if all is done? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. . . . Wherefore, if ye shall *press forward*, feasting upon the word of Christ, *and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.* (2 Ne. 31:19–20, italics added)

Baptism resembles the path from infancy (in the gospel) to adulthood: having the Father tell you that you shall have eternal life, or, as Joseph

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the initiatories were made more recently, diminishing the communal part of touching at the pronouncement of blessings, see below and John-Charles Duffy, "Concealing the Body, Concealing the Sacred: The Decline of Ritual Nudity in Mormon Temples," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 21, no. 1 (2007): 1–21. A full account of all policy and content changes can be found in the works of David Buerger, *The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship* (San Francisco: Smith Research Associates, 1994 / 2003) and "'The Fulness of the Priesthood': The Second Anointing in Latter-day Saint Theology and Practice," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1983): 10–44.

or Peter taught: "having our callings and election made sure." All intermediate ordinances can be seen as steps on the "ladder," a pedagogy toward perfection. In the well-known King Follett Sermon delivered April 7, 1844 Joseph explained:

> Here then is eternal life, to know the only wise and true God. You have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves; to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done; by going from a small degree to another, from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you are able to sit in glory as doth those who sit enthroned in everlasting power; . . . When you climb a ladder, you must begin at the bottom and go on until you learn the last principle; it will be a great while before you have learned the last. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it is a great thing to learn salvation beyond the grave.[73]

This last sentence again raises debate as to whether the sealing unto eternal life has to take place in this world or if it might be received in the hereafter. One could argue that, after passing through death, all will see God and know that he is. The other option is that the ordinance does have to take place in this life and that only then will progression continue after death.[74] Notwithstanding these possibilities, Joseph Smith seemed eager to prepare the Saints to meet God in this life and have the promised blessing sealed upon them in this life. All further temple instructions point to that.

Washings and anointings were among the first ordinances to be performed in this dispensation. An important part of these are the references to our own bodies and blessings connected to them. So, one's own body becomes an instrument in sanctification, by overcoming the natural tendencies of the flesh and instead using the body to acquire these spiritual blessings. One could say the Methodist sense of perfection,

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73. Joseph Smith, Discourse, Nauvoo, Ill., Apr. 7, 1844; in *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 15 (Nauvoo, Ill.: Aug. 15, 1844): 613–14.

74. A detailed account of this debate is discussed by Buerger in his article "The Fulness of the Priesthood," 43–44.

becoming entirely clean of (the blood and) sins (of this generation), took on this sacramental form in Joseph's perfectionism. Again, internalization through the ritual is very prominent, as these blessings are memorized and one's own body—and the symbolic garments it is clothed with—serve as daily reminders. It also has a communal aspect of great trust, whereas the washings and anointings are performed by touching by a brother or sister, providing the experience that internalizes the ritual.

The endowment is even closer to a "ladder" of sanctification, as the initiate is literally taken from one phase to the other, symbolized by the different rooms one passes through, the increasing brightness of light, and the ever deeper commitments entered into. Deeper commitments also lead to deeper connection with the divine, in anticipation of reuniting with God at the end of the ceremony, where one ritually steps into God's presence by passing through a veil (Ether 3:20).

Temple marriage is, of course, a direct symbol of uniting man and woman in God and having these relationships "sealed" beyond the grave. Children are "born into the covenant," and covenant relationships can be extended vicariously to ancestors. Blessings pertaining to offspring in this world and the next are represented in symbolic representations of fertility.[75] Unity in marriage as a way to grow nearer to God the Father and Mother sets up family life as a learning environment as well: practicing to become gods and have an "increase" (D&C 131:4).

We could go on expanding on the symbolism of these ordinances, but I noted only some that had relation to the perfectionism Joseph taught. (See table 1, a series of principles that are taught and internalized by experiencing temple ordinances.) *The LDS temple ritual is deeply pedagogical*: anyone can learn new things relevant to one's current phase of development and as the Holy Spirit may direct. This, one can say, is the *perfect* mode of learning, tailored, deeply spiritual, and experiential. It is *revealing* on the one hand, to the individual through personal

75. This is most obvious in the Salt Lake Temple where the celestial room is adorned with many fertility symbols.

revelation brought about by communal symbolic rites and experiences, and *safeguards* on the other hand the sacredness of these teachings by the initiation principle and the promises entered into. It is this mode of teaching I call Joseph's Pedagogy of Perfection. In essence it is that *all Saints can, of their own free will and choice, partake in ordinances as means to experience spiritual maturation, to the end purpose of meeting and becoming like God.*

EDUCATION	**PEDAGOGY**
Principle = Knowledge	Ordinance = Experience
Repentance, new life, resurrection	*Baptism,* washed clean, out of water
Pure life, overcome sins of generation	*Washing,* blessings on bodily parts
Act righteously with power given, stewardship from small to great	*Anointing,* preparatory king and priest
Set apart from the world, discipline over body, searching for truth, faithfulness	*Priesthood garments,* wear always, constant reminder, protection, etc.
Line upon line, growth in priesthood power, strong against temptations of Satan	*Endowment,* going from room to room, learning, clothing, covenants
Marriage for eternity, fidelity, family, offspring	*Temple marriage,* sealing, blessings
. . .	. . .
ALL: preparing to meet and be like God	ALL: preparing to meet and be like God

Let us return to the early Saints who first received these ordinances, who were still innovating and learning to apply this new mode of teaching to their development and spiritual life. I would like to show, from their own experiences, how they thought these teachings were to be applied and disseminated. Just as Joseph had openly *preached* about many of the *principles* pertaining to exaltation and making one's calling and election sure, partakers of the ordinances were *discussing* their *experiences* in the temple. Helen Mar Whitney recorded Amasa Lyman's insights and

experiences of the temple ordinances he received on December 21, 1845, which reveal some keys to the perceived purposes of temple pedagogy:

> These things [are] to put you in possession of the means of salvation, and be brought into a proper relationship to God. . . . It is the key by which you approach God. No impression which you receive here should be lost. It was to rivet the recollections of these things in your memory, like a nail in a sure place never to be forgotten. The scenery through which you have passed is actually laying before you a picture or map, by which you are to travel through life and obtain entrance into the celestial Kingdom hereafter.[76]

According to this statement, the ritual accomplishes three things: It is meant to "bridge the gap" between humans and God (it is relational). Second, it provides a specific goal to internalize the "oral scripture" by memorizing the proceedings of the ordinances. Third, there is a close relation between our "travel through the temple" and our everyday "travel through life."

Easily overlooked, but to me very poignant, is that the quotation above comes from minutes made of meetings held just after the performance of the ordinances. This was like a "temple testimony meeting," with seventy-five brothers and sisters present and where several shared their views on what they had just experienced. These early Saints, under the direction of Heber C. Kimball, helped each other understand and get a testimony of these important saving ordinances. They were actively making that connection with real life, as we also see with prophets of old and others in the scriptures. This begs the question: how do Latter-day Saints, from the early times to the present, go about making that connection? How do they liken the oral scriptures of the temple to themselves? Where and when do they discuss them, to mentor one another to further initiation? Next, I want to discuss the extension of temple ordinances

76. Helen Mar Whitney, "Scenes in Nauvoo, and Incidents from H.C. Kimball's Journal," *The Woman's Exponent* 12 (Aug. 1 and 15, 1883), 26, in Ehat, *Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances*, 115–16.

and of the accompanying temple education over time, and the evolving modes and policies surrounding them.

4: Extension of Teachings and Blessings to the Saints Abroad—Gathering Reversed

> *But there has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. . . . Even the Saints are slow to understand. I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God, but we frequently see some of them after suffering all they have for the work of God will fly to pieces like glass as soon as any thing comes that is contrary to their traditions, they cannot stand the fire at all.* How many will be able to abide a celestial law, go through and receive their exaltation I am unable to say but many are called and few are chosen.[77]

Joseph Smith's lamentation that the early Saints were slow to understand demonstrates that he was struggling with the dilemma of widespread dissemination and selective initiation already in his day. Likewise, from the earliest days of Joseph's teaching about perfection and eternal marriage, there have been exposés and distortions by dissenting members and others. Balancing the needs of members learning and maintaining the sacredness of the temple teachings has been a constant conundrum. Policies about both content and dissemination of temple blessings have been evolving ever since.

When Joseph Smith was martyred, he had only performed the full temple ordinances with sixty-five Saints.[78] Brigham Young continued overseeing the temple construction and performed these saving ordinances wherever possible. In the meantime, he made some late innovations to the ceremonies. Upon completion of the temple, the ordi-

77. Sermon delivered at Nauvoo, Ill. in front of Robert D. Foster's hotel on Jan. 21, 1844 in *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*. Italics and corrections mine

78. *History of the Church* 7:543–80. See table of ordinances in Ehat, *Joseph Smith's Introduction of Temple Ordinances*.

nance work started and took off at an unfathomable pace, as thousands of Saints were yearning to be "endowed" and married before their God. Just before the trek to the West, over 5,000 members went through the temple, around 600 of whom received the highest blessings pertaining to exaltation.[79]

Once in the Utah mountains, Brigham Young continued extending endowments and sealings to as many as possible as soon as possible. Before any buildings were erected, some ordinances were performed on hilltops: "Addison Pratt received his endowments on Ensign Hill on the 21st [July 21, 1849], the place being consecrated for the purpose. Myself . . . being present."[80] Mountains were, scripturally, seen as places equal to temples and this seemed in line with earlier practices of performing ordinances elsewhere when there was no operating temple.[81] The endowment house was erected to make ordinances available before temples were finished; in 1855 endowments were continued, and in 1867 the other sealing ordinances.[82] In 1877, the St. George Temple was dedicated. Ordinances were standardized and recorded in written form the year before President Young's death. President Taylor reinstituted the School of the Prophets in 1883, introducing "worthy" married members with the washing of feet as had been done before, but only as a reminder or repetition of blessings already pronounced and as a sign of unity and selfless service. President Taylor explained at a meeting of the school on October 12, 1883:

> The reason why things are in the shape they are is because Joseph felt called upon to confer all ordinances connected with the Priesthood. He felt in a hurry on account of certain premonition [*sic*] that he had

79. In Buerger, "The Fulness of the Priesthood," 32.

80. William S. Harwell, ed., *Manuscript History of Brigham Young* (Salt Lake City: Collier's, 1997), 224–25.

81. D&C 124:29–40.

82. Buerger, "The Fulness of the Priesthood," 27–28.

> concerning his death, and was very desirous to impart the endowments and all the ordinances thereof to the Priesthood during his lifetime, and it would seem to be necessary that there should be *more care* taken in the administration of the ordinances to the Saints in order that those who had *not* proven themselves *worthy* might not partake of the fulness of the anointings until they had proven themselves *worthy* thereof, *upon being faithful to the initiatory principles*; as great *carelessness* and a lack of appreciation had been manifested by many who had partaken of these sacred ordinances.[83]

This remark illustrates the point of careful initiation, and the School had the purpose of preparing those who had received the "initiatory principles" to be instructed—and thus initiated—further, until they were worthy and ready to receive further ordinances. President Taylor and George Q. Cannon decided, for this purpose, "it would be advisable for the endowment to be administered in separate stages."[84] In these first few decades of the Utah-based Church, General Authorities generally knew all Church members, so members' progress could be monitored closely. Ordinances were mostly done by temple presidents and General Authorities, so the needed balance between members' getting instruction and the ceremonies' being kept sacred was maintained.

With only four temples available in the first seventy-three years of the Church,[85] converts abroad who wanted to receive the temple blessings had no choice but to come to the United States. The policy of the gathering was underlined by the idea of a "compact society":

> TO THE SAINTS ABROAD. In order that the object for which the saints are gathered together in the last days, as spoken of by all the holy

83. "School of the Prophets Minutes" 1, in Buerger, "The Fulness of the Priesthood," Oct. 2, 1883, 32. Italics mine.

84. "School of the Prophets Minutes," in Buerger, "The Fulness of the Priesthood," Aug. 2, 1883, Sept. 27, 1883, 32.

85. From the dedication of the Nauvoo Temple in May 1846 until the first temple outside of Utah dedicated in Laie, Hawaii, in Nov. 1919. The four temples meant are those in Utah from St. George in 1877 on until 1919.

> prophets since the world began, may be obtained, it is essentially necessary, that they should all be gathered in to the Cities appointed for that purpose; as it will be much better for them all, in order that they may be in a situation to have the *necessary instruction*, to prepare them for the duties of their callings respectively. . . . And we wish it to be deeply impressed on the minds of all, that to *obtain all the knowledge* which the circumstances of man will admit of, is one of the principle objects the saints have in gathering together. Intelligence is the result of *education*, and education can only be obtained by living in compact society.[86]

This 1838 charge by Sidney Rigdon was still the standing policy at the time the Saints settled the Utah basin. A "perpetual immigration fund" provided means for converts to travel and settle, but the economic "panic" in the 1890s and the Great Depression in the 1930s probably sparked a change in policy of the gathering, as Utah Saints weren't able to accommodate the immigrants. Nevertheless, immigration was substantial until after World War II.

The policy, however, eventually changed from gathering in Utah to gathering in "stakes of Zion" abroad. A first European-based temple came in 1955 in Bern (Zollikofen), Switzerland. With the first two stakes outside of the United States in the 1950s (Hamilton, New Zealand, and London, England), also came two temples in 1958. South America and Japan followed in 1978 and 1980. A massive surge in temple dedications abroad (and in general) began in 1983 by Gordon B. Hinckley,[87] who also started the "small temple plan," announced in October 1997. He urged that temple blessings and "all other ordinances to be had in the Lord's house" be available, be "presided over, wherever possible, by local men called as temple presidents, just as stake presidents are called," and be

86. Sidney Rigdon in "Elders Journal 1" (Kirtland, Ohio: Far West, Mo., Aug. 4, 1838), 54. Italics mine.

87. "Temple Chronology," http://www.ldschurchtemples.com/chronological/.

performed by "local people who would serve in other capacities in their wards and stakes."[88] Temples now approach 200 in number.

Judging by this trend in extending temple blessings, one could say the gathering is definitively reversed. This demanded different ways to prepare, initiate, and monitor worthiness for extension of ordinances, especially as judging worthiness was delegated to local leaders.[89] But what was the international equivalent of the School of the Prophets? There is an official temple preparation class, and up until 1990 there was a "sermon at the veil" providing some explanation on the symbolisms of the performed ceremony. But systematic teaching about the temple as in the School of the Prophets, or like the "temple testimony meetings" of 1845, have been discontinued. Whenever relevant scriptures are discussed in priesthood and Relief Society classes now, references to the temple ordinances can be made only as brief hints, as both endowed and non-endowed members are present. The communal discussion about

88. The announcement was as follows: "But there are many areas of the Church that are remote, where the membership is small and not likely to grow very much in the near future. Are those who live in these places to be denied forever the blessings of the temple ordinances? While visiting such an area a few months ago, we prayerfully pondered this question. The answer, we believe, came bright and clear. We will construct small temples in some of these areas, buildings with all of the facilities to administer all of the ordinances. . . . They would accommodate baptisms for the dead, the endowment service, sealings, and all other ordinances to be had in the Lord's house for both the living and the dead. They would be presided over, wherever possible, by local men called as temple presidents, just as stake presidents are called. . . . All ordinance workers would be local people who would serve in other capacities in their wards and stakes" (Virginia Hatch Romney and Richard O. Cowan, *The Colonia Juárez Temple: A Prophet's Inspiration* [Provo: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2009], Appendix C. President Hinckley's General Conference Announcement, Saturday, Oct. 4, 1997).

89. Actually, this delegation already took place in the Utah-based Church after 1889 under President Wilford Woodruff. During these years, different standards and lists of criteria for worthiness were developed, e.g.,by President Lorenzo Snow. See Buerger, "The Fulness of the Priesthood," 32–34.

temple symbolism is discouraged outside as well as inside the temple.[90] Still, the importance of teaching perfection and the principles and ordinances pertaining to it, have been a major mission of the Church, as stated, for example, by President Benson:

> The temple ceremony was given by a wise Heavenly Father to help us become more Christlike. . . . We will not be able to dwell in the company of celestial beings unless we are pure and holy. The laws and ordinances which cause men and women to come out of the world and become sanctified are administered only in these holy places. They were given by revelation and are comprehended by revelation. It is for this reason that one of the Brethren [ElRay Christensen] has referred to the temple as the "university of the Lord." No member of the Church can be perfected without the ordinances of the temple. We have a mission to assist those who do not have these blessings to receive them.[91]

The mission of "perfecting the Saints" and that of "redeeming the dead" are intertwined in the ability to repeat the temple ordinances for deceased ancestors. In my opinion, though, the focus has shifted to "the great work of redeeming the dead, fulfilling the mission of Elijah."[92]

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90. It goes too far for the scope of this paper to discuss all these changing trends and policies; that can be a topic for a different paper. What I derive from it is that temple education or pedagogy is not systematically embedded.

91. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Ezra Taft Benson* (Salt Lake City: Intellectual Reserve, 2014), 250–52; see also Elder Ray L. Christiansen, "Why Temples," *Conference Report* (Apr. 1968), 134.

92. In speaking in regard to the Saints becoming saviors upon Mount Zion, the Prophet Joseph said thus to his brethren [Jan. 20, 1844.]: "But how are they to become saviors on Mount Zion? By building their temples, erecting their baptismal fonts, and going forth and receiving all the ordinances, baptisms, confirmations, washings, anointings, ordinations, and sealing powers upon their heads, in behalf of all their progenitors who are dead, and redeem them that they may come forth in the first resurrection and be exalted to thrones of glory with them; and herein is the chain that binds the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, which fulfils the mission of Elijah." See: Marriner W. Merrill, "Temple Work" General Conference, Oct. 4, 1895, *Collected Discourses* 4:359.

There have been urges to reinvigorate temple attendance for the purpose of *individual* development in the gospel, but no structural *communal* policy changes have been made recently.

With a worldwide membership of sixteen million and adding thousands every day, it is understandable that the focus of teaching can shift to the basic principles. But at the same time, with more members, more will also be "ready to receive" the highest blessings of the temple, and more will strive for their calling and election to be made sure. So how can the LDS Church go about initiation in a way that is more open, to more and more members, while safeguarding the sacredness of these ordinances in an information age where all of them can be found in one Google search? In sum, how can graduating from "temple university" become more achievable? In my conclusion I will draw from all the above to make some suggestions and raise some questions on how to go about clever teaching and mentoring.

Conclusion and Suggestions: Pedagogy of Perfection: The End in Mind and Education Toward That End

> *"God's earthly kingdom is a school in which the saints learn the doctrines of salvation. Some members of the Church are being taught elementary courses; others are approaching graduation and can do independent research where the deep and hidden things are concerned. All must learn line upon line and precept upon precept."*[93]

Both Moses and Jesus tried to bring the temple to the center of the religious life of their followers. They disseminated the knowledge and ordinances of the temple, first to their disciples and through them to others. Joseph Smith set up the same mode of teaching for the Latter-day Saints, a series of ordinances to be available for all who are ready

93. Alma 21:9–10 and Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* 2 (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 323.

to receive it. But do we teach about it in the same ways and as often as Joseph and the early Saints did? What is needed in our age?

With temple ordinances being officiated around the world and with Church leaders trying to safeguard the sacredness of the temple ordinances, it is no wonder that we tend to err on the side of not talking about the temple. We must be *care*ful, but I think also we need to look for *inventive* ways to teach about the temple in order to perfect the Saints more universally. Joseph Smith was clear about this: the temple is the center of our worship, but it is for initiates. So even though the outward ordinances have been exposed,[94] the knowledge will always be safe, because it can only be received by initiatory experiences and revelation. Initiation in ritual *is* the safety measure.

Education is still the form of worship most dominant in LDS Church meetings and home, with Church members being encouraged to keep rereading the standard works of scripture, helped by Sunday School, seminary and institute classes. But does this bring about sufficient development? If one is to learn "line upon line," ascending Joseph's ladder, one needs constant *hints* to new possible meanings, *insights*[95] into new layers of deeper knowledge that were not yet "present" to the understanding. I argue that the same goes for the oral scripture of the temple. Progress without mentoring is hard.

Following Joseph's cry to all Saints to make their calling and elections sure,[96] how are we to go about teaching that in a careful way?

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94. Starting as early as 1842 with John C. Bennett in Nauvoo, until fairly recently with Tom Philips in England, 2012.

95. In the literal meaning of "looking into" or "peeking." So "dropping hints" and letting others "take a peek," becomes part of the teaching skill. In Dutch there is a phrase that comes even closer to this skill: *Een tip van de sluier oplichten*, "lifting up a tip of the veil."

96. "I am going on in my progress for eternal life, ... Oh! I beseech you to go forward, go forward and make your calling and election sure." "Thomas Bullock report, Friday May 12, 1844," Book of Abraham Project, http://www.boap.org/LDS/Parallel/1844/12May44.html.

Enduring to the end, explained simply as not falling away on hidden paths, is not as motivating as a concrete and attainable goal in this life: the tangible sign of one's "calling and election being made sure." The suggestion I want to make here is that this goal could be communicated more clearly to faithful couples. In light of this great end goal, all other "work" toward it gains meaning. Enduring can become joyful, or the prospect can become a rock in times of tempest, and be preventive of becoming lukewarm[97] by the many routines and repetitions.

Joseph's pedagogy of perfection is quite a unique form of salvation theology, which makes the LDS Church (and temple) stand out more than it blends in. This gives rise to a paradox,[98] already in Joseph's time, of stressing the newly revealed points of doctrine (including premortal existence, eternal marriage, and exaltation) on the one hand, and wanting to be accepted as a Christian religion on the other. But the Church today, especially in Europe, is surrounded more and more by secular philosophies. Converts come from different paradigms and are less concerned about how "different" the Church is from other Christian denominations. The idea of a God who is an exalted human living in a different realm of this universe with a plan to have us come to earth for a mortal moral apprenticeship, preparatory to returning to dwell in his presence, is actually pretty "down to earth." It fits in a disenchanted perception of God, who is not seen any more as pure Spirit and unreachable, but as a God we can relate to and even touch and meet. Likewise, the idea of developing line upon line, from the preparatory gospel to the "temple university," advancing in the priesthood (for both male and female), is a pedagogy similar to our educational systems.

But where are the professors, the mentors, those who guide the initiation, teaching "research methods," toward eventual "graduation"? I

97. Think again about John the Apostle's letter to Laodicea in Revelation 3:15–16.

98. The fourth paradox as explained by Terryl Givens in *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 53–62.

suggest that the LDS Church could put initiation and mentoring forward as a priority, with less concern about secretiveness, but proud that it has a tangible and achievable way to prepare faithful believers in Christ to the point where they are ready to meet him. It could take the same pride in the teachings as did the early saints who announced it in bold terms:

> These teachings of the Savior [in 1 John 3:2–3; 1 Peter 1:15–16; Matthew 5:48; John 14:12; 17:20–24] most clearly show unto us the nature of salvation, and what He proposed unto the human family when He proposed to save them—that He proposed to make them like unto himself, and He was like the Father, the great prototype of all saved beings; and for any portion of the human family to be assimilated into their likeness is to be saved.[99]

And they could recognize, as did Bruce R. McConkie, that to continually advance toward God is an innate human desire:

> Among those who have received the gospel, and who are seeking diligently to live its laws and gain eternal life, there is *an instinctive and determined desire to make their calling and election sure*. Because they have tasted the good things of God and sipped from the fountain of eternal truth, they now seek the divine presence, where they shall know all things, have all power, all might, and all dominion, and in fact be like Him who is the great Prototype of all saved beings—God our Heavenly Father. (D&C 132:20.) *This is the end objective, the chief goal of all the faithful*, and there is nothing greater in all eternity, "for there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation." (D&C 6:13)[100]

99. "Lectures on Faith, Seventh lecture, verse 16," as found in *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints* (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams & Co., 1835).

100. Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary,* vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 325. Italics mine.

Rebecca Wagstaff
Contemplating
oil on panel, 38x30, 2006

WITH MARBLES FOR EYES

Nate Noorlander

As they crested the final hill into town, the speed limit dropped and the noise from the tires was quieter and less constant. Travis looked out Sarah's window and she looked at him like he would say something, but he avoided her eyes. There was the tire shop, and the gas station with the dinosaur. There was the four-wheeler place with the sun-bleached mannequin in a tattered BYU t-shirt. A man in the shade of the awning over the front of the store waved. His name was Rick Anderson. When Travis was little he knew him in church and boy scouts, and seeing him now confirmed that being here was a mistake.

Farther down Main Street the Rupes sign rotated slowly. *Utah's burger and fry place.*

"Rupes. *That's* what it's called," Chris said from the back seat. "I was trying to remember."

The font on the sign was old-fashioned.

Travis slowed almost to a stop and pulled onto the shoulder, and the gravel was loud under the tires. He turned down the long driveway between the pastures, and the cattle guard buzzed, and a big black bird lifted off the fence and coasted away from the noise of the car. The driveway split, and Travis followed it to the right where it was shaded and the shadows from the leaves danced on his skin like they used to. The temperature was lower in the shade, and he remembered feeling happy here. He used to turn rocks over under the trees and collect bugs with Greg or Sam or Cindy, whoever would play with him. Later he walked the lane with Mary, talking or just holding hands. The silence made him feel good. He liked escaping from the noise at home, about church and school and boy scouts and sports.

He pulled up to the fence and put the car in park and Chris groaned and stretched and said to Ollie, "Hey buddy. We're here! We're at Grandpa Richard's!" Chris got out and Adam unbuckled Ollie and held him while he woke up. Sarah was at the fence. She put out a hand and touched the rail, then rubbed her fingers together and came back to the car.

"Come on," she said.

"I can't do it."

"What?"

"I can't go in."

"Travis."

She got back in the car and closed the door.

"What the hell."

"I can't go inside, I'm sorry."

"Are you serious?"

"Yes."

She studied his face.

"I thought I could be okay with it. But I'm not. Sorry," he said.

"So, what—we just turn around and leave?"

He shrugged. "You could go in and say hi. I doubt they'll ask any questions."

"We drove for two hours to say hi and leave?"

"I'm not rushing you. Stay as long as we planned. Whatever. I'll go to Sam's. I'll go to the bookstore. I can entertain myself."

"That's not what I'm worried about."

"I know," he said, and she knew she couldn't change his mind, he was decided already.

"Travis. Do you know what situation you're putting me in?"

"Of course."

"No, you don't. I'm not making the call. This is your decision. You can be the one to explain yourself to the boys and your dad. Not me."

"Okay. Let's go then. Let's leave," he said. She wasn't ready for this. When she responded, she was exasperated.

"Travis. Isn't this a little silly? How long has it been? Ten years?"

"How does that change anything?"

"You said you thought it had been long enough."

"I was wrong."

"What do you think the boys are going to learn from this? You haven't even given him a chance."

"I can't."

"So now I have to be the bad guy?"

"The bad guy? How?"

He waited for her to explain. She looked through the windshield for a long time. She had no good options. If she told the boys they had to go they'd hate her. If they turned around and left without going inside she would be lumped in with Travis, inconsiderate, bitter, afraid. He left her no choice. She got out of the car and slammed the door. Travis opened his door and put his head out.

"Sarah, what are you doing?"

"What does it look like?" she said over her shoulder.

He scoffed and got back into the car, watching her just to make sure. She was going in. And she was acting like a victim about it, even though he told her she didn't have to do it. She would be at the front door in a second and he would just be sitting here. He started the car and reversed down the driveway. He backed into a clearing in the trees where the driveway split. He could see the front porch from here and he watched them gather at the door and then disappear into the house, and imagined the conversation they were having, and what Sarah was saying about why he wasn't there, and what the kids were thinking, and felt funny about being in the car down the driveway behind the trees, and laughed to himself in the quiet of the car. He was happy about his decision not to go in, and the feeling of freedom he had now made his chest swell. Like the time he told his dad he wasn't going to get his Eagle Scout, and his dad paced the room like a lion, trying to figure him out, but he couldn't, because Travis was his own man. He got out and closed

the door and walked the rest of the way to Sam's house, down the other fork of the driveway. The old orange truck was home. Lady pulled herself up from the shade and limped up to him, wagging her tail. She sniffed his leg and he pet her head.

"Hey there girl. You're still kicking around, huh?"

He knocked on the door. He knocked again, harder. It was hot on the doorstep in the sun and he covered the back of his neck with his hand to keep the sun off. The door opened and a man stood in front of him wearing only boxer shorts.

"Travis?"

"Hey Sam."

"Travis Parker? What the hell? Get in here buddy!" He opened the screen door and they hugged. The landing was littered with empty twelve-packs of Mountain Dew and Bud Light from a half-full trash bag spilling onto the landing and down the stairs to the basement. They went up the stairs to the living room.

"Come on up man! How ya' been?"

"I've been good. You?"

"Oh you know. Can't complain."

"Your kids here?"

"They're with their mom today."

"So it's just you, then. Living the dream."

"As you can see. Let me get some pants on. Make yourself comfortable."

The living room still had his parents' old furniture in it. An oak entertainment system with glass doors and old VHS tapes inside. Dark blue floral couches with ruffled skirts. The pictures on the wall looked the same, different shapes and sizes of wood and gilded metal frames, old family pictures with big glasses and lacey dresses and double-breasted suits. There was a picture of the temple in Manti, where they used to go with the youth group sometimes to do baptisms for the dead, or feed breakfast to the cast putting on the pageant about the Book of Mormon

every July. He stared at the picture and wondered why it was still on the wall. When he moved, he was aware of it like it was watching him.

"So how you been man?" Sam came down the hall pulling a shirt over his head. "You want something to drink? I got beer and soda. And water."

"Beer. Please."

"You visiting your dad?"

Travis shook his head. "My family is. I couldn't."

"Your family's over there without you?"

He shrugged, and Sam tossed him a beer. When he pulled the tab, it bubbled around the mouth so that he had to slurp up the bubbles before they dripped off the can. He cleared a couch-cushion and sat down.

"Thought maybe you were here because of Grace."

"What do you mean?"

"You haven't heard? She left him."

"Are you serious?"

Sam nodded.

"Is it just him over there?"

"Oh yeah. Grace hasn't been there for a while."

"Shit. Sarah's going to kill me. I can't believe he didn't mention that. What happened?"

"I don't really know. I heard a few things through the grapevine. Her sons are still around here. Sounded a lot like what I remember about him and your mom."

"Like what?"

"Uh, he wasn't that nice to her kids I know. Made her feel like they were screw-ups. When they were first married, Jeff was still at home and your dad was really hard on him. Probably a lot of the same stuff you guys used to fight about. He locked him out of the house once when Grace was out of town, because he was with his girlfriend past curfew. He came over here, but I was working graveyard and he couldn't get in. Ended up walking back to his girlfriend's house in the snow and moving in with her. Grace was livid."

"My dad's plans always backfire."

"You remember when you told me how he used to give your mom the silent treatment? He did that to Grace but like, times-ten. I guess she wanted to get a king size mattress, but he told her they didn't need one or they couldn't afford it or something. Grace bought it anyway and to protest your dad slept on the floor for like a year. He wouldn't get in the bed. I think that was the last straw."

"What the hell."

"Yeah. John said he slept on a camping pad and talked to her from the floor like nothing was wrong. She was totally confused because other than sleeping on the floor he was acting so normal about everything. Your dad kind of has a way of doing that to people."

Travis could see the camping pad. It was army green and inflated by a black mouthpiece that twisted opened and closed. His dad bought those when Travis was young. He spent a bunch of money on really nice North Face stuff and treated it so reverently that Greg and Travis decided they had the best camping stuff in the world, and it must be important, because they didn't have anything else like that. They stored it in special bins in the attic where it was organized and labeled. When they were camping Richard helped them with their tents and their pads and he was very patient while he was teaching them how to use everything. Travis wondered if he still rolled his pad up in stages in the morning, open the mouthpiece, roll the air out, close the mouthpiece, re-roll the pad, tight as a bandage, open the mouthpiece again at the very end to let out the last bubble of air, store the pad in its bag, out of the way for the coming day, no sign he was ever there. It was always embarrassing to see him when he was sleeping, if his mouth was hanging open or his hair was messy. But in the morning, he would be dad again, his bedroll neatly packed away. Travis wondered if he should feel worse than he did about Grace being gone, but all he felt when stuff like this happened was proud, because it affirmed all his previous judgments, and he liked it when his judgment was affirmed.

"He's really painted himself into a corner over there," Sam said. "I don't think he really sees anyone. Greg and Cindy still in touch with him?"

"Rarely. I don't think either of them know about Grace."

"He's probably not eager to share the news."

"He still going to church?"

"I'm sure."

"Of course he is." Travis sipped his beer and shifted his eyes around the room. "You going to church now too? That temple's staring at me like the Eye of Sauron."

"You kiddin' me, I haven't been to church since I discovered tits in high school. What temple?" He turned to look. He got up and took the picture of the temple off the wall and tossed it down the stairs to the landing. It smacked the trash bag and slid to the floor.

"There," he said.

Travis finished his beer. Sam worked the tab on his can back and forth until it broke off.

"Twenty-two," he said.

"Twenty-two what?"

"Don't you remember? We played that in high school. Twenty-two girls are thinking about me right now."

Travis's came off in four and they laughed. He flicked his tab at Sam and missed and it tinked across the kitchen floor. He set his empty can on the window ledge next to a small stack of dirty cups and plates. The blinds were down but open and the room was bright without the lights on. A bluish light that didn't quite reach the corners but made it so that you didn't want to turn on the overhead lights and ruin the color.

"Don't you ever have girls over? This place is a sty," Travis said.

Sam surveyed the room and shrugged.

"Still smells the same though," Travis said.

"Good or bad?"

"Neither. Just a smell. It's your smell. You used to bring it with you to my house. It's in your clothes. It hasn't changed since we were little."

He rested his head on the couch. Dried water spots showed through the popcorn ceiling, dark at the perimeter, light in the center. He wished they were covered up. The blades of the ceiling fan were dusty, and the bells of frosted glass had cobwebs inside. It was quiet everywhere. There was nothing between the sun and the earth in this town. Just people and desert. Long summer days. Hot rooms.

"You want anything else to drink?" Sam said.

"What?"

"You want anything else to drink?"

"No. I think I'm going to head in a minute. Take a stroll around town. Maybe hit the bookstore."

"I haven't had lunch yet. I'm going to make some eggs if you want to stick around."

"Nah. Just want to sit here for another minute."

It was like being in a museum. He'd lain on this very couch and watched *Ghostbusters* and *A Walk to Remember* and made out with Mary. He'd come in his pants and been surprised and tried to hide it even though it smelled like a swimming pool, and she'd laughed and put her hand on his crotch and said "uh-oh," and he couldn't laugh with her because her hand was on his crotch and he could hardly breathe. He knew he shouldn't let it happen again because that was the thing they talked about most in church, but he did, again and again, and when he finally decided to stop and confess to the bishop, Mary felt betrayed. His dad was bishop then, and he was proud of Travis for being brave enough to come to him and confess his mistakes. He was happy when Mary broke up with Travis, and he congratulated him, because even though some decisions were hard, in the long run it would always be better to do the right thing than the easy thing or the fun thing.

Travis stood up.

"I'm going to take off," he called into the kitchen. Sam came out, licking his fingers.

"Alright man," he said. "Well I'm glad I got to see you. You going to be down here more regular?"

"Don't think so."

"Well keep in better touch at least. I'll hit you up when I'm up your way."

Travis flicked a wave over his head. Outside the shade hadn't moved. Lady was lying in the grass. He walked back over the dirt and gravel, hands in his pockets. Sarah was leaning on the back end of the car. He stopped and said "hey" and then came closer.

"So Grace," he said.

"So Grace," she said. "How did we not hear about that?" She seemed resigned, and he smiled, and the tension broke.

"How's it going in there?" he said.

"I told him we couldn't stay long. Didn't seem surprised. He's in there building Lincoln Logs with Ollie."

"What'd you tell the boys?"

"They didn't ask."

Travis took his cigarettes from the glove box. He offered one to Sarah and she took it and he lit it for her.

"Have I showed you what's back here?" he said.

She looked where he was pointing and said he hadn't.

"Come on." He led her into the trees where there used to be a trail. It was grown over now, and the branches scraped their legs. They inched around a swarm of bees on a plant with purple flowers, then the foliage thinned out and they could walk between the trees down hard-packed earth to a creek at the bottom. It burbled through the channel.

"Sam's parents used to own all this. It's probably his now. Didn't even think about that. He might be rich."

"The boys would love this."

"I know I used to."

From the time they discovered it, he and Sam lived down here. The stream followed the line of trees behind the driveway, all the way between

both houses. It was like the backstage of a theater and they could run from house to house without being seen before they emerged on stage again. They stopped searching for bugs in the driveway and the new games were searching for creatures in the water or building a ladder into the branches of the best tree there ever was for a fort. The tree was still there, with their names carved into the side. He brought Mary back here to fool around in the grass until he told her he'd confessed to his dad and she broke up with him because he was always doing what he thought other people wanted him to do and never making his own decisions. He was confused about why she thought that was a bad thing. He didn't learn that there was another way until later, during the divorce, when he was getting emails from his dad that expressed regret about all the bad decisions his mom was making, so that Travis took her guilt for granted, and started to hate her. Then Greg told him their dad was a liar and that he needed to ask more questions, he couldn't just believe everything dad said, and Travis realized that he was right, and he was embarrassed, and wished he would have known that by himself.

"When do you want to go?" Sarah asked.

He was on his heels by the stream listening to the water.

"What?" he said.

"When do you want to go?"

"Whenever."

"We should probably give the boys a little more time." She put her cigarette out in the dirt. "I'll feel it out."

"Okay."

She watched him.

"You want to wait inside with me?"

"No."

"Okay," she said.

He watched her.

"Thanks," he said.

She nodded. He moved closer and sat by her in the grass above the stream. He lay on his back and she put her hand on his knee and he covered it with his. The ground was soft and the air was cool and the only sound was the water. He pulled her down to him and she came willingly and his hands glided down her sides and then they were under her pants and her hands were under his shirt and they tried to shush themselves but it was exciting to be loud in the wild.

Afterwards they cleaned off with water from the stream then got dressed and walked the length of the stream to Richard's house, and Travis showed her how they used to get out on this side, since there was no path. He hoisted her up to a tree branch and she held on and reached her foot over the bushes to the fence and balanced herself with one foot on the top rung until she could stand and hop down to the yard. Travis followed her. They were in the backyard and Richard was at the pond with the boys and he could see them, and he waved, and Sarah looked at Travis because now she was caught in the middle. Travis could feel her anxiety and wanted her to know she didn't have to feel it.

"It's fine," he said.

"What?"

"It's fine."

They were walking in the direction of the pond and he had to squeeze her hand to keep her walking and assure her this is what he meant to do.

"You sure?" she asked.

"Yeah. It's fine."

She didn't ask him to explain and he held on to her hand to keep her close. He stopped a safe distance from his dad.

"Hey guys. You found the pond," he said to the boys.

Ollie stood up and showed him the mud on both his hands and grinned widely because he knew he was protected if a grown-up had said he could do it. Travis smiled and said he was like Clayface and he better be careful in his good clothes. Chris and Adam already had fishing poles in the water, Richard's good Shimano poles they used to clean

with Q-tips in the shower when they were done using them. All the time he was aware of his dad.

"You still keep fish in here?" he said to Richard.

"Haven't for a couple of years. What's in there is just what's left over."

Travis shifted his hand in Sarah's and acted absorbed in watching the boys fish. He had ideas about what to say next but the longer he waited the harder it got to say anything. His dad was cleaning his hands with a bottle of water and when he was finished he came up from where he was standing on the rocks and opened his arms for a hug. Travis hugged him with his free arm. Richard kissed his cheek and said it was good to see him and his lips were dry and his skin was rough and Travis was glad that part was finally over. They were standing on the same level now, and Travis towered over his dad, who was wearing his John Deere cap, and prescription glasses. His short-sleeve plaid shirt was tucked into his standard pair of supermarket jeans. His face was small and the hair under his hat was short and thin and grey. His cheeks drooped where they used to be tight around his jaw, and when he stood back he had nothing to do with his arms except hook his thumbs in his pockets, then cross them in front of his chest, and ask Travis what he was doing these days. Travis didn't have much to say, and then there was the fear of silence again.

"The place looks good," Travis said.

"Oh, thanks. Trying to keep it up."

A goat bleated from its pen and another one tried to stand but its front legs just slid off the fence rail and it stood there stupidly with marbles for eyes. A cow lowed from the field and Travis asked about the rest of the animals.

"This is it. Just storing a few for renters now. Haven't kept my own for a few years."

Travis was surprised because that's why they'd moved down here, so that Richard could have some space and some animals.

"Just living the life then, huh," he said. He realized that his dad might think he was being facetious and the silence was awkward again. They watched Chris and Adam cast their lines out into the water. Richard helped Chris with his grip and the timing of his release and his next cast was much better. Chris was the first one to catch a fish, but Adam caught one shortly after, and Travis and Sarah were happy to see him so excited. Richard asked if there was time to gut the fish before they had to go and taught the boys how to do it right there on the shore of the pond with a knife he kept on his belt. Travis worked on the second fish with Adam. Richard wrapped the fish in paper and put them in a cooler with ice for the drive home. They could keep the cooler, he had plenty. Sarah went inside to get Ollie cleaned up, and the boys stayed at the pond skipping rocks. Travis and Richard were alone on the back porch. Travis explored the porch and complimented his dad on the improvements he noticed.

"Those stairs used to sag like crazy," he said.

"Well I've got a little more time on my hands these days."

"I remember how busy you used to get," Travis said.

He ran his hand over the railing. Richard must know he had heard something about Grace, otherwise he would have asked where she was. If he didn't acknowledge the divorce at all it would seem like he thought it was embarrassing or taboo. He didn't want to give that impression. His heart pounded in his throat.

"I was sorry to hear about Grace," he said.

Richard was quiet and Travis was wary.

"What did you hear?" Richard said.

"I heard you were thinking about . . . divorce? Is that right?"

Richard shook his head to himself.

"Oh. Am I wrong?"

"I don't know, because I don't know what you've heard."

"That's basically it."

"From who?"

"Sam just mentioned it when I was over there."

Richard looked skeptical. This isn't what Travis expected and he was confused.

"You'd think we'd have learned our lesson by now," Richard said.

"What do you mean."

"We've been through this before, son. People talked about me when your mom left too. I'm just trying to move on with my life, but every time I turn around there's someone there who insists on dragging me back to the past."

"Sam's not a gossiper, Dad. I just hadn't heard about the divorce. You didn't mention it in your email."

"That's because there's no story, son. We parted ways for reasons that are between me and her, but she is a wonderful person. We are still best friends. We hang out together, we go to the temple together. I love her as much as I always have."

"I'm glad to hear that you're still friends," Travis said. He remembered when Richard said stuff like that about Dawn too. He didn't know if Richard believed what he said or if he just said it.

"Why shouldn't we still be friends?"

"I just know what divorce can do."

Richard sighed. "We're not children, Travis."

"I don't think you have to be."

"It's how I wanted things to be with your mother, too."

Travis felt the anger returning. He saw the severity in his dad's eyes that was there when he was talking about himself and being doubted was more than he could handle. It was always there when he talked about Dawn too. They'd tried to continue getting together as a family after the divorce, many times. But Richard looked ill when he was in the same room with Dawn, and he wouldn't look at her, and she felt so insecure all she could was babble to cope with her feelings.

"Why do you call her 'my mother'?"

"What would you like me to call her, Travis?"

"How about 'Dawn'?"

"Do you ever defend me like that in front of your mom?"

"She already calls you by your name."

He sighed again. "Okay Travis. Okay." He adjusted his hat and folded his arms. He was sitting on the bench that wrapped around the railing and he crossed his feet below him and looked shrunken with his arms folded and his back arched like that. Sarah had been waiting on the other side of the sliding-glass door and Travis finally looked. She stayed behind the curtain and shrugged to say, *what should I do?* She was holding Ollie. Travis didn't know and he shrugged and broke eye contact, hoping that she would make the decision for him. The boys finished skipping rocks and disappeared around the side of the house, and Travis's heart swelled with sadness, and he wanted them to understand, and to love him.

He stood.

"Looks likes it's time to go," he said. He went to the sliding door like Sarah was trying to get his attention. Richard followed them to the front yard. Travis carried the cooler and didn't turn around to say goodbye until he was far enough away that there was no question of how to say goodbye except to wave. He waited for his boys to say goodbye, then they walked to the car under the trees. They got in the car and drove over the dirt and gravel and then on to the road that was quiet until they picked up speed, and the tires hummed until the noise was like silence.

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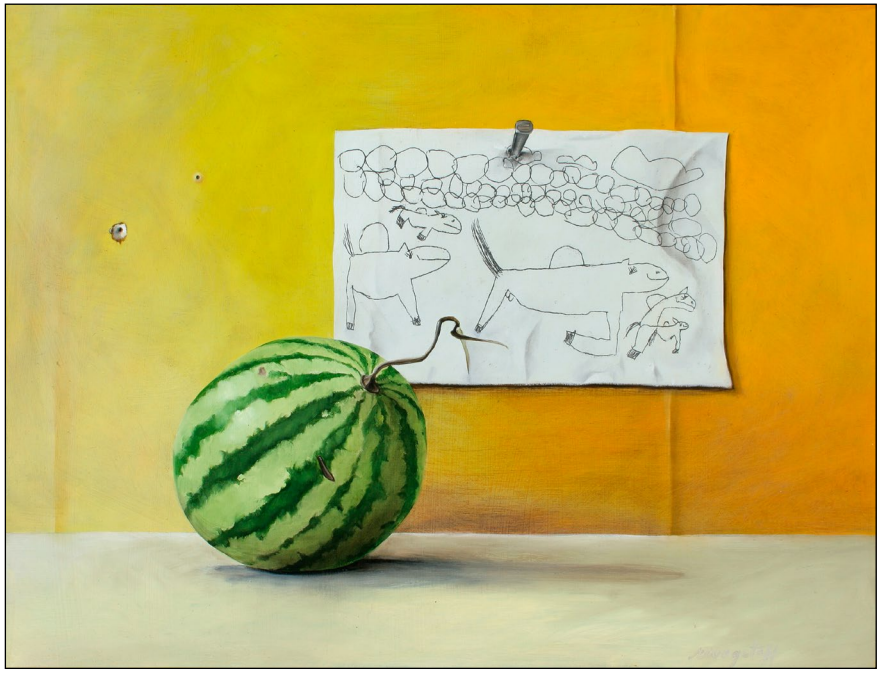

Rebecca Wagstaff
Green Melon with "Horse Family Flying"
oil on panel, 15x19, 2005

RESURRECTION

Mette Ivie Harrison

Since he was a child, he'd dreamed of himself in one form and woken up, always disappointed, always jolted by the reality and by the way that others looked at him. In the first years, they'd seen him completely differently, had called him by a painfully inadequate name, and had expected all kinds of things from him as a result.

But even later, when he'd been allowed to wear the clothes he wanted to wear and a name that suited him better, there were always compromises. That shirt, but not that one. Those pants, but not the tight ones. A jacket with everything, because it covered so much. And never the makeup he wanted to wear, because makeup meant the wrong thing to the wrong people.

His parents had made him go to church as a child. He'd given up on God when he was told that he wasn't welcome at church anymore. He frankly hadn't expected there to be anything after death. He'd been an angry atheist. Fine, he'd been a stereotype. But at least he hadn't given himself any false hopes.

He hadn't needed to rely on ancient ideas born of fear of death and a lack of understanding of science. He knew what was logical and what was logical was that there was nothing after death, that there was no soul, no spirit. A body died and went back to the earth. It became food for worms. If there was immortality, that was all it was, a chance to be part of the circle of life, the cosmos that would eventually expand too far and then shrink back to another big bang, to begin again.

But here he was, not just a soul, but himself inside a body. A perfect body, without any scars on it. All the male parts were there that he had

dreamed of his whole life—and a nice set of them, too. A size no one would complain about.

He was standing in an open grave. It surprised him because he'd somehow thought that his family would cremate him, as he'd told them he wanted. He'd always thought that it was a kindness to them. Once he was dead, he imagined there would be nothing left of him to care about. And it would be easier for them if he didn't have to have a space in the family plot. Yet here he was, in the family plot, resurrected facing east, toward the sun rising in the bright morning light. He saw none of his other family members there. Were they gone already? Had they been resurrected before him? That was entirely possible, as he recalled something vaguely about a first and second resurrection, and then a final resurrection just before the judgment.

So he'd be judged of God. He'd be sent to hell, or to a lower level of heaven. What he'd read in books was that he'd be happy there, that God would send him where he'd be happy because in the end, God loved all His children.

As it turned out, he couldn't imagine being happy with his family members who had rejected him during his lifetime and refused to call him by his proper pronouns or by his name. They would only allow him to come to family activities if he dressed as a woman and let them treat him as they'd once treated him.

He'd never liked being a woman, but it had been much worse once he knew he was a man. Then it seemed that his family needed to show him their latent misogyny, because they pushed him down into the dirt again and again, told him that God had made him a woman for a reason, and that he was rejecting God's decision to be who he was meant to be, which was a servant to men, an object for them to look at.

He'd never hated women, but he hated being a woman then for more than one reason.

Wait. There was a friend he hadn't seen in years. He lifted his arm and called out her name. She turned and saw him, then ran toward him. She embraced him fully and wept.

"I didn't believe in resurrection," she said.

"Neither did I. But this is pretty convincing," he said.

She looked down at herself. "I thought somehow I'd be different. Fixed, I guess."

"Fixed?" He tensed.

"More beautiful. Without the extra weight I'm carrying around." She put a protective hand around her stomach.

"You are beautiful," he said. "You always were."

She stared at him, but she said nothing about his form, though they were both naked and she must have been surprised. Yet she wasn't.

"I thought I'd be able to see again, too. But it's different now."

"Different how?" he asked. He'd never thought of her as blind. She passed so well in the seeing world, never using a stick or a service dog. He'd always thought she must be only partially blind, but it hadn't been something he'd ever felt capable of asking her about directly. It seemed rude.

"I don't know. Maybe just that it doesn't matter anymore? Or that everything has a sound that I can hear." She pointed to the grass on the cemetery grounds. "I can hear it. Can you? It's singing to me, telling me where to step."

He strained for a moment, then shook his head. "I don't hear anything."

"Oh, well, maybe I'm crazy, then." She laughed.

"I don't think so," he said. What if resurrection was more than just about how your own body turned out? What if it was a resurrection for the whole world, so that everything out there was more in tune with what was inside your heart? What if the world was alive enough now to know what you needed, and to give it to you?

"The other graves aren't opened yet," she said, waving at them.

He stared, confused. "Maybe they were filled in again?" he said. But there was no sign of them ever being opened, of the ground being disturbed at all.

"What if they weren't the first ones resurrected? What if we are?" she asked.

That was impossible, surely. He could believe that God loved him, even that God had made sure that he had the body he wanted at last. But to be loved before the others, who had always been perfect, who had never doubted their faith, who had never cursed God—no, that wasn't right. He couldn't be rewarded for what he'd done. Not like that.

"Look at that," he said. It was a great white light on the horizon. He had plenty of energy to go toward it if he wanted to. Like they said, go toward the light.

"You go," she said. "I'll stay here."

He hesitated, then reached for her hand and held it. "I don't want to go, either," she said.

"Why not?"

"Because I don't know that I want any more than we have right now. Here. Together."

He felt something stir inside of him, something that had died long before his body had. It was a sense of hope.

"What if we're afraid to ask for more because we're so used to having so little?" he asked.

"What if?" she said, and she walked the other way, away from the light.

They didn't feel the earth moving beneath their feet, or the sky go dark. There seemed to be no consequence for not going toward the light, other than the light getting just a little bit smaller. But by the end of the day, when they'd found an empty house that looked nice to stay in for the night, he looked back and saw that the light was still there. Maybe he'd change his mind later, but for now, he was going to sleep. He was going to enjoy being alive again, and being himself for the first time ever. And he was going to enjoy not feeling as if there was anything wrong or missing. That was the real resurrection.

On *Cherubim and a Flaming Sword* by J. Kirk Richards

Tyler Chadwick

Like moths summoned by the gravity of light,
figures lean beneath sinuous white robes, their
point of communion is clear: hands in line with
the flame—its blade toward the earth's unhealed
wound, toward the fissure through Eve's flesh—
they warm themselves before the Tree, transients
clinging to the stories God told them before
giving them charge of the far end of Paradise.

Seared to seer stones and stillness by the flame's
quartered eye, wings tuned to Eurus sighing matins,
hair flaming out like a moth's mad fireside benediction,
they watch for wanderers to part the distant trees
as the earth rolls toward the sun like a lover turning
to spoon with the promise of verdure and apocalypse.

Talitha koum

Tyler Chadwick

1.
Your body disrupts the narrative:
Jairus—unaccustomed to want—
calls Jesus to pull his daughter
from death. Jesus comes, touches
the girl; she rises. Just like Jairus
rehearsed it.
But you unravel the plot.
Inhabiting shadow, your back
against 12 years of doctor's visits,
miscarried hope, and indigence,
you slip into well-worn anonymity,
veil yourself with a horde, and wait
to be swept near enough the Physician
to brush his styptic robe.

Bodies press bodies as the swarm
swallows Jesus swallows you, and you,
wearied by your constant wound,
retreat into desire's dark womb:
a hollow held open in the story
between wall and pulsing throng.
Fetal around your emptiness, folded
and unfolding into your history, you
dip your hand in the stream of fabric
and flesh, grasping at the flow
for a palm full of tassels and deliverance.

Without you, maybe Jesus makes it
to the girl before she dies, maybe
he doesn't need to reach as deep
into the grave to revive her. Yet your
imposition on his grace stalls him,
steals the life Jairus reserved
with his plea. Pausing at the doorway,
hand raised to part the white noise,
head tilted to eavesdrop on your touch,
Jesus digresses, questions the intrusion.
The swarm surges to silence. In habit,
you duck into shadow and mourning
but your joy calls you out: you confess
to having unraveled his hem
into the troubled pool of your flesh.
He sears your wound with assurance,
dismisses you from the disease. And

the girl slips from her father's hope.

2.
But you see it, there, on the tip
of the Healer's tongue: the girl's name
reaching to pull her from the deep end
of death, its familiar litany ringing
across the courtyard of her childhood,
weaving its strands around her appetite
until she can no more resist the pull
and runs home, bursting through the door,
hoping for something to eat.

Walking Back to the ’70s

R. A. Christmas

Remember, it’s a Covenant Path.
On our way we must keep hearts
and minds—as Brigham said—
“riveted on the cross of Christ.”

Ours will not be a parade or a
demonstration. Orientation is
no cause for celebration. It’s
simply a sweet fact of life.

The goal? The same rules and
blessings for everyone. Single?
Be chaste. In love? Great.
Marry, and raise some kids.

Promiscuity never was happiness.
Let’s get our butts into Church.
Excommunicated? Show up.
(It’s a public meeting, folks.)

Patience—this could take years,
or never. Heads bowed, hearts
open, with a nod to the Africans.
That’s how they got it done.

Dream Psalm

William DeFord

You wake me to the all and the every,
You breathe me to your shattering stillness,
Walk me to the brink of the dream
That jerks alert. You, the nurturing darkness
I wake to, show me the days of creation
And kneel me alone at Eve's cold alter,
Extend your hand through the curtain
To spark these stones for the dark boat.
I have signs for you, and you a name for me.

Placenta[1]

William DeFord

"Snow glistens in its instant in the air"
—Wallace Stevens

I picture it, a milky glass teardrop
Just large enough to fill my cupped hand.
It floats in an almost-dark cave;
It lights the cave but slightly, casting
Wan shadows, a vessel of music and logic
Unknown among us.

I saw it as a dark circle on the ultrasound,
Saw it conspicuously empty.
It's common, the doctor said, for it to end this way.
But it hasn't ended, even after the procedure,
After bringing you grape juice in a paper cup,
And watching you lift it to your mouth, trailing
An IV tube from your wrist.

The dark teardrop is still there
Not a thing but a place, as the name suggests,
A place that cannot be given or taken,
That does not live or die.

1. Previously published in *Fire in the Pasture: Twenty-First Century Mormon Poets,* edited by Tyler Chadwick (El Cerrito, Calif.: Peculiar Pages, 2011).

HEAVENLY MOTHER: THE MOTHER OF ALL WOMEN

Blaire Ostler

Heavenly Mother is a cherished doctrine among many Latter-day Saints. Her unique esthetic of feminine deity offers Latter-day Saint women a trajectory for godhood—the ultimate goal of Mormon theology. Though Heavenly Mother offers a uniquely feminine perspective of God, there are some problematic aspects. First, Heavenly Mother can be discouraging for some Latter-day Saint women who desire more equitable representation among gendered deities. Since Latter-day Saint women are discouraged from directly worshiping, communing, and praying to Her, She is disconnected from Her spirit children in ways that Heavenly Father is not. Second, the standard Heavenly Mother esthetic doesn't offer a trajectory for women who desire godhood without motherhood. The inherent nature of Heavenly Mother implies all women would desire eternal motherhood. In this sense, motherhood becomes the gatekeeper of a woman's godly potential. Third, the Heavenly Mother concept of godhood combined with Latter-day Saint culture can be harmful to some Latter-day Saint women who struggle with fertility—especially when godliness is connected to the ability to produce children. Lastly, the cisgender, heterosexual Heavenly Mother esthetic fails to give queer women a feminine trajectory that exemplifies their earthly experience and desires. Though Her example may appeal to conventional, heterosexual, cisgender women, there is still room for improvement in how we speak of Her when She is the Mother of all women. Here I will suggest ways to overcome these four obstacles within the Mormon theological tradition.

Mormon theology puts a strong emphasis on theosis—the idea that humans are to become Gods. According to Joseph Smith, we must learn to become Gods the same as all other Gods that came before us.[1] From this perspective, Latter-day Saints are polytheists. There is a potentially infinite number of Gods that dwell in worlds without end. Some might claim this theology is strictly monotheistic in that Latter-day Saints only worship one God (God the Father), but this is problematic for a few reasons. Though some Latter-day Saints only worship one male anthropomorphized God,[2] the idea that other infinite Gods exist is not controversial. If God became God through evolutionary means, God is not a singleton. The status of God's godhood is intimately connected with the other Gods who collectively become Gods together, with their respective wives, or in other words, Heavenly Mothers. Furthermore, when Latter-day Saints worship God the Father, they are also implicitly worshiping Heavenly Mother and the multitude of Gods who also made God's godhood possible. In Mormon theology, God the Father is sealed to God the Mother[3] —though it is also worth mentioning some Mormon leaders have claimed we have many Heavenly Mothers through the practice of polygyny.[4] According to Latter-day Saint doctrine, God is not God unless They are composed of both man and woman: God is both man and woman, and all are made in the image of God.[5] However,

1. Joseph Smith, Jr., "The King Follett Discourse," *General Conference Meeting* (Nauvoo, Ill.: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Apr. 7, 1844).

2. LDS Gospel Topics, s.v. "Godhead," accessed Jul. 30, 2018, https://www.lds.org/topics/godhead?lang=eng. "They acknowledge the Father as the ultimate object of their worship."

3. LDS Gospel Topics, s.v. "Mother in Heaven," accessed Jul. 30, 2018, https://www.lds.org/topics/mother-in-heaven?

4. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 11:269 "The only men who become Gods, even the sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy."

5. Genesis 1:26–27; Romans 8:16–17; Psalms 82:6; Elder Erastus Snow, Mar. 3, 1878, *Journal of Discourses,* 19:269–70: "If I believe anything that God has ever

if the standard narrative implies God is both male and female sealed in a simplistic heterosexual union to produce spirit children, why is Heavenly Mother's role not a prominent as Heavenly Fathers? What does this mean for women who are infertile, or do not desire motherhood? What does this mean for queer women? How can we emphasize the office of Heavenly Mother without perpetuating cisgender, heterosexual biases? Essentially, how is it possible for Heavenly Mother to be the trajectory for all women when Her esthetic is limited and neglectful of all women's experiences and desires?

Motherly Women

If theosis is the ultimate goal of Mormon theology,[6] Heavenly Mother is the most prominent feminine example of that trajectory. She is the deity Latter-day Saint women are to aspire to.[7] However, Her lack of presence in our communion and worship has caused many women to wonder why she is mostly absent in Her children's lives, or at least in their communal worship.[8] Is that a woman's trajectory in the heavenly eternities? For some Latter-day Saint women, the thought of deifying into Heavenly Mother is a terrifying disconnect between them and their potential spirit children. If Latter-day Saint families are to be sealed together as whole families, why is it our own Mother's presences is

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said about himself . . . I must believe that deity consists of man and woman. . . . There can be no God except he is composed of the man and woman united, and there is not in all the eternities that exist, or ever will be a God in any other way.46 We may never hope to attain unto the eternal power and the Godhead upon any other principle . . . this Godhead composing two parts, male and female."

6. Joseph Smith, Jr., "The King Follett Discourse," *General Conference Meeting* (Nauvoo: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Apr. 7, 1844).

7. Elder Dallin H. Oaks, "Apostasy and Restoration," *Ensign*, May 1995, 84. "Our theology begins with heavenly parents. Our highest aspiration is to be like them."

8. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Daughters of God," *LDS General Conference* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Oct. 1991).

so essential, but simultaneously veiled? Many women have begun the search for more concerning Heavenly Mother, Her presence, and Her role in the theological narrative. Books, such as *Dove Song: Heavenly Mother in Mormon Poetry*, *Mother's Milk: Poems in Search of Heavenly Mother*, and communities like *Feminist Mormon Housewives*, *Exponent II*, and the *Finding Heavenly Mother Project* are a direct product of this aspiration to find our feminine trajectory in an androcentric religion. So what can we do to enrich our vision of Heavenly Mother?

First, our language could more fully reflect the richness of Latter-day Saint doctrine and Mormon theology. If God is man and woman combined in a sealed eternal union, instead of using the pronoun *He*, the plural *They* pronoun could be used. The gender of our God, our Heavenly Parents, is far more inclusive than exclusively, yet our semantics fall short. How we talk about God matters, and the shift from *He* to *They* is more inclusive of diverse gender experiences, including non-binary identities and intersex anatomies. *They* also reflects the potentially infinite plurality of God.

Following a shift in language could be a shift in our literature, music, vernacular, and by extension, our worship. Policy could be extended to include the worship of a feminine deity with feminine pronouns and prominence. Latter-day Saints could be offered the opportunity to submit literature and music to be included in our Sunday worship about Heavenly Mother. Our language, worship, rituals, vernacular, and esthetics can include so much more than a male singleton. If we so choose, we can free our Mother and ourselves from the prison of thoughtless repetition. Her role is directly reflected in the roles of the women who worship Her in a symbiotic process of becoming.

Independent Women

Being a lifelong Latter-day Saint, I can say with confidence that one of the most common justifications for the exclusion of women from

priesthood ordination can be summarized in one brief sentence: women have motherhood and men have the priesthood. Motherhood is of such importance for Latter-day Saint women that it is often compared to a man's priesthood ordination—not in his participation in parenthood as a father, but in his divine right to act in the name of God through priesthood authority. As Elder John A. Widtsoe argues in *Priesthood and Church Government,* God the Father gave his sons priesthood power through ordination and gave women motherhood—"of equal importance and power."[9] It is strange that Elder Widtsoe suggests it is God the Father and not God the Mother that gave women motherhood. It would seem more fitting that motherhood is gifted by the Mother and fatherhood is gifted by the Father, or that parenthood is gifted by our Heavenly Parents. Even still, Widtsoe continues, "That grave responsibility [of motherhood] belongs, by right of sex, to the women who bear and nurture the whole race. Surely no right-thinking woman could crave more responsibility nor greater proof of innate powers than that!"[10] According to a prominent apostle, a high-ranking official in the Church, a woman who craves a role or desires responsibility outside motherhood, could not be a "right thinking woman." The critical underlying assumption Widtsoe projects is that women would inherently desire motherhood as the source of her godly power and glory. This assumption excludes the experiences of women who do not desire motherhood or even marriage as their divine purpose or trajectory.

This idea is not exclusively limited to Widtsoe. In my work in the Mormon feminist community, it has been condescendingly explained to me by critics that women who desire ordination risk shirking their responsibility of motherhood and are neglectful of their children. However, what many fail to acknowledge is that a man can be ordained

9. John A. Widtsoe, *Priesthood and Church Government* (Salt Lake: Deseret Book Company, 1954), 84.

10. Widtsoe, *Priesthood and Church Government*, 85.

to the priesthood without shirking his responsibility of fatherhood or being neglectful of his children. The double standard is that men use their priesthood authority to bless the lives of others, while a woman would be using priesthood authority selfishly or at the expense of her children. Why is this assumption necessarily different for women than men? Furthermore, if a woman doesn't desire motherhood as her primary way of exemplifying godhood, why can't she seek after her godly potential by entering into the priesthood to serve and bless the lives of those around her? Her power and service may not need to include nor be limited to motherhood or marriage. Priesthood ordination is one way to empower women who strive after a godly potential—by acting in the name of God. By broadening the offices women may hold in religious practice, we will also be broadening the offices women may hold in the eternities, such as with Heavenly Mother. In this sense, Heavenly Mother is only one office a woman might hold in the eternities. Heavenly Mother may be the bearer of all spirit children, but that is only one office, role, or responsibility a female deity might have. There are countless ways women can serve and participate in their communities beyond motherhood or marriage.

Infertile Women

Another problem with the Heavenly Mother concept of godhood is that Her power and glory are predicated on her ability to produce offspring. It's in her title: Heavenly *Mother*. I can say from personal experience that worshipping deified motherhood can be extremely painful for some, though not necessarily all, women who struggle with infertility. In the Church, womanhood is treated as if it is tantamount to motherhood, functionally speaking. The Latter-day Saint essentialist position of womanhood is to produce offspring to build up the Father's kingdom. Before I continue, I should clarify that my experience is not every woman's experience. Many Latter-day Saint women struggle with infertility and

do not share my criticisms. Some take comfort in the Heavenly Mother concept of godhood when it offers a trajectory through which she may eventually be able to conceive children in the eternities. On the other hand, others may become resistant to Heavenly Mother when She feels like an unreachable trajectory for the infertile Latter-day Saint woman on earth. Every woman's experience is different, and I honor and respect those diverse experiences, just as I hope other women would honor and respect my experience.

For me, the Heavenly Mother concept of godhood has been both a friend and foe in my efforts toward motherhood. Motherhood and biological reproduction have been a personal struggle for me.[11] Being raised in a religion that puts a heavy emphasis on motherhood can be very difficult for women with a gender variant biology, like myself. I wanted to be a woman, even when my body didn't comply. My womanhood was dependent upon my uterus. Since my uterus was faulty, I saw myself as faulty. Comments like Widtsoe's only perpetuated the problem. In his commentary on how priesthood is comparable to motherhood, Widtsoe continued, "Such power [reproduction] entrusted to women proves conclusively that they have been recognized and trusted. Our Father even chose a Daughter of Eve to be the earth-mother and guide of His Only Begotten Son, and thus honored womanhood for all time and eternity!"[12] If this comment is to be taken seriously, it implies that women who cannot reproduce are not recognized, honored, and trusted by God the Father. Why would God the Father trust the woman sitting next to me in the pews, but not me? Am I even a woman if I'm not a mother? It can be incredibly painful for women with fertility issues or gender variant anatomies like mine to internalize ignorant sentiments like these. I cannot help but feel like the constant barrage of messages

11. Blaire Ostler, "How a Mother Became a Transhumanist," *Queer Mormon Transhumanist*, accessed Jul. 31, 2018, https://www.blaireostler.com/journal/2015/6/6/how-a-mother-became-a-transhumanist.

12. Widtsoe, *Priesthood and Church Government*, 85.

about motherhood being the overriding guiding concept for a woman's existence is a way to maintain the patriarchal order of the Church structure and narrative, and not to comfort the women who need it most.

Similar to women who do not desire motherhood, infertile women should not be bombarded with messages of motherhood being their only or most valuable contribution to eternal glory. Women could be honored in other accomplishments to their religious community, just as men are, without overly emphasizing the role of mother. Doing so would not eradicate the role of the motherhood, nor its importance, just as fatherhood is not eradicated nor considered unimportant within the Church. Instead, a more balanced rhetoric would greatly reduce the mental and emotional pain for many women. It would also help if women were granted access to all offices through priesthood ordination. It is also worth mentioning the most obvious way to help infertile women who desire motherhood is to support medical and scientific advancements which would allow safe reproduction for all gender variant anatomies. I have greatly benefited from these technologies, and trust there are many more inspiring possibilities for the future of biological reproduction and creation.

Queer Women

Queer women are of particular concern when it comes to godly representation. Heavenly Mother offers a feminine template, but queer women are often neglected from the narrative. Is it possible for Heavenly Mother to know a transgender experience? Are transgender women also made in the image of God? If so, shouldn't the esthetics of our worship reflect that?

Despite the ignorance of Widtsoe's comments concerning women, he leaves open a very intriguing possibility—motherhood by proxy, or by vicarious means. Widtsoe continues under the subheading *The Spirit of Motherhood* to clarify: "Women who through no fault of their own

cannot exercise the gift of motherhood directly, may do so vicariously"[13] If motherhood may be accomplished vicariously, then why must motherhood be accomplished by cisgender women? Could motherhood be accomplished vicariously via transgender men or transgender women? New reproductive technologies are changing the landscape of both gender and procreation.[14] Soon, uterus transplants may allow transgender women the ability to carry children. If this is the case, a transgender woman who can gestate her own offspring through technological means is not significantly different from her cisgender sister who gestates her own offspring through technological means. According to bio essentialist claims, functionally, a transgender woman would be the child's biological mother. The primary difference between the two is that the cisgender mother is a mother by assignment and the transgender mother is a mother by affiliation. In time, we will see our Heavenly Parents have granted *The Spirit of Motherhood* to a diversity of genders.

It is understandable why an individual who was assigned a male sex at birth might aspire to motherhood. Latter-day apostles teach "the highest and noblest work in this life is that of a mother" and motherhood "is the highest, holiest service to be assumed by mankind." Please note that motherhood is to be assumed by *man*kind. The semantics implicitly leave room for mothers of various anatomies. Why shouldn't someone who was assigned male aspire to motherhood if she agrees it is her noblest work? Why does biology prevent her from the experience of motherhood anymore than a woman like me who struggles with fertility? If a transgender woman desires motherhood as her holiest work, who are we to impinge on her service the community with a gender assignment? Why not simply allow parents to engage in parenthood as their holiest work according to their skills and gender preferences

13. Widtsoe, *Priesthood and Church Government*, 85.

14. Blaire Ostler, "Sexuality and Procreation," *Queer Mormon Transhumanist*, accessed Jul. 31, https://www.blaireostler.com/journal/2016/3/22/broadening-our-understanding-of-sexuality-and-procreation.

instead of an imposed gender assignment? Likewise, why not allow people to serve through various priesthood offices according skills and preferences instead of an imposed gender assignment? If parenthood is a holy service and priesthood is a holy service, it seems fitting to rejoice in such aspirations regardless of the gender identity or biological sex assignment of the person pursuing such holy endeavors.

Mormon theology also embraces the notion of proxy work—the idea that we can each fulfill the role of each other when the occasion calls for it. If this is the case, transgender women who desire motherhood could attain motherhood via proxy for cis women who don't desire motherhood. Likewise, transgender men who desire fatherhood could be bearers of children as gestational dads.[15] Consider a heterosexual couple composed of a transgender man and transgender woman. The transgender man could use his uterus to carry the child, while the transgender woman could assume the role of mother once the child is born. Consider a gay couple in which one of the fathers wants to assume what is traditionally thought of as the motherly role. Any couple, queer or not, might be able to benefit from surrogacy with a willing, consenting woman as a proxy gestational parent.[16] Even traditional adoption could be a form of proxy parenting. There are many possibilities as to how families might be composed of people doing "proxy work" for one

15. Gestational dad is a term used to describe transgender men or intersex men with functioning ovaries and uterus that allows him to carry, deliver, and even nurse his offspring.

16. I want to acknowledge that surrogacy is fraught with controversy, especially around gay dads who participate in overseas surrogacy. The bodies of women of color are often exploited and misused in the underground network of overseas surrogacy. It is unacceptable for advancements in queer parenting to come at the expense of women of color, their bodies, their health care, and their economic position. They deserve our love, care, and consideration to their volition, consent, and autonomy. Methods of surrogacy need to be radically revised to benefit and respect women of color and other economically disadvantaged women.

another according to their needs and desires in a system of love, respect, and cooperation. As Widstoe suggests, *The Spirit of Motherhood* includes many possibilities through vicarious participation.

Conclusion

The sealed union between Heavenly Mother and Heavenly Father may not strictly be a cisgender heterosexual experience. According to Latter-day Saint doctrine and Mormon theology, God is composed of both man and woman. In Hebrew, Elohim is a plural noun. His godhood is dependent on Her, just as Hers is dependent on Him. I see this sealed union as a representation of partnership between the sexes, not a necessary mandate for heterosexual copulation. In this reading, Heavenly Mother and Heavenly Father represent two offices a person may hold, but under the infinite plurality of God, there is room for every gender, race, orientation, experience, and benevolent desire. Our Heavenly Parents, *They*, don't even mandate a necessary binary for our non-binary and genderqueer siblings. The broad all-encompassing plurality of God leaves no one behind, and our esthetics, language, and pronouns should reflect the doctrine that we are all made in the image of God.

If anyone has the potential to be a God in Mormon theology, Godly esthetics should reflect the image of all Their children. Likewise, Heavenly Mother, as the Mother of all women, holds multitudes under Her wings. Hers is the face that is reflected in the motherly woman, the independent woman, the infertile woman, and the queer woman. We need not restrict Her esthetics and by extension, her love, on account of our ignorance. Her image is the image of all those that choose the label "woman" with as many faces, variations, and expression that are manifested on earth and in the heavens. She is the Mother of all women.

Rebecca Wagstaff
Rose
oil on canvas, 12x12, 2004

WELL-RED

Tait R. Jensen

In my father's small apartment in Salt Lake stood a bookshelf that nearly scraped the ceiling. Titles like *The God Particle* and *The Story of Civilization* rested next to each other, packed more than arranged, because my father always knew where his books were, just like most people keep track of their fingernails. The middle and bottom shelves were my playground, a sort of intellectual playpen. I would pull volumes away from the shelf one by one, scanning pages for recognizable words, but mostly finding vocabulary that felt strange on my tongue, like it didn't fit. I stared at the pages with words like *archaic* and *pathology* and *eschatological.* I propped the books up on my skinny boyish knees; I invited their heaviness. I felt that merely holding the book would somehow grant me knowledge; that contact preceded understanding, as it was for meeting people. So I came to view books as people, capable of being spoken to, addressed, regarded with dignity.

My fingers would run over the indelible kiss of my father's red pencil, scratched into the margins like a beacon of my father's mind. His contribution. Seeing that made the weight of the book worth it.

~

In 2017, I completed fifty-three books. My goal had been fifty.

"That's a lot," my father says over the phone.

"Yeah, I guess," I trail off, holding my breath in hopes that he might interrupt me to ask what I had thought of Capote's *In Cold Blood.* Did I enjoy the nonfiction novel form? Did it inspire my own writing? Did I

admire Capote for reasons other than his authorship—maybe the fact that he was unabashedly queer? Just talk. Talk to *me*.

I take a breath. He still hasn't said anything. I clear my throat—a signal, a ploy to entrap the voice in my ear, a voice that I wish to remain there. Speaking. Or, if not, at least breathing.

"Well, bud, I need to go. Great to chat." It had been two months since we last spoke. He hangs up and I walk over to my daily journal to write *spoke to dad on phone.* I place a checkmark next to it.

Did we speak, really?

I scribble out the checkmark.

If so, by what standard?

I cross out the words.

~

"I think Dad is the smartest person I know," I once told my mother as we sat eating a lunch of tuna fish sandwiches with sliced pickle. "Way smarter than my teacher."

My mother was startled. Was I just being precocious? Or was it something more? More worrisome.

"Heavenly Father doesn't want you to be *too* smart, Tait. Otherwise you won't have any faith."

I sipped my milk quietly from a green plastic cup ruddy with the residue of too many washes. My eyes caught the bag of library books by the front door, then turned back to her face, which felt blank, even with her furrowed brow, and I wondered if she really meant what she had said.

"But I *want* to be smart. I really like reading."

"Just make sure you're filling your mind with good books." The bookbag was open slightly. I could see inside, but only a peek. A cover flashed. I looked back at her.

I hoped she wouldn't look in the bag.

~

From a very young age, I could tell that my father was different. The other boys had gruff, stupid fathers with big bellies and stooped shoulders. Their fathers spoke in short sentences, failing to pronounce the "g" at the end of certain words. Their fathers made them play catch or shoot hoops on Saturday afternoons in the arid Utah air that partnered with a sunny noon to produce an army of farmer tans. I would see the boys, nodding and frowning at their dads while avenues of sweat paved their way down furrowed brows. But my father wasn't like that. He was tall and lean, with a sharp jaw and intelligent, sad eyes. People said we looked alike, and at the time I didn't believe them: he was too untouchable, too mythic, too *amazing* to be like me.

Saturday mornings, when it was his weekend, he would wake my sister and me up early for a hurried breakfast of grape nuts and whole milk, maybe some sliced banana if he had it. He would load up a red backpack with some sandwiches, chips, water bottles, a tarp, a book, a map, and usually a bit of rope, always the Boy Scout. The three of us would ascend the steep highway that cuts through Little Cottonwood Canyon outside Salt Lake, the wind before us, my father driving with his left hand at the top of the wheel, playing music that I never heard anywhere else and yet to this day feels as familiar as a grandmother's cursive scribble on a birthday card.

My ears would pop from the gain in altitude, and I felt smaller, somehow shrunken in the shadow of both my father and the mountain. I liked to stare out the window at bends in the road, watching as the rocks above us changed color: dull brown to ocher to black, melting into reds and flecks of orange. I would read to my father from whatever book I had with me. He said I had a good reading voice. He would pause me to ask things, and if I glanced quickly enough, I could see the gears of his mind begin to churn and sputter, picking up speed as his questions flowed. I

read to be able to answer my father's questions, knowing that if I didn't have an answer, I would feel stupid. And stupidity was disappointment.

~

My parents divorced when I was five years old. My mother was granted full custody, which, as I would later learn from a pamphlet on divorce, is typical in the American court system. There was no abuse, no infidelity, just a difference of religious opinion. My father didn't want to be Mormon anymore, at least not the way my mother wanted him to be. They were both young and angry, so the divorce was long and costly. The only thing I remember is that at one point I slept in between their sheeted bodies, like a meadow nestled in the crook of a tall valley, and then I didn't anymore. Instead, I slept alone on a hand-me-down mattress in a dark apartment in north Salt Lake, listening to the bellowing of trains in the distance, wondering if my father heard them too.

Three months after my mother remarried, we moved from north Salt Lake to the suburbs. It's what she wanted more than anything. Family being the prime directive for Mormons, couples purchased homes as soon as they could afford the mortgage, meaning that for a Mormon former-divorcée, "home" and "family" were just different shades of the same aspiration. For the next four years, incalculable hours were spent driving on I-15 between Salt Lake and Kaysville, which was, and still is, a predominantly white Mormon community of cookie-cutter homes, pristine lawns, and middle-class morals. The judge had granted my father every other weekend, a unit of time which became "Dad's time." On Friday evenings when he pulled up to our yellow home, the rush-hour traffic having carved a frown into his eyes, it was a reminder that my father didn't live with me; that he lived in the big, dingy city with his books and his red mountain bike and his small fridge packed with disgusting soy milk and incorrectly-named Red Delicious apples; that if he wanted to see his children, he had to come pick them up, like we were a package and my mother the postman.

~

One time I came across the word *diplomacy* in one of my father's books. As soon as I grasped what it was, it dawned upon me that I was an expert; I had lots of practice already.

Never show too much favor to one parent. Never cite the good deeds of one parent to another parent. Never tell one parent what the other parent said, unless they demand it, in which case you might as well give in. Never say the words "I don't want to go home" when visiting your father for the weekend. Never act too sad when you show up on your mother's doorstep on Sunday evening, a half-hour late, and definitely don't say anything when she begins yelling at your father because "we said six o'clock, not six-thirty, Shane."

By the age of eight, I could equivocate, prevaricate, and obfuscate. I would learn later what they meant.

~

The relationship between my father and me became one between minds around my eleventh birthday. It was then that he began talking to me about Mormon Church history, a topic which I was trained to avoid by a mother fearful of my innate curiosity. Her fear, obvious to me, was simple: she was haunted by the memory of an ex-husband who wanted knowledge more than anything. I knew I had to do whatever possible to *not be like my father*. But even as I saw my father bringing up topics that I knew were off-limits, I never stopped yearning to be like him, even with little things like how he sat when he ate (straight as a rod, feet firmly planted), or how he spoke on the phone (answering the call crisply with "this is Shane"), I wondered how admiration and rejection, which felt so opposite, could exist in the same mind.

By the time these conversations began, my stepfather had moved us to Seattle for a new job. Trips back to Salt Lake were scarce and therefore precious. Each vacation meant another conversation with

my father—another chance for him to speak to his son, who was fast becoming less and less of a boy.

The next five years were spent riding a see-saw of reason and belief, the ebbs and flows correlating with my travels back home. My father challenged; I retorted. My father prodded; I ignored.

"Religion demands that you shut your brain off, Tait. You've seen this." We're sitting at a kitchen table. I'm staring at the placemat, which has frayed at the edges because I've tugged too many times at stray fabric.

"I don't feel that way, though."

"That's just it—a feeling can never be truth. A feeling is nothing more than a chemical reaction in your brain."

Eventually, my faith shrunk in the same way that children lose baby teeth: slowly, but with bursts of momentum, each burst less surprising than the last. My boyhood vision was dissolving, and I now viewed my father's bookshelf with suspicion. I avoided certain shelves for fear of what I might find, knowing that if I opened the first page of a book, my eye would leap to the second. I knew that if I succumbed, I'd be just like my father. Just like my mother had said would happen. I didn't stare up at the shelves with wonder like I did as a young boy. Now, they stared at me as my mother's words bored their syllables across my eyelids. *Good books. Good books. Only read good books.*

My mental shelf groaned with the weight of scattered truths—the detritus of anguished nights spent wandering the labyrinths of mind. Quotes. Figures. Images. Stories. They molded and melded together, an alloy of my independence and curiosity and unrelenting admiration for my father, no matter the indictments of my mother.

And then the shelf broke. The books I had long avoided had found their way into my book bag, which I held close to my chest like a scarlet letter: evil, yes, but irrefutably, irreducibly mine to carry. I hid them under my bed, under my pillow, behind curtains. I slipped them into my backpack and read them on the school bus, finally safe from my mother's gaze.

As I discovered my voice, markings from my own pencil joined my father's red ones in the yellowed margins.

"I hadn't caught that," he said once, commenting on a note I had made in B. H. Roberts's *Studies on the Book of Mormon* during a summer visit, "Nice job."

I had earned the right to an opinion.

~

Shortly after my sixteenth birthday, I decided I could no longer believe in Mormonism. I had made the final plunge, yanking a thread of testimony out of my family's time-worn tapestry of unshakeable belief. Overnight, a rift tore its way through my family. I had expected this, spending restless nights calculating the size, the scope, the severity of the rift. I stood on one side with my father. My mother stood on the other, wondering if she had lost her only son: the one who would serve a mission in some far-flung locale, marry a good Mormon girl from a good Mormon family, serve honorably in his Church callings, and produce beautiful Mormon children whom I would baptize on their eighth birthdays.

In the moments after my mother discovered the fateful truth, my father shined, marking those precious seconds as the pinnacle of my trust and admiration.

"She told me to leave," I whispered into the phone. I thought I was crying, but the choking was just fear. His voice, steady and measured, was all I needed, as if he knew, just as he had always seemed to know.

"I'll buy you a plane ticket."

~

The fifty-three books sit stacked on my dresser, the read scattered among the unread like a sedimentary layer. My eyes scan each spine. I turn each letter over in my mind, considering its weight, its power, its necessity. I'm reminded of the hours spent sitting on the floor of the Salt Lake apartment, staring at words I didn't understand and pondering their meanings. I consider how many hours could have been spent

discussing these fifty-three books with my father, just as he did on our canyon drives when I was a little boy. I count how many moments were instead spent in an aching silence that had crept into a corner of his vast mind years ago, made itself at home, engorged itself on his humor, his voice, his love of adventure—features of my childhood that were once crisp but now fade into creases as if left by the press of my fingers on an old photograph.

I consider all the things I should have said when he told me he had to get off the phone: *you've changed, you don't try to call anymore, and I know that me being gay is hard on you, but can't you see how much I've done to prove I love you like a son should?* I ask why I didn't say them, then I see his weary face and his salt-and-pepper hair and his thoughtful frown and his clenched jaw and I know why I didn't say them, and now I have to stop thinking about him stop splashing the canvas of my memory like a madman abuses a white wall with sickly paint stop hating him stop loving him stop thinking about him stop.

I fall asleep that night gritting my teeth, running over scripted words, preparing for an argument that will never happen. Because it is always an argument with my father these days, even from a thousand unreachable, inaudible miles away. It is an argument with no resolution, no reconciliation: an argument chiseled into the smooth marble of a headstone, the final resting place of memory. The father of my youth, the father who proudly displayed books, the father who picked me up and gave me rides upon his strong shoulders, the father who tousled my hair and called me "buddy"—this man is dead.

Behind closed eyes, I see my father's red pencil. It's still there, marking in the margins of a book I've never read. Not sure if I ever will.

What is an LDS Artist?

Glen Nelson. *Joseph Paul Vorst.* New York: Mormon Artist Group, 2017. 236 pp. Paper: $29.95. ISBN: 9780692950227.

Reviewed by Micah Christensen

Image 1. Joseph Paul Vorst (1897–1947) After the Flood (c. 1940) Oil on canvas. 28 x 36 in. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville.

"Joseph Paul Vorst was arguably the most culturally significant Latter-day Saint painter of his time."[1] So, starts the Church History Museum's

1. Glen Nelson and Laura Allred Hurtado, "An introduction to Joseph Paul Vorst, Video Script," *Joseph Paul Vorst A Retrospective: Exhibition Press Guide*

video for the exhibition on the life and works of Joseph Paul Vorst (1897–1947). The video and the exhibition is a joint collaboration between the museum's curator, Laura Allred Hurtado, and the independent writer Glen Nelson, who authored a catalogue detailing the life and known works of the German-American artist. Both exhibition and catalogue seek to rehabilitate the reputation of an artist that has largely been overlooked. Vorst's life is beautifully evoked and contextualized on every page by Nelson, who raises questions about conventional definitions of what it means to be a Mormon artist.

Vorst's tumultuous life would make a remarkable biopic. Wounded in WWI, he converted to the Church in his early twenties, moved to America before WWII, returned to paint Adolf Hitler's portrait from life, shared a studio with one of the greatest American artists, and died prematurely from a brain hemorrhage at the age of fifty. The style and content of his art changed with the times and locations he lived, from expressionist linocuts in Germany to mid-western genre scenes heavily influenced by Thomas Hart Benton. Working among what art historians today called the Regionalists, Vorst's *oeuvre* is different in style and content than any of the preeminent contemporary LDS artists of his era.

Little is known about Vorst's early life. The chaos inflicted on German record keeping during two world wars makes it difficult to research even the most public of figures, let alone Vorst, the seventh child of a poor provincial family. (More than 90 percent of his hometown, Essen, was destroyed in WWII.[2]) Despite the dearth of materials in this and many parts of the artist's turbulent life, Nelson does a great deal to contextualize Vorst in his time and place.

Vorst was seventeen years old when Germany entered World War I and, like many of his generation, was pressed into service. Wounded with shrapnel, Vorst described himself as "permanently lame in one leg."[3] Sometime after the war, probably around 1919 and at the age of twenty-two, Vorst enrolled in the local Essen School of Trades and Applied Arts

(Salt Lake City: Church History Museum, 2017), 65.

2. Glen Nelson, *Joseph Paul Vorst* (New York: Mormon Artist Group, 2017), 10.

3. Nelson, *Joseph Paul Vorst,* 21.

(EHKGS). The curriculum was a mix of practical skills like sign painting, architectural rendering, and mechanical draftsmanship, taught by a mix of engineers, architects, and fine artists. One of his earliest known works, published in Nelson's catalogue, is a traditional watercolor *Braunschweig* (1919). Though pedestrian in aesthetic terms, the work demonstrated a burgeoning arsenal of skills including command of color, perspective, and light, all in a very unforgiving medium. Vorst's work during these years reflected the kind of mimetic experimentation that is expected of any young artist.

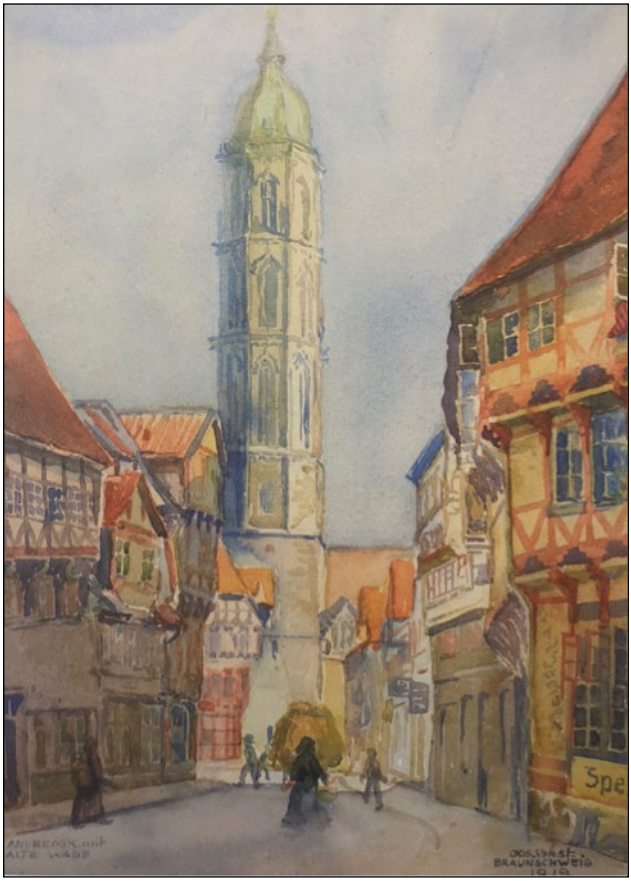

Image 2. Joseph Paul Vorst. Braunshweig (1919) Watercolor on paper. 16 x 12 in. Collection of Cris and Janae Baird. Reproduced courtesy of the Carl and Carole Vorst Estate.

It was shortly after this that Vorst joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He attended his local congregation and ticked all the boxes of membership, including regular attendance and ordinations to the priesthood.

At the time, Vorst was regularly publishing works in local German newspapers, and studied briefly with the preeminent figurative artist of the era, Max Liebermann (1847–1935), with whom Vorst maintained a lifelong correspondence. The economic troubles in Germany, however, made America more promising.

Vorst had relatives in Missouri. So, unlike many European converts who headed to Salt Lake City to take advantage of the economic and social benefits of the Saints, Vorst moved to the Midwest. He married a non-member and had children, who today are not closely associated with the Church. Despite this relative isolation from the center of the Church, Vorst remained very active participating in his local congregation and receiving missionaries.

Vorst made two trips to Salt Lake City in his life. His travels to the administrative center of Mormonism, however, bore no official commissions from Church nor any known local sales of his work. He was not alone in this. Besides a few temple projects that were given to a small number of artists, the Church did not get in the business of commissioning or distributing art until the 1960s. And, compared to St. Louis, Salt Lake City was rather provincial, with little in the way of galleries or art venues.

Image 3. Joseph Paul Vorst (1897–1947) Einzug Christi in Jerusalem (1930) Linocut. 17.64 x 14.69 in. Private Collection, Germany. Reproduced courtesy of the Carl and Carole Vorst Estate.

In Utah, Vorst met Alice Merrill Horne (1869–1948), the doyenne of the Utah arts at the turn of the century, who wrote the classic *Devotees and their Shrines*, founded the Department of Museum and Arts, and championed other artists, such as Minerva Teichert (1888–1976). Horne later organized a show of Vorst's New Testament linocuts at the Deseret Gymnasium Art Room. The venue might seem less than ideal to us today, but in a time before the Church History Museum and government buildings dedicated to such shows, it would have been ideal. The Deseret Gym was frequented by business and Church leaders alike as a place for socializing and recreation. Having his work there would have guaranteed some useful exposure.

The images were not made for the show. Rather, Vorst produced them before moving to the US. Stylistically, with their heavy use of negative space and dynamic gestures, they are much in the style of other works by more famous artists of the time, such as Emil Nolde (1867–1956). In spirit, however, Vorst's linocuts bear little resemblance to the rampant cynicism of the German Expressionists.

Back in Missouri, Vorst established himself among a group of formidable artists. This included John Steuart Curry (1897–1946), Joseph "Joe" Jones (1909–1963), and, most important for Vorst, Thomas Hart Benton (1889–1975). These artists came to be known as Regionalists. And, although their styles differed, they all were dedicated to depicting midwestern subjects that, before their success, were not considered worthy of treatment for many fine artists. From the late 1930s to his death in 1957, Vorst's paintings were dedicated to the treatment of the drama of the people and scenery that surrounded him, often with remarkable insight and empathy.

Vorst shared a studio with Benton, who is now considered one of the greatest painters of America. (Next year, Benton will be the subject a major exhibition at BYU Museum of Art.) At first, it seems that Vorst's relationship with Benton was that of student and teacher, respectively.

Benton had already established a national reputation. But, according to Nelson's ample documentation of their relationship, they became more like companions to one another.

Career-wise, the association with Benton seems to have opened up opportunities beyond the midwest. The relationship had aesthetic consequences for Vorst. Even as he was accepted to major shows at the Whitney Museum or Chicago Institute of Art, Vorst rarely escaped comparison, for better and worse. Writing for the *New York Herald Tribune*, one critic wrote:

> Aesthetically, Vorst was heavily influenced by Benton, adopting similar subjects, treatment of figures, and pallet. A contemporary noted: "Most of [Vorst's] works, which show a strong Benton influence, are keyed up to excessively violent moods of drama.[4]

Another critic writing about the same show commented:

> At the A.C.A. Gallery Joseph Vorst is showing new pictures. It's a pity Joe Jones and Thomas Benton keep getting in the way of a real appreciation of Vorst. There is unquestionably a strong likeness between himself and both of these better-known men . . . when you get close up to these things and give yourself over to them for a while, you realize that Vorst has qualities quite his own.[5]

In their lifetimes and posthumously, the changes in critical fortunes of artists are often subject to causes beyond their reach. It would be tempting for art historians to attribute Vorst's lack of name recognition today to the problem of too close of a relationship with better known artists. Nelson, however, handles this deftly, pointing out that Vorst was never critical of the comparisons.

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4. "Drama in Missouri," *New York Herald Tribune,* Dec. 7, 1941.

5. Quoted in Nelson, *Joseph Paul Vorst,* 169.

Image 4. Joseph Paul Vorst (1897–1947) Adolf Hitler (1932) Lithograph from drawing, published in Esquire Magazine, February 1934.

Vorst accepted a teaching position at a local college in 1936, at the height of the Depression. For even the most successful artists, finding a

teaching position would have been difficult and most welcome. Reporting on the appointment, the local St. Louis newspaper wrote:

> Joseph Vorst, the 40-year-old German-born St. Louis artist, who, on a visit to Germany in 1932 painting campaign portraits of Adolf Hitler and other Nazi leaders, has been selected to supervise a new course in applied arts.[6]

Yes, Vorst was paid by the Nazi party to paint portraits of Adolf Hitler, Herman Goehring, Gregor Strasser, and Joseph Goebbels during the German election of 1932. In a major oversight, the Church History Museum, which described the show as "a retrospective," does not mention or display the portraits or reproductions of them. From a public-relations perspective, their existence is a nightmare. But from a scholarly perspective the omission is unforgivable. Nelson is clearly uncomfortable with the event, characterizing it in the catalogue as the desperate act of a financially-strapped artist. In fact, in the catalogue and the exhibition, again and again, Nelson and Hurtado bring up how difficult it was for Vorst to be a German in America during the world wars.

That does not seem to be the case for Vorst. Despite all the apologies made by Nelson, this clearly-documented, uncomfortable truth can be explained, in part, by prosaic context. Many artists painted figures whom they disagreed with for artistic and journalistic purposes, and World War II had not yet happened. In 1932 most of Europe, let alone Americans, were not yet clear on who or what Hitler and his henchmen would become. Vorst's images were not used for official purposes by the Nazi German politicians, and were subsequently printed in an *Esquire* magazine article discussing pre-war Germany. The more troubling fact is that for years Vorst continued to use the event as a resume-building talking point. That is sure to make many, including me, uncomfortable.

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6. "Joseph Vorst Names Art Supervisor at Jefferson College," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch,* Aug. 9, 1936.

Image 5. Joseph Paul Vorst (1897–1947) Sharecroppers' Revolt (1939) Oil on panel. 24 x 31 in. Collection of Dan Shogren and Susan Meyer. Reproduced courtesy of the Carl and Carole Vorst Estate.

A great deal of the catalogue and the Church History Museum's exhibition are dedicated to Vorst's images of African Americans. Like Benton, Vorst chronicled the struggles of contemporary black Americans, not far removed from slavery and living on the edges of more prosperous communities. These are unquestionably the most moving and accomplished works on display.

In the painting *Sharecroppers' Revolt* (1939) Vorst depicts a scene from January 1939 when over one thousand mostly black farmers camped along the highways to bring attention to unfair practices by landowners. Vorst focuses on one family and their meager possessions huddled by a stove against the cold Missouri winter.

Image 6. A screenshot from the Church History Museum Instagram feed, dated Nov. 15, 2017.

In the catalogue and Church History Museum, Vorst's efforts are described as acts of Christian compassion. While it is certainly true that Vorst seems to have genuinely sympathized with his subjects, almost no analysis is done of Vorst's intended audience and those audiences' reactions to them.

While most of these depictions of African Americans are clearly sympathetic, some, like *White Gold* (n.d.) are painful caricatures of African Americans, showing them with exaggerated features while picking cotton. It seems that Vorst and his Missouri regionalists were painting African Americans much like Jean-François Millet's paintings of rural peasants for sophisticated Parisian salon audiences. Viewers at the Whitney Museum were not given the identities of the figures in Vorst's paintings. They were shown a foreign and exotic world within their own country. It is not clear from the catalogue whether Vorst had a serious relationship with African Americans, despite his clear sympathy for them. Did he paint them from live models, or were they invented? Again, Nelson is working in unexplored territory with Vorst, and perhaps

struggled to explain these works using the artist's own words, if there were any. In any case, more should have been done to address issues of race and the appropriation of images, both in Vorst's time and today.

Image 7. Joseph Paul Vorst (1897–1947) White Gold (n.d.) Oil on canvas. 37 x 24 1/2 in. Courtesy of McCormick Gallery, Chicago and Vallarino Fine Art, New York. Reproduced courtesy of the Carl and Carole Vorst Estate.

Image 8. Photograph of Vorst in his studio, c 1925. The whereabouts of the painting, depicting Joseph Smith Jr. receiving the gold plates from Moroni, are unknown.

The genesis for the catalogue and exhibition on Vorst was a June 24, 2013 blog post, "Joseph Paul Vorst: Regionalist Artist" by Ardis E. Parshall, a freelance historian. Parshall had come across a few images and appealed for more information. In the comments section, Glen Nelson reached out and proposed the idea of doing a project for the Mormon Artist Group.[7]

7. Ardis E. Parshall, "Joseph Paul Vorst: Regionalist Artist," *Keepapitchinin* (blog), Jun. 24, 2013, http://www.keepapitchinin.org/2013/06/24/joseph-paul-vorst-regionalist-artist/.

Within two years, the Church released an interview with Glen Nelson and Laura Hurtado, Global Acquisitions Collections Manager and curator for the exhibition, announcing that the Church had acquired several works by the artist. "[Vorst] widens the discussion regarding Mormon art and the definition of who is included in the canon of Mormon artists," according to Hurtado.[8] Nelson added, "To have someone like this, of this quality, completely unknown, this is like a curator's dream come true."[9]

While his name is almost totally unknown today, in his time, Mormons had heard of Vorst. In June 1940, the Church's premier publication, *Improvement Era*, ran a lengthy profile on the artist with the teaser: "Why Joseph Paul Vorst, artist, chose to live in Missouri?"[10] The question reveals the mindset of members of the Church when everyone was tacitly expected to join the Saints in Zion. It also acknowledges the practical consideration that by living in Missouri, Vorst's audience was not the LDS community. Yes, he made a few images with Mormon subject matter, such as the First Vision seen in the photograph above. These seem to be private images, however, not included in the many shows in which he participated. While Vorst certainly was Mormon, with the exception of a few works, his *oeuvre* was not particularly Mormon in content, nor was it directed toward Mormon audiences. To his contemporaries this was not a problem, Vorst was not a Mormon artist, he was a Regionalist. It is a problem for Nelson and the Church History Museum, however, who spent a great deal of energy—and the precious resources of Church exhibition space—explaining his posthumous relevance to Mormon audiences. The existential question, then, put forward by the catalogue

8. R. Scott Lloyd, "Church Acquires Art of Unsung LDS Artist Joseph Paul Vorst," *Church News,* Apr. 2, 2015, https://www.lds.org/church/news/church-acquires-art-of-unsung-lds-artist-joseph-paul-vorst?lang=eng.

9. Sarah Harris, "Discover the fascinating Mormon artist you didn't know existed at the Church History Museum," *Deseret News,* Nov. 16, 2017, https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900004082/new-church-history-museum-exhibit-recanonizes-lesser-known-mormon-artist.html.

10. William Mulder, "Missouri Artist," *Improvement Era* (Jun. 1940), 326–37.

and the exhibition is: should Mormon art be considered Mormon if the only consideration is that it was made by a Mormon?

Every religion has its own pantheon of artists who inform the aesthetics of the faithful and further articulate doctrine and identity. Catholics have looked to many, including Raphael, Michelangelo, Rubens, and Bernini. Protestants have had Hans Holbein, Lucas Cranach, Peiter Bruegel, Jan Steen, and Rembrandt. In its short, 188-year history, Mormons have cobbled together their own pantheon, even populated with artists from other faiths. It includes the pioneer artists CCA Christensen and Danquart Weggeland, the Mormon Art Missionaries (i.e., John Hafen, JB Fairbanks, Edwin Evans, Herman Haag), monument makers (i.e., Mahonri Young, Torlief Knaphus, Avard Fairbanks), Book of Mormon and historical painters (Minerva Teichert, Arnold Friberg, Walter Rane), and a host of artists whose works are used in lesson materials and meeting houses (Robert Barrett, Greg Olsen, Gary Kapp). We've grafted in a few artists I like to call NMMA's (Non-Mormon Mormon Artists): Carl Bloch and Heinrich Hofmann, both protestants whose works were adopted after their deaths. It is also true of Harry Anderson, John Scott, and Tom Lovell, three prominent illustrators of different faiths who were commissioned to make works for the Church's participation in several world's fairs and subsequently included in the Gospel Art Kit.

There is no official committee that has drawn up a canonical list. Inclusion in the pantheon requires, in my opinion, only two characteristics: first, the artist's work represents Mormon culture; and, second, the artist's work has in turn had an influence on LDS culture.

As quoted at the beginning of the article, Nelson and Hurtado claim Joseph Paul Vorst is the most culturally significant LDS artist of his generation."[11] Here is a short—and probably incomplete—list of prominent LDS artists of Vorst generation:

11. Glen Nelson and Laura Allred Hurtado. "An introduction to Joseph Paul Vorst, Video Script," Joseph Paul Vorst A Retrospective: Exhibition Press Guide (Salt Lake City: Church History Museum, 2017), 65.

Mabel Frazer (1897–1981)

An influential teacher and muralist, Frazer studied at the Art Students League and Beaux-Arts Institute in New York and taught at the University of Utah from 1920 to 1953.

Mahonri Young (1877–1957)

The grandson of Brigham Young. He studied at the Académie Julian in Paris and at the Art Students League in New York and won international awards as both a sculptor and painter. He married the sister of J. Alden Weir, one of the preeminent American impressionists, and worked in Italy, France, and the US. Between making works for New York galleries and spending time with members of the international jetset, including Gertrude Stein, Young did the first art monuments for Temple Square (two life-sized statues of Joseph Smith Jr. and Hyrum Smith) and, later, the This is the Place Monument. His collection of over 10,000 old-master to contemporary artworks became the basis for BYU Museum of Art.

Alma B. Wright (1875–1952)

Studied at the Académie Julian and Académie Colarossi in Paris. In the 1920s, he painted temple murals for the Church in Canada, Arizona, and Hawaii, while teaching at the University of Utah.

Lynn Fausett (1894–1977)

Perhaps the best case for future discovery, Fausett was born in Price moved to New York for school and, for more than ten years, served as the Director of the Arts Students League of New York. He was regularly listed on the Who's Who of New York, and did over fifty monumental murals in various State capitols and Church buildings during the WPA era.

Minerva Teichert (1888–1976)

Teichert hardly needs an introduction to today's audiences. In her lifetime, however, after studying at the Art Institute of Chicago and the Art Students League of New York, she worked in isolation in Wyoming

painting more than five hundred scenes from Mormon history and scripture. It is only recently that Minerva Teichert, who painted her works in isolation, with no serious commissions or recognition from the Church, has become a full-fledged member of the pantheon.

Compared to these eminent and influential artists, is Vorst the "most culturally significant"? Whether from the perspective of contemporary New York critics, contemporary LDS audiences, or in the minds of today's members of the Church, the answer is probably no. It should not be a competition, however. Rather, it should be a discussion of how Vorst, self-isolated from the predominant aesthetics of Mormon artists at the time—who mostly trained in France and New York—represented a completely different aesthetic.

Vorst should be remembered for his art. But, should the reason for remembering him his be that he was Mormon? Do we remember Picasso because he was a great Catholic artist, or Modigliani for his Jewishness? This approach to remembering artists for their religious affiliations seems untenable. The question that I had at the end of the catalogue and viewing the exhibition came down to this: Does a retrospective of Joseph Paul Vorst belong at the Church History Museum? And if not, where?

Located across the street from Temple Square, the Church History Museum is the only official venue for Church art. Over the past few years, its ground floor has undergone a multi-million-dollar renovation, creating elaborate historical dioramas that illustrate the foundation of the Church and its key figures. The museum is mostly staffed with volunteer missionaries who are trained to answer the questions of non-member tourists.

The day I recently visited, a bus of Asian tourists poured into the museum. What, I wondered, did these foreign visitors think when they went upstairs to see an exhibition almost totally devoid of any direct reference to Mormon doctrine, history, or figures?

Revealing the Holy in Deja Earley's *To the Mormon Newlyweds Who Thought the Bellybutton Was Somehow Involved*

Deja Earley. *To the Mormon Newlyweds Who Thought the Bellybutton Was Somehow Involved.* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2018. 88 pp. Paper: $19.95. ISBN: 9781560852711.

Reviewed by Terresa Wellborn

Don't let the book cover's scandalous bare navel dissuade you. Deja Earley's poetry collection, *To the Mormon Newlyweds Who Thought the Bellybutton Was Somehow Involved*, is well worth your time as she navigates the truths and agonies of growing up Mormon. Although the book is likely to resonate with Latter-day Saints, those not versed in LDS culture still have much to appreciate. Earley deftly handles everything from first kiss bliss and cringe-worthy roommates to aging parents and sexual naiveté. Her words speak from the page as if from a found diary, at times reminiscent of Anne Sexton and Sharon Olds, but throughout clearly Earley. Her clarified musings clothe the poems well as she draws us near with a conversational tone, keen observations, and fresh imagery.

Earley digs into the rich mulch of the self as the poems arc through three distinct sections: girlhood and adolescence, young adulthood, and housewifery and motherhood. In this slim volume, nothing is taboo: cat vomit, aliens, skunks, and a dream in which the author becomes a second wife to her own father.

Ensenada is the setting of the first poem, "Bunnies in Velvet" (3). As a girl on a trip to Ensenada, she naively wants the Playboy bunny earrings but her sister tries to discourage her. We join her as "the vendor, / smiling, took them from their velvet niche / and held them to my ears.

His hands smelled / / of sweat and silver, and his fingers were coarse / against my cheeks." Such detail reminds us of a time in our lives before the world crashed in, a moment suspended when innocence meets reality, a theme revisited throughout subsequent poems. This poem reminds us that Eve leaving Eden was not only a biblical event, but one each of us have endured.

In "Lashes" (6), Earley unfurls defining moments with dashes of grit. She juxtaposes a dead cockroach with self-discovery, not sure what she's looking at, thinking it, "a piece of shoe, / a fringe pulled from the rug, / a stale crust of toast." We observe its death, followed by self-birth as knowledge of her own body grows. She ties together the disparate ends of the poem with a revelation: some experiences are a combination of grotesqueness, self-awareness, shame, and inexplicable memory.

The book moves into high school territory with "Chaste Dancing" (10) and I'm nodding as I read, remembering those awkward, dimly lit Mormon church dances. Diction such as "shared saliva" and "firstkiss"—a made up compound word à la e.e. cummings—expresses all the details we did (and didn't) want to know about the intimacies of church foyer make outs. Here, thanks to Earley's vivid word choice and alliteration, adolescence feels as near as the book's page.

"Macaroni and Cheese" (14) is another enjoyable poem in this section. It spotlights the irritating issues of living with righteous but obnoxious roommates in love. She posits a fine, thumb-your-nose: "As I leave the room, she covers / his eyes during a pantyhose ad." Earley acts as the observer here, witnessing their cheesy kisses that sound, ironically, like "someone is stirring macaroni and cheese." You want to save her from it, if only you could.

As we move into part two of this collection, where some poetry books sag mid-point, this does not; it lifts to new locales, notably young adulthood and England. The poem, "Whatever Would Follow Hello" (27), takes place in London and speaks of wish fulfillment. A night alone at the ballet presents an opportunity to step out of herself. But she resists.

The reader may struggle at the confines of this poem, as perhaps Earley does too. It ends superbly,

> Her laugh is like an advertising jingle and her leg is a
> long invitation, and the skyline out the window
> appears a tiny perfect city in her glass.

We observe an imminent affair, perfectly at place in the world, but through the eyes of an observer detect more: what appears to be perfect may be anything but.

Next, we have "Seducing Stonehenge" (28), offering a fresh view of the famous stones. This poem can be read as a creative description of the literal location, or an allusion to a boy crush. However you read it, Earley nails the last stanza, creating mystical images with, "Watch the spiders pace their dewy webs. / Come away with lichen on your lips." I've visited Stonehenge a few times and am struck by Earley's unique reimagining, taking a tourist locale and crafting it as an ode to intimacy.

Part three regales us with poems about adulthood. Sex, pregnancy, motherhood, and conjugal love feature prominently here. In the title poem, "To the Mormon Newlyweds Who Thought the Bellybutton Was Somehow Involved" (58), we find equal parts humor, truth, and incredulous wonder. The poem by far the longest in the volume, stretching in five parts across five pages. It ranges from Earley's musings on how two naive individuals can marry and discover physical intimacy, to her personal experience, explaining, "Quietly, quietly, you make of every / mundanity a room, / and the two of you enter it." And, "It's a steady ramp, a passion no less promising if it begins in / wild misconception." Perhaps I appreciate this poem most because it is gentle and scolding and personal. And because she takes on the topic of sexual intimacy in a Latter-Day Saint culture that rarely discusses it. Earley not only handles the topic well, but she unapologetically names her collection after it. Bravo. Thus we see, through her eyes, our youthful dreams fall away in marriage with "tub rings," "the baby," and "cat

vomit." Yet despite wrinkles and the passage of time, we still seek physical connection which brings us back to ourselves, each other, and love.

In "Bobbing Fish" (66), Earley portrays her daughter's preschool years. The tables are turned as her four-year-old wonders aloud, "And what, may I ask, are you doing here?" This moment distills the divinity of parenting: a multitude of lessons, of epiphanies, if only we slow down enough to see them. Child becomes teacher, as the balloon transforms in her hands, "And then she's reeling it in as fast as she can./ It's a fat, red, bobbing fish, and she's laughing." Here, a child whispers to us one of life's secrets, finding joy in the simple, the mundane. Is childhood exquisite? Can motherhood be exquisite? This poem answers both queries with a resounding yes.

The collection ends with the poem, "Upon Attending a Yoga Class with my Husband" (68). It reads as a love poem, but more than that, appreciation and deep joy for life. True to form, Earley finishes with a brilliant, euphoric sigh, "Then we're standing and lifting our arms high-high over our heads / and I can see his bellybutton, his small bellybutton, and he is / so young and I am so young and we both imagine we're floating / in shiny bright bubbles of light." Circling back to childhood again we see through our own middling lives, that imagination brings us to light.

Where current LDS poetry offerings such as *Dove Song* and *Mother's Milk* draw Heavenly Mother and the celestial into our lives, Earley revels the holy in our fallen state. Her writing offers something different: frank, cheeky, confessional poetry treating sex and the human experience as divine. Attuned to Mormon culture, she shares sacred truths through her personal lens, celebrating the self while inviting us, the reader, to do likewise.

Can Faith Survive Choice and Circumstance?

Jack Harrell. *Caldera Ridge.* Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2018. 298 pp. Paper: $29.95. ISBN: 9781560852704.

Reviewed by Heidi Naylor

Kail Lambert, the protagonist in Jack Harrell's new novel *Caldera Ridge*, stands in the front room of the small, older home he and his wife Charlene have bought in rural southeast Idaho. While Charlene works in the kitchen, Kail unpacks a dish made of carnival glass.

The glass is shiny and pretty, catching light even from the darkest corners of the room; but it's only an imitation of the finer, more valuable glass blown by artisans. Kail has been similarly captured by a dalliance that looked real and promising. His marriage grew stale, and he sought comfort in the arms of a former love. The experience shocked him, so he quickly confessed the attraction and moved his family of four from their Arizona home to safer ground: Charlene's hometown, near a new job at beautiful Caldera Ridge State Park.

The carnival dish as well as the park thus become apt metaphors for the world God created—which, in Mormon theology, is also the world God's children inhabit: gorgeous and full of light, but also flawed, fragile, and easily shattered. They represent an imperfect prototype of a world, an understanding, and a way of being that will one distant day be perfect, as God brings about his work and glory through the choices of his children.

Until that perfect day, Harrell reminds us, there's a truckload of trouble to work through. Here's a bit of his vivid prose, capturing Kail's first day at Caldera Ridge:

> When they reached the truck, Kail stopped and turned for a moment. He looked out over Johnson's meadow, envisioning the elk, hearing the bugling of the bulls, imagining the crispness of the fall morning air on

> his cheek. It was a beautiful thought. But as he turned to get into the truck, he had a strange sense of something else waiting in this meadow, in the soil, in the silent emptiness of the sky. This was the kind of place where things could go wrong. The smell of blood might waft on the morning air, the tall weeds quivering with death in their tiny cells. But Kail dismissed it, this sense so slight and gentle as the whisper of a still, small voice. (41)

We've got divine help—Kail has access to it—but it can easily go unseen, or misperceived and disregarded. This carnival world and his own flawed choices have shifted the ground beneath Kail and his family, and they've lost their footing. Despite his impulsive move, his new job, and his hopes to rebuild his marriage with the help of Charlene's parents, Kail endures stretches of discouragement where he can't see that he has agency, not at all; he wonders if God, being all-powerful and all-seeing, has determined everyone's decisions and behavior already, through his all-knowingness.

Kail's vision of such a God might be a tough, rather Calvinistic pill for a Mormon reader to swallow. Mormons ingest the concept of agency—choice and consequence—from infancy, like mother's milk. Yet, Kail is a convert, without the lifelong Latter-day Saint tradition and worldview; and Charlene is deeply hurt and resistant to his efforts. Time and despondency have chipped away at his perceptions of faith and possibility. This is where the novel rung most true for me. Doesn't that "chipping away" happen for each of us, in times of grief, trouble, or doubt? Isn't the resulting loss of faith and hope among the greatest risks and tests of the mortal experience?

Kail's particular re-vision of God's purpose and guidance may seem singular. But a similarly skewed perception of fate and destiny has become reality for lifelong Mormon Jonas Simmons, Kail's father-in-law. Here, the troubling yet hopeful novel turns darker. Harrell does a masterful job creating some sympathy for Jonas, a pedophile, because of his initiation as a child to the perversions of his "beautiful, tyran[nical]

cousin Richard" (193), an anguished young man who'd come to live with Jonas's family. Richard molested Jonas and convinced him that "no one will ever love you the way I do" (194). A tormented soul, Richard hanged himself in the barn; and young Jonas was left shattered. Through the ensuing years, Jonas develops rigid rituals involving fasting and personal "revelation." He tries doggedly to resist his urges, to live life as a faithful family man; but eventually he allows his warped sexuality to alter his own perceptions of agency. "The mists had cleared," Jonas felt, now an old man parked in a car within sight of a playground; and "now he could see . . . he was only doing what had been determined for him to do. . . . All his years of resistance meant nothing now" (194).

The similar shifts in perception—Jonas and Kail each wrestling with their predetermined fates as sexual predator and adulterer—each traveling away from foundational Mormon theology—may challenge some readers. But Jonas had much to do with Kail's early beliefs as a new convert and son-in-law; Kail (not to mention Charlene) depended heavily on his mentorship and guidance. The most poignant and beautiful scene in the novel involves whether Kail and Charlene can come to hope for and rely on a "yet unmade future [with] movement and time" (288), where healing and redemption are "up to [them]" and—especially—on the love and guidance, but never control, of a God who "won't give up" (286).

"If something is in need of redemption, it must be in jeopardy first," writes Harrell, about the best art and writing. The parallel struggles of Jonas and of Kail jeopardize their marriages and children—along with their work, legacies, inner peace, even their souls. I couldn't help turning pages faster, as *Caldera Ridge* explored the individual choices in each struggle—indeed, in each earthly journey, whether that of Jonas, of Kail, or of the reader—and how these choices move us inevitably toward tragedy or toward hope.

Running the (Selected) Gamut of Missionary Experiences

Mike Laughead and Theric Jepsen, eds. *Served: A Missionary Comics Anthology.* Mike Laughead Publishing, LLC, 2018. 160 pp. Paper: $25.00. ISBN: 9780692197400.

Reviewed by Mike Lemon

Served: A Missionary Comics Anthology features short graphic vignettes about the contributors' experiences as LDS missionaries. It is the culmination of author Mike Laughead's and editor Theric Jepsen's Kickstarter campaign, which received $24,902 from 419 backers in thirty days. When backers receive their copies they will encounter a variety of short graphic narratives that are simultaneously varied in their visual approaches and bound together by major themes.

The funded project includes twenty-seven stories by twenty-seven contributors. The anthology's stories range in length, from a single page (Benjamin Ritter's "The Coolest Man I Ever Taught") to its longest contributions at nine pages (Lance Fry's "Just Friends" and Joshua Abegglen's "The Drunken Ninja." Moreover, these vignettes vary in artistic styles. Readers will explore a myriad of graphic presentations, from cartoon and anime to photoshop realism and woodcut illustration. Because these vignettes are graphic narratives, contributors use panels and layout to compress their storytelling onto the page. For example, Jacob Douglas's "The Lord CAN Help" uses no dialogue. Instead, he uses a series of bordered panels to track food from a cannery to its delivery at a disaster site. Other contributors do not have traditional panels, but use other graphic techniques to convey their narrative. Annie Poon's hilarious "Whistle While You Work" has an open layout and changing color palette to break up her narrative. While the story opens in muted

colors, the page explodes in yellow when a male church member whistles his way across the room and into the arms of an adoring crowd. While some yellow remains in the final graphic moment, Poon presents the sister missionaries within the story's initial palette.

The age of contributors also become a fascinating point of variance. In a statement on the Kickstarter page, Laughead notes, "These stories take place in many locations around the world *over several decades*" (emphasis added).[1] A cursory look at the artists' social media and websites seems to indicate that most are millennials. The use of Kickstarter and Laughead's insistence on linking to contributors' social media and websites again suggest a millennial presence. However, several stories come from older generations. Darren Rawlings, Patrick Scullin, Scott Hales, Abegglen, and Laughead date their stories, placing them within Generation X. While he does not explicitly indicate when his story occurs, Brad Teare ends "Reason to Believe" by graphically depicting himself. Visual clues signal his age, suggesting that he represents an older generation than the other contributors. These examples confirm Laughead's intended goals: to share a myriad of missionary experiences through autobiographical narratives.

While these stories contain unique narratives, there exists several recurrent themes. In addition to faith affirming stories, many contributors explore humor, the juxtaposition of missionary life and the "real" world, and the difficulties of being a missionary. While some might argue humor is not a theme, many return missionary readers will recognize that humorous situations often occur. Moreover, laughing at an experience can become a survival mechanism for dealing with a mission's emotional labor. In *Served*, some of the stories highlight the funny differences in international Church culture and learning a new language. Brittany Long Olsen recalls in "Hikari" a giggle attack while

1. Mike Laughead, "Served: A Missionary Comics Anthology," *Kickstarter,* May 8, 2018, https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/mikelaughead/served-a-missionary-comics-anthology/description.

singing an off-key rendition of "Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam" during sacrament meeting in Japan. American readers might recognize the cultural differences and find themselves giggling with Olsen. For "Windy," Sarah LuAnn Perkins thinks she is learning the language, but discovers that the question "Is it windy outside?" means that she has messy hair. She in turn uses the phrase with a bald member, signaling that she has learned the language by joking with members. Some stories involve body humor. (I would argue that most returned missionaries have at least one bathroom story.) Anthony Holden's "It Was a Dark and Stormy Night" opens with him and his companion braving a blizzard to tract. Instead of finding a golden investigator (perhaps the expectation for his illustrated audience, his children, and his expanded readership), they discover a drunk man who urinates on Holden's companion. In Randy Bishop's "Brownies," the author and his companion bake laxative-laden brownies as revenge for another companionship's "gift."

Several contributors depict the strange, often humorous juxtaposition of missionary life and the "real" world. Bethany Stancliffe's third short adventure exemplifies this. Readers follow a sister missionary on exchanges as she wakes up. Stancliffe uses excellent sequential storytelling to depict her look of sleepiness, to awareness, to focus, as she encounters a shirtless, mustached man smoking just outside her window. When she finally speaks, Sister Bates (most likely Stancliffe) responds in a nonplussed manner, "Oh yeah, that's our neighbor Cruz." Cruz becomes part of—and yet apart from—the missionary experience (20). That Stancliffe ends with Cruz waving to readers speaks volumes. It invites them to consider those strange, incongruous moments in their own lives and to find the friendly, amusing connections. Cam Kendell's "döner Kebab" ends with a similar moment. Kendell and his companion check on an inactive member. David/Daisy Day opens the door in a burlap dress and painted nails, and rips a two-minute electric ukulele solo. Kendell portrays the missionaries' visual reactions as perplexed and shocked.

However, they do not condemn Daisy. Instead, Kendell ends the comic with the elders smiling, agreeing to return and visit.

For all its humor and exploration of being a missionary in the world, *Served* also includes a large space for illustrating the difficulties of being a missionary. B. C. Sterret recounts receiving a Dear John letter. Josh Ferrin begins with humor in "Lesser-Known Gifts of the Spirit," before recalling a former companion's death. Josh Talbot uses backgrounds to portray his anxiety about being a missionary. Whenever he feels the "darkness" come, his backgrounds become jungles. Encouragement from his companion and renewed faith dispels the jungle. In "Small and Simple Things," Normandie Luscher recounts her feelings of anxiety being a new missionary. She dislikes tracting and expresses her frustration to her companion. Like Talbot's companion, Luscher receives encouragement to find the simple things. The comic ends with Luscher commenting on the clouds, suggesting that she is following her companion's advice. Finding the humor in missionary work, exploring the juxtaposition of missionary life and the "real" world, and discussing the difficulties of being missionaries are major recurrent themes with the anthology, often combining within individual stories, but they are not the only themes that reader may identify.

There are some themes intentionally, or perhaps not, excluded from *Served*. An article for the *Deseret News* notes that Laughead's "only limit . . . was they didn't want stories about sex scandals."[2] And true to this limit, there are no contributions about sexual indiscretion. Additionally, the anthology largely overlooks conspicuous references to baptism. When a story does mention baptism, the event is not the focal point, such as in Rawlings's and Benjamin Ritter's stories. Finally, *Served* does not include any stories about missionaries losing their faith or returning early from their mission. This could indicate the contacted contributors,

2. Michelle Garrett Bulciewicz, "A look at 'Served,' a new comic book anthology about LDS missions," *Deseret News*, May 12, 2018, https://www.deseretnews.com/article/900018219/a-look-at-served-a-new-comic-book-anthology-about-lds-missions.html.

but most likely this editorial decision involves the anthology's focus on the day-to-day happenings of LDS missionaries.

Even though readers will not encounter any salacious scandals or miraculous conversion experiences within the graphic vignettes, *Served: A Missionary Comics Anthology* offers a look into the lives of LDS missionaries. Readers might find the contributors' various art styles and sequential art methodologies disjointed, especially when reading through. Preferences in comic art and presentation are largely subjective. But recurring themes bind *Served* together effectively. When I did not enjoy a contributor's artistic style, I still identified with their experience. I suspect that many LDS returned missionary readers will react similarly to the anthology, because the contributions capture the small, common (and sometimes recognizably uncommon) emotions and experiences that come with serving.

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Making the World Light for Others

Keira Shae. *How the Light Gets In: A Memoir.* Salt Lake City: BCC Press, 2018. 268 pp. Paper: $7.00. ISBN: 9781948218078.

Reviewed by Matthew James Babcock

The trouble with reviewing a book like Keira Shae's debut memoir *How the Light Gets In* is the reviewer finds himself in the position of assessing an account of suffering and survival, and in the case of Shae's story of desperation and deliverance, suffering and survival aren't literary topics for analysis, but states of being to be encountered, felt, and understood. This is a tough, important, and energetically written remembrance—at

times, heavy material for a book about the healing influence of spiritual light—but no child advocacy expert, book club member, student of nonfiction, or library patron nationwide (and especially no convert or fifth-generation Mormon in Utah County) should pass on the chance to read this jarring and rejuvenating recollection from one of the Rocky Mountain Northwest's grittiest women.

In terms of composition technique, music is Shae's muse and the bright and often harsh light of reality her preferred mode in this uncompromising outpouring of memories. Chapter headings employ an eclectic mix of musical sources: song titles and snippets from lyrics, a selection that ranges from *The New Children's Songbook* and Leonard Cohen and *Les Misérables* to Death Cab for Cutie and Wolfmother. Bruce Cockburn's "Lovers in a Dangerous Time" (too early for Shae's generation, but not her mother's) could have added an apt line to this chronicle of a shattered life restored: "Nothing worth having comes without some kind of fight / Gotta kick at the darkness 'til it bleeds daylight." *How the Light Gets In,* a fight in its own right, finds friendship and faith clawing toward heaven out of a domestic hell of children in danger, emotional darkness, a family bleeding and kicking to survive—from the disturbing, vivid account of Shae's mother, Sierra, kicking Shae's malnourished baby sister in the ribs to the day Shae kicks off her wedding dress following her temple marriage at the age of nineteen, just one year older than her runaway mother was when Shae herself was born.

In one sense, *How the Light Gets In* qualifies as a spiritual autobiography, the genre popularized by seventeenth-century English Protestant dissenters, in which a troubled soul journeys from damnation to a state of grace. In Saint Keira's case, her colorfully wrought post-grunge housing-project state of grace is achieved through fateful—and some might say, blessed—interactions with Latter-day Saints: bishops and ward members who provide sanctuary and sustenance, the missionaries who in the middle of Mormonia find her and teach her the gospel, and the "wholesome Mormon boys" Shae crushes on in her youth 155). Only Provo's most naïve resident could read this book and ask, "How

could something like this happen here?" And yet, the bulk of Shae's story probably should strike more sheltered readers as shocking, considering the time period and location. The church members Shae encounters (her "holier-than-thou, thrifty, educated, and financially successful religious neighbors") do reach out to her, exerting a positive influence on the young troubled teen and her family, only occasionally appearing as doltish deployments of do-gooders doling out rolled oats and flour in bulk to her household of feral, starving siblings (119). Regardless of religious affiliation, self-professed believers and non-believers will see Shae's personal grappling toward God as authentic, including her bouts with depression as a young mother of three boys.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Shae's offering is the way it provides an insider's blow-by-blow breakdown of a dysfunctional family and the personal dynamics that make that environment so destructive: her meth-mad mother, the sex abuse and beatings and cyclical abandonment, the guilt-induced devotion of the girl forced to play caregiver, the endless entourage of tattooed boyfriends and deadbeat husbands (with the occasional good guy), and the way the more permanent players in the drama insist on blind loyalty, a kind of loyalty of the damned, where you are "shunned" for threatening the family when you seek outside assistance—as Shae does when she turns to her bishop and finds herself attacked by her prostitute mother and her mother's latest male companion for allowing government and religious influences to fragment her family. Later, a viewing of *Les Misérables* helps Shae see her mother's plight more clearly, and as a more mature woman Shae vacillates understandably between love and hate toward the woman who gave her life and took her life from her—in some ways, the bond between Shae and Sierra parallels the relationship between Valjean and Javert (with Shae's book ending far less tragically). Somehow, amid the appalling scenes of violence and neglect, the most heartbreaking violation seems to come when Sierra punishes Shae by using kitchen scissors to cut off her ponytail and hand it to her:

> I tried not to scream in horror. I cried as silently as possible with my handful of my beloved Disney-princess length hair. I touched my head and covered my neck, trying to solidify what had happened to me with evidence. I didn't feel very beautiful as a child, but I loved my hair. My favorite feeling was taking a bath with it. I loved feeling the hair tickle my bare back. I loved the feeling of how heavy it became in the water, yet it floated around my head like a mermaid's. To lose this part of my identity was crushing. I had only a moment with my hair before my mother chased me through the kitchen and living room to spank my rear end raw; Sierra was red from hairline to toenail beds. (29)

Despite the difficult beginnings, this is a book that moves from darkness to light, from the story of a broken life to the story of a life healed by the light of God and love, though we are not spared any of the necessary details in tracing Shae's rocky upward path. Shae and By Comment Consent Press are to be commended for producing a book that brings together such raw and religious reading, a combination very few books of this kind achieve (in fact, I would say in all my years of reading, I have never read anything that compares to Shae's memoir). Too often, spiritual memoirs fall into the camps of saccharine institutional propaganda or iconoclastic apostasy fests, either avoiding the tough facts or wallowing in them, leaving readers unable to appreciate either the struggle or the salvation because they've been given too much of one side and not enough of the other. Shae's technique is a kind of lyrical chiaroscuro, describing her abusive mother's eyes that "burned like cigarettes" (120) and, at the moment her siblings are taken from her, delivering a litany of all their beautiful qualities: Ashley borrowing her favorite black shirt; Becca giggling on the bed with stuffed animals; Brandon making chef-quality ramen noodles; Alex's jokes. By reading of all that was lost, we appreciate everything that was gained and understand—from the perspective of someone who truly made the difficult journey—the cost and reward of breaking away from darkness and finding light.

"You can't get common sense from a book!" (183). Shae's mother shouts at her, an utterance that strikes readers as monumentally ironic, since by that point in Shae's life story, we have gained so much from the published and bound record of her uncommon life. Shae's theme, taken from Leonard Cohen's "Anthem," is that life's cracks are what let the light in, and the cracks in her narrative are what make her writing so illuminating. Why, for example, does Sierra not try to find hope in the Church when her young daughter does? What were the circumstances that led this trio of lonely women—Shae, Sierra, and Shae's "Granny"—to find themselves abandoned in the heart of Utah? How does Shae's biological father re-enter her life when, years earlier, he was the one who tried to pay her teenage mother to have an abortion, only for Shae's mother to turn around and spend it on baby clothes? These questions aren't indicators of faults in the book, but places where we can shine our own lights of curiosity on the fault lines in the human landscape Shae so vividly reveals to us. The common act of reading, in this case, cracks open our views of the lives of those who have lived in our neighborhoods for years, so that greater empathy and understanding can seep into us.

How many blows does it take to crack a life until it breaks? How many lumens fill a life with transformative, healing love? Keira Shae's *How the Light Gets In* gets it absolutely right, turning the full light of personal and spiritual truth on the misery that made her a mother determined to make the world lighter for others.

A Private Revelation

William Victor Smith. *Textual Studies of the Doctrine and Covenants: The Plural Marriage Revelation.* Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2018. x + 274 pp. Footnotes. Bibliography. Index. Cloth: $59.95. Paper: $26.95. Kindle: $23.99. ISBN: 9781589586901.

Reviewed by Gary James Bergera

Can there be too many studies of Mormon plural marriage? As one interested in the topic for the better part of the past three-plus decades, and who acknowledges the plethora of works that grapple with it, I hope the answer is no. For me, Mormon plural marriage has not merely survived the efforts of skilled historians and others to explain, but has prevailed as one of the LDS Church's chief doctrines to elude truly satisfactory comprehension (Adam God may be the only other teaching that, like plural marriage, only becomes more confusing with study).

William Victor Smith has taught mathematics at Brigham Young University since 1985 (having previously worked at the University of Mississippi and the University of Pau [France]). However, he is probably best known to the LDS intellectual community for his blog posts, since 2010, at By Common Consent; for his hosting since 2009 the Book of Abraham Project (BOAP.org); for his work on assembling the texts of the funeral sermons of Joseph Smith; and especially for his recently published textual and historical analysis of section 132 of the LDS edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, commonly referred to Joseph Smith's July 12, 1843, plural marriage revelation. (To avoid confusion, in this review, Smith refers to William V. Smith, and Joseph to Joseph Smith.)

Smith's treatment of Joseph's plural marriage revelation is a syncretic blend of approaches: textual analysis, historical reconstruction, thematic narrative, and speculation. While his emphasis is a thoughtful,

tightly focused dissection of the text, history, and possible meaning(s) of section 132, Smith also veers into considerations of related topics that, depending on the reader's interests, may or may not be as germane to the study of plural marriage as the reader expects. For example, in addition to an examination of the beginnings of Nauvoo plural marriage, Smith broaches, among other subjects, the early development of priesthood keys, offices, authority, and succession (41–57); the nature of premortal intelligences (96–99); and sexual procreation versus spirit adoption in the next life as well as the role of a mother in heaven (158–72). Each of these, and other similar detours, is intriguing in its own right. Whether they coalesce into a unified consideration of plural marriage depends on the reader.

To give potential readers a taste of Smith's rewarding study, consider the following brief call-outs that both tease and tantalize:

> "It is naïve to divorce Joseph Smith from physical desire." (11, n.31)
>
> "The term 'Celestial Marriage' was almost universally synonymous with polygamy in Mormonism until 1890, after which it gradually came to refer exclusively to sealing." (23)
>
> "polygamy is one and the same with 'Celestial Marriage.'" (24)
>
> "Nauvoo where community morals and church law might be ignored under special conditions." (35)
>
> "The LDS Church today frequently advertises the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as being the collective custodians of the sealing authority between the passing of a Church President and the sustaining and ordination of his successor. Although this has been a part of the succession tradition since the crisis following the death of Joseph Smith, there is nothing in the textual history of restored priesthood authority that establishes this. Rather, that narrative was constructed out of Smith's teachings and the conferral of temple rites before his death." (39)
>
> "The full April [1836] vision [of Elijah in the Kirtland, Ohio, temple] itself (which would be first published . . . in November 1852) makes no explicit reference to sealing and only links Elijah with 'turn[ing] the

> hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers' . . . . Given the continued emphasis in Mormonism of Elijah's role in restoring the sealing keys, it is somewhat remarkable that the plural marriage revelation makes no mention of that figure [i.e., Elijah]." (44)
>
> "[Brigham] Young had to construct a narrative that put him in place as 'the one' [i.e., Joseph Smith's successor]." (53)
>
> "The plural marriage revelation, however, does not whole-heartedly embrace a rejection of civil or non-priesthood authority, and it acknowledges earlier on that at least some of those contracts would be honored by the spiritual world–even if they 'have an end when men are dead.'" (107)
>
> "in Nauvoo, proto-heavens were *created* by forming networks of sealing in and between families." (129; emphasis in original)
>
> "reproduction seems to be the primary purpose behind polygamy." (156)
>
> "The revelation thus declared that [Joseph] Smith's own salvation was guaranteed." (160)
>
> "While celestial procreation as a sexual analogue of mortal reproduction does not seem to be an intended part of [Joseph] Smith's cosmology, his public remarks, like the [plural] marriage revelation itself, could be interpreted in ways that allowed for procreated souls in heaven." (166)
>
> "Sex in heaven may seem like a validation of the patterns of mortality, but to see it as a necessary component of spirit generation lets the wonderful complexity of human biology invade heavenly precincts with hormone-driven psychology, resulting in a complex theological fruit that still awaits some careful and consistent explanation." (169)
>
> "Simply put, under the law of Sarah the wife can either grant permission for her husband to marry additional wives or she can be damned." (174)

For Smith, the revelation Joseph dictated, according to reports, on July 12, 1843, was instigated by his older brother, Hyrum; was directed at his own civil wife, Emma Hale Smith, in an effort to convince her of the divinity of plural marriage; and may have been written in two sections and at two different times before being given to Emma. The revelation

did not inaugurate Joseph's controversial practice of plural marriage, but presented a theological justification—eternal marital sealings that survive death—for its implementation. It makes explicit to Emma that her husband's practice was a heaven-mandated commandment, that its objective was to maximize procreation, and that all who rejected it would be damned eternally. The revelation, in no uncertain terms, informed Emma and those like her—reluctant to embrace the new teaching—that if they rejected it, they would thereafter never be able to obtain a fullness of celestial glory. Smith argues persuasively that Joseph's revelation was not meant for the Church generally, and should not, at least in its current form, have been included in the Church's canon.

While I may quibble with Smith over a few of his statements, I agree with the gist of his analysis and arguments. I also agree that section 132 should not have been included in the Doctrine and Covenants but go even further: Joseph's revelation, like the Lectures on Faith (which were included in the Doctrine and Covenants until 1921), should be retired from the official canon. There may be some especially meaningful passages in the revelation for believers, but the fact is, as Smith points out, the document itself, in its present iteration, was never intended for the Church. That it was also read to members of the Nauvoo high council and then later explicitly and publicly disavowed as applying to the present underscores its problematic nature. Because we know so little for certain about the facts of the beginnings of plural marriage, and of its implementation and practice during Joseph's lifetime, we should, I believe, seriously consider relegating Joseph's July 12, 1843, revelation to a category of documents requiring further study before bestowing upon it the church's official imprimatur.

Since the publication of Smith's book, some reviewers have raised objections to his use of sources—specifically, Smith's disinclination to engage in debates with other scholars of the topic whose views may differ from Smith's. While I'm certain I would be interested in Smith's engaging with the historians with whom he disagrees, I realize that the

field of Mormon polygamy studies is especially fraught. (The waves of ad hominem assertions and passive aggression that surface during some debates, especially in those in which one is a participant, can be frustrating to navigate.) Thus I tend to interpret Smith's silence as a polite refusal to encourage potentially acrimonious exchanges, and not as an unwillingness to consider or evaluate opposing points of view.

Nor do I fault the book's subtitle *The Plural Marriage Revelation*. Granted, Joseph's revelation addresses more than plural marriage (for example, sealing, contracts, eternal marriage, proper authority, etc.). But there is no question that the document's primary focus is plural marriage and that it is best known as the revelation on plural marriage. All titles/subtitles fall short of the ideal. The title/subtitle of Smith's book is as good as, and arguably more marketable than, say, Smith's own preferred *The Restoration of Hagar: Joseph Smith's July 12, 1843, Revelation.*

I find it very easy to recommend Smith's book. After all, I agree with almost all of it. Smith has produced an important, valuable contribution to the study of early Mormon plural marriage.

REFLECTIONS ON LIFE, ART, LOSS, AND LOVE

Rebecca Wagstaff

I was born an artist—I see this more clearly now. Yes, I am a painter, but that is only one of the mediums I use to make art.

In the ’80s I studied painting at Brigham Young University, and then taught traditional hand bookbinding classes for the art department briefly after returning from an apprenticeship with famed bookbinder Arno Werner. It was at this time I became acquainted with and soon married artist Clay Wagstaff, who had returned to Utah after finishing his masters degrees in California. I had not previously entertained the possibility of marrying another artist, but my decision to marry Clay was the best I have ever made. We’ve had a life of creativity together—twenty-seven years so far. After marriage, we moved to a remote place in southern Utah.

I’ve always instinctively valued self-sufficiency—the knowledge plus skills to make and do essential things—taking responsibility for my own health and more. Naturally I chose home birth midwives when I became pregnant with Hannah. It was the right choice for me and my baby. Raising a child—and we also chose to homeschool—is an act of creativity. I loved having my daughters at home with us, participating in our daily lives.

When Hannah was about two years old, a photocopy of a soap recipe fell into my hands. Of course I had to make it because I love to make useful, functional things. Unexpectedly my soap proved to be better quality than soap from the store. So we turned artisan soap making into a business that we still operate. About this time, my great-uncle’s house

in Tropic became available and we bought our first home. Clay's art also extends beyond painting and drawing. He has put in countless hours during our twenty-three years here, updating, remodeling, constructing, and finishing a freestanding studio in the backyard and more—creating unique and beautiful spaces for our family.

Miriam was born just before Hannah turned six. Again, I chose a midwife. Clay remodeled the attic into a charming bedroom, finishing it in the nick of time. After nurturing Miriam well into toddlerhood, and with her doting older sister to help look after her, I began painting seriously again and was quite productive for several years.

I painted "Inheritance" with Hannah as my model—her unreal, thick, long hair, braided, then loosed to make it wavy. I was contemplating the idea of inheritance—what have I inherited that is of most value to me? What have my daughters inherited? What have each of us inherited from our Divine Parents? And then this interesting idea—"children are an heritage from the Lord"—another way of saying my children are an inheritance the Lord gifts to me.

I chose the wool paisley shawl to directly symbolize my ancestors, and Clay's, who immigrated from England and elsewhere, sacrificing much—sometimes all—to do what they believed was right. But the shawl indirectly represents all my forbearers. The book Hannah holds is a first edition Book of Mormon, representing the great heritage from God I believe that book is to all of us. She also holds an early American coin. The abstract geometric lines I often include in my paintings indicate passageways between worlds or dimensions, even the possibility of piercing the veil. The expression on this girl's face is soberly contemplative in part because she is considering all the things that I am thinking about while I'm making this painting.

In August 2008, friends invited us to join them on an unofficial handcart trek in Sanpete County. For some reason I felt uneasy and increasingly uncomfortable as the hours passed the night before our early morning departure. Overnight I also developed painful sciatica,

and felt it would not be possible for me to walk with the trekkers the next day. Clay and I decided we would drive around, taking landscape painting scrap photos and then join the group at camp later in the afternoon. Hannah, who had recently returned from a trip to visit friends in Virginia, begged to go with us, which surprised and touched me. My uneasiness was at a high pitch by then, but I assumed my concerns were for Miriam—being the youngest in our family and appearing the most vulnerable—so I took Hannah aside and gave her careful instructions to watch over the safety of her little sister that day. I needed Hannah to go with Miriam and protect her.

We got the phone call about the accident less than an hour after the group left. I wanted to ride in the back of the ambulance with Hannah's body, but they said there wasn't room so we three rode in the ambulance cab to the hospital where we were provided a room to be with Hannah, for as long as we wanted, they said. We were in the room for many hours, and little by little thoughts came. We would make a phone call and then another, to family and friends. Then I realized we were *not* going to turn our sweet daughter's body over to strangers in a strange mortuary, so Clay called a friend who dropped everything and built a coffin for us. There were many other details. Lots of people helped us. It took all those hours to get everything arranged because I could only deal with one slow thought at a time. Hannah's great-granny and grandma came to be with us and to help wash Hannah and dress her. We took Hannah home in our van and buried her the next morning in a tiny remote cemetery alongside some of her ancestors.

Jeremiah writes that Rachel wept for her children "and would not be comforted, because they are not." This is a painfully beautiful and accurate expression of what it *felt* like to lose Hannah.

The second night, crystal clear words came into my mind: "Your sacrifice is accepted." I immediately cried out, in my mind, "How could it be a sacrifice if I didn't agree to it?" The reply came just as quickly "You agreed before you came here." I continue to ponder on that exchange.

Jesus Christ made the great and supreme sacrifice of Himself to save all of us. We talk sometimes of God the Father's suffering in allowing the sacrifice of His Son. I believe that Jesus' Mother also made an immense sacrifice, so that Her Son could be our Savior. Was it not all planned out before They came here? As I apparently participated in my life plans before I came here?

It seems to me that sacrifice does not end when we depart this life. And apparently we, the ones in need of saving, are given the opportunity to willingly make seemingly impossible sacrifices ourselves—like Abraham and Sarah, and many others. It appears that sacrifice is required for us to progress. I feel certain there is purpose in the massacre, or "sacrifice" of the Innocents. The sacrifice those mothers, and families, made, is for a wise purpose in God, even as we—behind the dark veil—might struggle to understand.

In the midst of pain I could never have imagined, I thankfully continued to feel gratitude to God for His many, many mercies. That I was able to care myself for Hannah's body—that beautiful body I had birthed fourteen years earlier. That she had not suffered in death, that I have reason to believe that "death was sweet" to her. Grateful that we had fourteen years with her, that we had spent so much quality time as a family. I felt somehow connected—as I never had before—to everyone on this globe who suffers loss of loved ones. When we lose someone we are very close to, someone we dearly love, we feel profound loss and pain—and it *feels* for a long time, that we, like Rachel, cannot be comforted.

Clay and I expressed our grief differently, but both of us had the sensation that we were unable to draw a full breath of air for months following, and we hardly slept. While I *knew* even at the very beginning that *Hannah* was okay, that she was absolutely fine—it's us left behind who are suffering—it still *felt* like the gap of her absence was unbearable. I *knew* that God loved me, that there was a purpose in Hannah's death even if it wasn't clear to me what that was, but at the same time, I was suffocating—every breath a struggle.

Miriam immediately developed severe behavioral problems which lasted over three years. I could "feel" her overwhelming pain, but I didn't know how to reach her and help her through my own all-enveloping pain. But we did our best. Fortunately Clay and I kept talking. We worked at being kind to each other. We tried different things; we kept on loving each other and Miriam. We prayed a lot. It took awhile for me to begin to comprehend that many *others* felt great grief for the loss of Hannah. Intellectually I understood this idea, but the mantle of pain was so thick around me. Grandparents, cousins, close friends, aunts and uncles, and other relatives were all hurting. And especially Miriam—her whole world had caved in at eight years of age.

Like me, Hannah and Miriam were born artists. Their drawings, from the time they could hold a pencil were confident, imaginative, well-designed, and composed. The girls loved reading and being read to for hours at a time. Their play was always creative and often involved imagining and then making things together and individually. And they always had "projects" of various kinds, underway. When Hannah was twelve, a wonderful violin teacher moved here and the girls began lessons, both progressing rapidly and loving the opportunity. We don't know how Hannah's gifts would have developed in this sphere, if she had stayed here longer, but that's okay. She is an amazing and gifted eternal being, continuing to progress as we all are.

Miriam showed unusual aptitude for music from a very young age. At two years old, when our family would watch old classic musicals, for weeks afterward Miriam would "sing" the songs from *My Fair Lady, Oliver!, The Sound of Music, Fiddler on the Roof,* etc. *in tune*, as she went about her daily play. We watched Ingmar Bergman's version of Mozart's *The Magic Flute* when Miriam was four. It's a long opera and I assumed a four year old was not going to be happy to sit through it, so I began reading the subtitles out loud. It wasn't long before she impatiently interrupted with "Mama, will you please be quiet so I can hear the music?!" She sat captivated through the entire opera.

Miriam took to the violin like a duck to water. The time came to transfer to a new teacher, which meant we needed to take her regularly to northern Utah. I delayed, and founded the Bryce Canyon Music Camp in an effort to bring more music opportunities into our rural area, but it was too late. Miriam needed much more. At eleven, Miriam added viola to violin and began playing in orchestras and chamber groups in Utah County. She jumped into fiddling then, too. We were away from home maybe half the time, sometimes more. I got a little painting in here and there, but my creativity went into Miriam and her music education for the next seven years as she auditioned, competed, progressed, and performed. She's a true musician.

This year, Miriam is a freshman in college and a little while ago she asked me to suggest edits for an essay she wrote for her English teacher about her experience of losing her sister Hannah. I was surprised that Miriam was able to share her deep and tender feelings in a more public venue—and glad. It's a beautiful essay.[1]

It's been ten years since Hannah died and I still sometimes *feel* a little like Rachel. I'm never without the feeling of Hannah's (mortal) absence. But I know Rachel's children are not really lost, and she *will* be comforted and healed.

Our latest creative big endeavor has been turning our home into a bed and breakfast. In April Clay proposed the idea since we live next to Bryce Canyon National Park, and I said yes. We spent the whole summer working like crazy to make this place into River Stone Inn & Gallery. I worked with such intensity that I didn't take time to think what it would be like to host strangers in my house day after day, so I'm very glad that it has been an almost entirely great experience. As we finish up details of our new business, I look forward to returning to my painting. It's been too long!

Hannah is still very much part of our family—I just hung her Christmas stocking up alongside of ours.

1. Miriam's essay is available on the Dialogue website.

Rebecca Wagstaff
Hatching
oil on muslin on panel, 9x15, 2005

Rebecca Wagstaff
Hatching II
oil on muslin on panel, 9x15, 2005

Rebecca Wagstaff
Hatching III
oil on muslin on panel, 9x15, 2005

Rebecca Wagstaff
Hatching IV
oil on muslin on panel, 9x15, 2005

WES JOHNSON: VISIONARY HISTORIAN

Robert A. Rees

The first time I met G. Wesley "Wes" Johnson was not long after I started teaching at UCLA in the mid-sixties. I had known of him earlier through his "Editorial Preface" in the first issue of *Dialogue* which I devoured at one sitting when my copy arrived. I still remember how excited I was to know there were people like me and that they had succeeded in doing what some friends and colleagues of mine at the University of Wisconsin had more modestly achieved, when we had actually published a small journal (*The Carpenter*). However, I recognized immediately that what Wes, Gene England, and a group of their friends had accomplished was far beyond our expectations or capabilities. *Dialogue* was the real thing. And it was a good thing.

In his editorial preface, Wes articulated the "general purposes" of the new journal of Mormon thought:

> to stimulate excellence in writing and the visual arts throughout the Mormon community; to present fresh talent and to offer established authors a new vehicle of thought; to sustain a serious standard of objectivity, candor, and imagination in dealing with Mormon culture; to give students and thoughtful persons across the land a journal directly concerned with their quest for rational faith and faith-promoting knowledge; to provide professional people from a variety of disciplines a place to publish findings on Mormon topics which are of interest to the general public; to help Mormons and their neighbors develop understanding and concern for each other through an exchange of ideas; and perhaps most important of all, to help Mormons develop their identity,

> uniqueness, and sense of purpose by expressing their spiritual heritage and moral vision to the community of man.[1]

Ambitious? Yes, but also visionary; for what Wes, Gene, Frances Menlove, Paul Salisbury, Paul Jeppson and others began that day has immensely blessed The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Mormon culture, and the lives of many individual members in particular for more than fifty years, and shows no signs of wavering or waning.

Many considered Gene the visionary behind the *Dialogue* enterprise, but I think it is more accurate to consider Gene the visionary of the future and Wes, a consummate historian, the visionary of the past. That is, *Dialogue* has fulfilled the promise of its founders both by looking forward and by looking backward—by imagining a better Mormonism and by unveiling a history that had been occluded by ignorance, fear, and secrecy.

Wes understood the power of history as truly, truthfully and responsibly told as possible, and one of *Dialogue's* chief accomplishments over the years has been the publication of important historic documents and the scholarship surrounding them. It is perhaps difficult to fairly see the role *Dialogue* has played in the maturing of Mormon scholarship in face of all that has transpired since it began publication in 1966, which includes the inauguration of the *Journal of Mormon History* (in 1974), the improvement of *BYU Studies,* the proliferation of other professional journals publishing solid Mormon historical scholarship, and the Church opening its archives and publishing important articles on critical and controversial historical issues. Another way to make this argument is to recognize that it is unlikely that some of the seminal scholarly work *Dialogue* has published, from its first decades to the present, would have been published by any other journal. I cite Lester Bush, Jr.'s groundbreaking "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview" as a prime example. That article, like many others published before and

1. G. Wesley Johnson, "Editorial Preface," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1966): 5–7.

since, has had a transformative influence on Mormon thought, theology, and culture.

Wes, who made important contributions to the larger field of historical studies during his illustrious career, set the tone for *Dialogue* (and dialogue) from the beginning by insisting, "Dialogue does not seek a particular editorial viewpoint. It attempts to serve as a forum for the encounter of diverse opinions, not as a platform for the promulgation of one kind of opinion. Thus, we conceive of Dialogue as a fresh idea in religious journalism—flexible, probing, and responsive to the needs of a variety of readers."

As Devery Anderson's excellent history of *Dialogue*[2] attests, launching an independent journal of Mormon thought was anything but assured. Some expressed fears that the venture was too risky, that it would quickly devolve into an anti-Mormon screed, that it would offend the Brethren, and that it would undermine faith. Considering the history of independent publications among the Mormons, those were reasonable concerns, but Wes, Gene, and others, like the founders of the new American religion itself, knew that, as Karl Keller wrote in a later essay in *Dialogue* "risk is the only kingdom."[3] By that, he meant, I believe, that without risk nothing, including the Kingdom of God, moves forward. As Wes's children wrote in their father's obituary, "Perhaps the greatest lesson he taught us was this, 'Long shots are never as long as you think; they're always worth going after.'"

Thanks Wes. We needed that.

2. Devery Anderson, "A History of Dialogue, Part One: The Early Years, 1965–1971," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 32, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 15–66.

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

Rebecca Wagstaff
Willows
oil on canvas, 60x36, 2003

MINISTERING

Kristine Haglund

My assigned topic is "Ministering with the Power and Authority of God." It's a daunting topic, and one that requires a preliminary confession: when I hear the word "minister," my most immediate and strongest association is with the Monty Python sketch about the Ministry of Silly Walks, so it has been good for me to research this topic and find some other associations to go with the word. We'll get to etymology in a minute, but first a story from the scriptures—or, uh, from the *New Yorker.*

In the April 30, 2018 issue of the *New Yorker,* Elif Batuman wrote about the "Rent-a-Family" industry in Japan.[1] She began with the story of Kazushige Nishida, a middle class, sixty-something-year-old salesman, recently widowed, and somewhat estranged from his only child. He contacted a company called Family Romance, which Batuman describes as "one of a number of agencies in Japan that rent out replacement relatives. He placed an order for a wife and daughter to join him for dinner. He described his real wife and daughter, hoping that the replacement wife might be "a little plump" as his wife had been. He paid 40,000 yen (about $370) and waited for them to come.

When they arrived, the replacement wife spent some time asking him about how he would like her and the replacement daughter to act. He described some of his late wife's mannerisms, and the way his daughter sometimes poked him playfully in the ribs. The two actresses did their best to incorporate these into their evening together.

1. Elif Batuman, "Japan's Rent-a-Family Industry," *New Yorker,* Apr. 30, 2018, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/04/30/japans-rent-a-family-industry.

Kazu paid for them to come again, several times, and he found himself feeling lighter, and sharing his feelings with the two women who were role-playing a family with him. Something like friendship began to grow—he explained how he and his daughter had argued before she left home, and the rental daughter offered him advice about how he might reach out to her. He called his real daughter, as the rental daughter had suggested, and tried hard to understand her point of view. One day, he came home and saw fresh flowers on the family altar. His daughter had returned to pay tribute to her departed mother and make a tentative peace offering to her father.

"I've been telling her to come home," he told the reporter, "I'm hoping to see her again soon."

This story seems terribly sad, but also revelatory and hopeful to me. Perhaps the most important revelation the story makes is that our deepest needs are not very complicated—the love we need most is manifest not in poetry, but in simple, prosaic, kindly deeds. When I was younger, I can remember passionately denouncing visiting teaching because friendship by assignment seemed so forced and artificial. I thought it might sometimes *lead to* authentic affection for someone, but I didn't think that stilted, awkward gestures of charity could themselves represent authentic Christian love. I think I wanted to feel the way the protagonist feels in "A Poor Wayfaring Man of Grief"—I wanted it to be dramatic; I didn't think love counted unless I was ready to give my life for someone. As I've gotten older, and become (a little) less prone to passionate denunciations, I've realized that a lot of the time, it is just dinner and another human voice we need. Or, as a friend of mine who lives alone once put it—"sometimes you just need there to be someone who knows you went to Target today." Sometimes these small things yield miraculous ones, as in this story where the rental daughter helped Mr. Nishida understand his daughter's perspective enough to reach out to her. And sometimes small gestures are freighted with enormous meaning, like the flowers the daughter leaves in memory of her mother.

But sometimes not. Sometimes it's just dinner. And the miracle is that dinner turns out to be enough.

There's one paragraph I want to specially draw attention to: "The wife asked Nishida for details about how she and the daughter should act. Nishida demonstrated the characteristic toss of the head with which his late wife had rearranged her hair, and his daughter's playful way of poking him in the ribs. Soon the rental wife called him Kazu, just as his real wife had, and tossed her head to shake back her hair. The rental daughter playfully poked him in the ribs."

In this story, it's very clear who is in charge—although Mr. Nishida is having service provided to him, he gets to direct the scene. The two women rely on him to tell them what to do until they have established enough of a relationship to accurately anticipate some of what he needs.

I want to tell you about a time that a visiting teacher served me powerfully by letting me set the terms of the relationship. As background, maybe it helps to know that I was always a very, very Mormon girl. My dad was a bishop for most of my growing up years, and I always expected to be a bishop's wife (or, let's be honest, maybe actually a bishop). I was a third pew from the front on the right kind of Mormon. But when I moved to this ward, I had recently divorced. In my old ward, my ex-husband had obtained custody of everyone's good opinion. The way that our schedules worked out, he had the kids and took them to church on Sunday mornings, and I skulked around going to different wards, sliding into the very last pew during the opening song and scurrying out before the last line of the closing song so no one would talk to me. I felt fragile and terrified of everyone's judgment, and unsure of how I belonged in the Church anymore.

I was assigned a visiting teacher who, from the outside, seemed pretty formidable. She had been in this ward and stake forever, and had raised what was surely a perfect family here—there was no question that she belonged thoroughly. She was very nice to me, called dutifully to try to set up appointments, even emailed (not her favorite form of

communication) when my phone call-avoiding skills proved daunting. I did not let her come visit me even one time. I'm sure she was puzzled and probably a little hurt—I was at church most weeks, mostly smiling, not apparently incapable of speech—but I was as inhospitable as a porcupine curled up into a spiky little ball. Treats started to appear at my door. Not on a schedule, and way more than once a month . . . beautiful cookies, birthday cupcakes, baskets of the most exquisite raspberries, freshly picked apples, pot roasts . . .

And that was all. She kept bringing gifts, and I kept not letting her in. Eventually, I found a toehold in the ward and uncurled my porcupine self a bit, but by then I was assigned a different visiting teacher and it was easier for me to let someone in. I'm not sure that I ever could tell the bringer of treats how desperately I had needed them. I didn't really understand myself how much her faithfulness, and especially, her *deference* to my odd, shy wishes had meant. I am probably on the list of her least satisfying visiting teaching relationships ever.

And that's a little bit the point. It can be easy, I think, to serve based on our own intuitions of the right way to do things, or our sense of what someone *really* needs. And we might even be right—it's entirely possible that things would have gone better for me if I had gotten over myself and received my visiting teacher's wisdom along with her cookies. But being right is one of the things we have to give up if we want to lose ourselves, as Jesus taught, and find God's image in ourselves and our neighbors. When we undertake to minister to someone, we are asking them to be a rental Jesus for us—we are entreating them to let us serve them, in our bumbling ways, as we would serve the Lord if we were here. It's a pretty big ask. And if the people we are trying to serve are playing God for us, it makes sense to let them direct the scene!

This brings me, in a roundabout way, to a serious point about the Ministry of Silly Walks. That sketch works by subverting our ideas about power. A government ministry ought to be a place where people dress and speak in certain ways, act in the kind of formal way we associate

with power. And in the Ministry of Silly Walks, the people are dressed the way we expect, and they use the bureaucratic language we expect, but they act completely ridiculous, in ways that we associate with people we would never see as powerful or important.

In a way, this undoing of the hierarchy gets us closer to the origin of the word "minister": it's actually an old Latinate and French word that comes from the same root as "minus." The earliest use of "minister" as a verb meant "to serve at table"—ministers were just waiters. So maybe part of what the change from "home and visiting *teaching*" to "ministering" can do is to remind us that in the kingdom of God, the hierarchies by which we organize ourselves on earth will be upended.

If we want to know what the kingdom of God feels like—not just to imagine it, but to experience it now, in our bodies, we have to make ourselves vulnerable, share in the vulnerability of those we are called to love. Maybe this is easier for some of us than others—it's pretty easy for me to see that most of the things I'm good at and feel comfortable doing are not much good to anyone else. It's really rare for someone to need, for instance, a brief lecture on the Orientalist imagery in Heinrich von Kleist's short stories. But even if you *are* good at lots of useful things, it's in the nature of caring for other people that we often end up doing things that fall outside our comfort zones, and doing them for people who aren't at their best, either. A lot of times, when we really need someone's help and have been brave enough to admit it, part of what we think of as "ourselves" isn't working—maybe it's our body that temporarily isn't doing the jobs we expect it to because of illness or injury, maybe it's our mind and heart because we are struggling through depression or other mental illness, maybe it's our pride that is damaged by not having enough money to live with the dignity we're used to. There are all kinds of ways that we can be "not ourselves" when we are in need of help, *and* when we are called on to meet someone else's need. When it really works, maybe ministering *should* be uncomfortable, because we become unsure of who we

are, who's up and who's down, who is helping whom. God suddenly peers out at us from the eyes of our inconvenient, needy, and infinitely beloved neighbor.

One of my very favorite stories from Church history gets at this confusion of hierarchy and identity:

Joseph Millett was one of the ordinary heroes of the restoration of the Church. He served multiple missions which included miraculous prophecies (about whales!) and their fulfillment, he organized the Lowell, Massachusetts branch, and was called by Brigham Young to settle the Dixie Mission and the even less hospitable Spring Valley, Nevada. And yet it was not only in these acts of heroic devotion that he came to know God. An entry from his journal, at a time of great hardship and loss in his own family, suggests the quiet, dutiful ways in which we come to understand who we are and what God is like:

> One of my children came in, said that Brother Newton Hall's folks were out of bread. Had none that day. I put . . . our flour in sack to send up to Brother Hall's. Just then Brother Hall came in. Says I, "Brother Hall, how are you out for flour." "Brother Millett, we have none." "Well, Brother Hall, there is some in that sack. I have divided and was going to send it to you." . . . Brother Hall began to cry. Said he had tried others. Could not get any. Went to the cedars and prayed to the Lord and the Lord told him to go to Joseph Millett. "Well, Brother Hall, you needn't bring this back if the Lord sent you for it. You don't owe me for it." . . . You can't know how good it made me feel to know that the Lord knew that there was such a person as Joseph Millett.[2]

I believe with my whole heart that it is in the moments when we see our sisters and brothers standing before us saying, "Our Heavenly Parents sent me to you. They are counting on you," that we begin to know how the kingdom of God works. It is in our sisters' and brothers' eyes that we can begin to see our selves—and theirs—as God does, and

2. Diary of Joseph Millett, holograph, Archives of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Quoted by Boyd K. Packer, "A Tribute to the Rank and File of the Church," Apr. 1980, https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1980/04/a-tribute-to-the-rank-and-file-of-the-church?lang=eng.

know ourselves to be beloved. As we let go of our own feeble power and goodness, give up on doing things "right," and really listen to each other as we try to love better, it will be in the mouths of our brothers and sisters that we will hear—and feel—God's words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Rebecca Wagstaff
Branch & Remnant
oil on muslin on panel, 18x24, 2007

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Rebecca Wagstaff
Hidden Vessel with Bread
oil on panel, 30x24, 2005

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