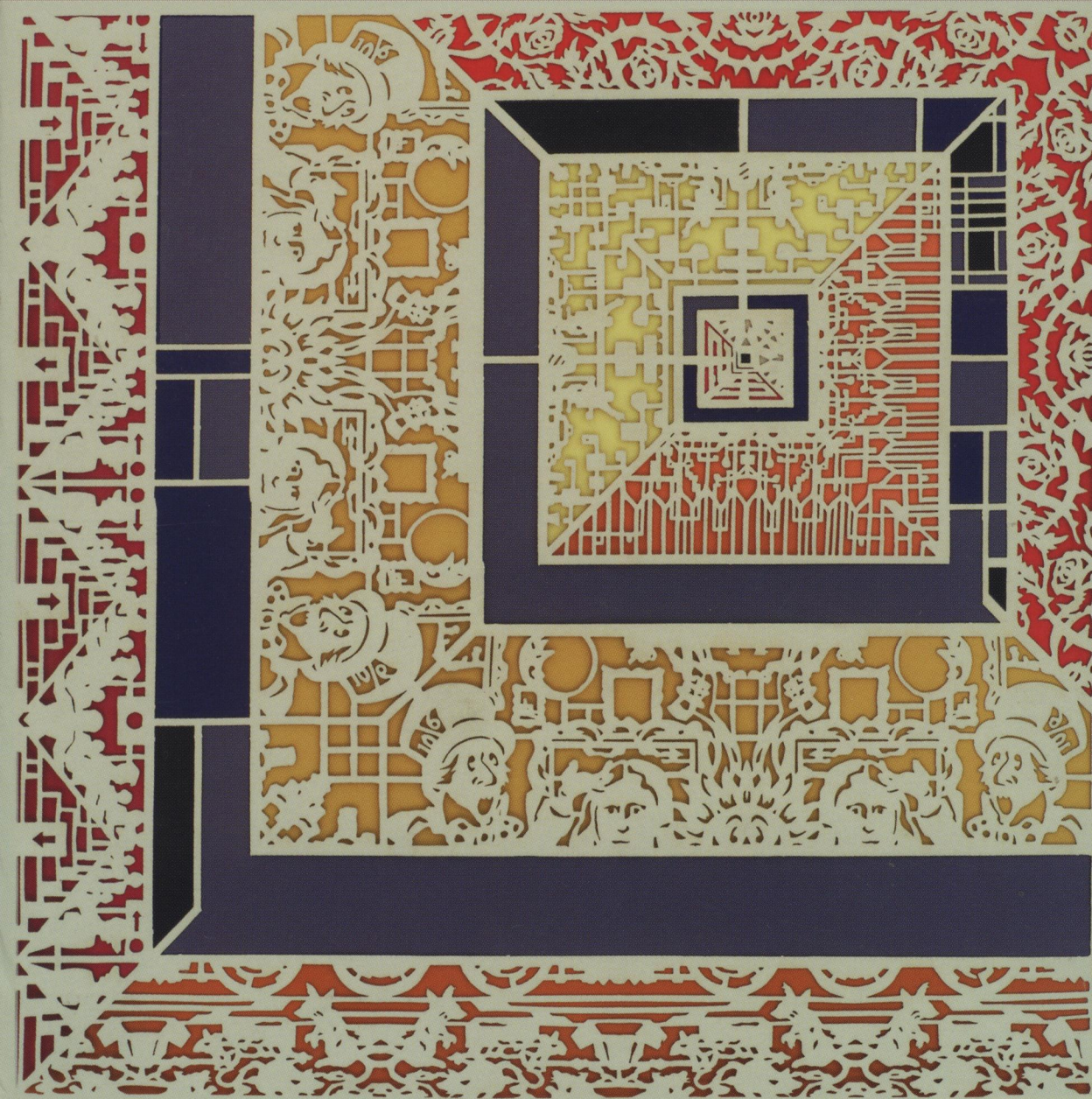


DIALOGUE

A Journal of Mormon Thought



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DIALOGUE

A Journal of Mormon Thought

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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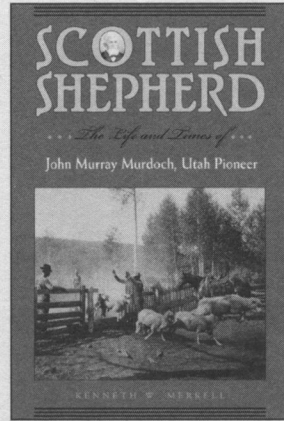
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Scottish Shepherd

The Life and Times of John Murray Murdoch, Utah Pioneer

Kenneth W. Merrell

John Murray Murdoch was an American immigrant. In Utah he participated in the military preparations and maneuvers against the United States Army in the 1857 Utah War; he helped to settle the Wasatch County area and became one of the first elected officials of the county; and he established the first sheep cooperative in Wasatch County, and helped to establish the sheep ranching industry in Utah. It is the "everyman" aspect of John Murdoch's life that makes his story so compelling.

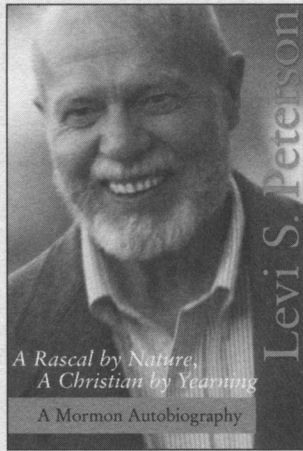


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"I will introduce myself with a few facts. I was born and raised in Snowflake, a Mormon town in northern Arizona. I have lived most of my adult life in the cities of the American West. Although I consider myself a religious person, I know very little about God. At first I intended this book to be about wilderness, but as I wrote it, it became an autobiography with many themes. Among these themes are wilderness, my vexed and vexing relationship with Mormonism, my moral and emotional qualities, and my family." So begins the autobiography of educator and author Levi S. Peterson.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Shall I Go or Shall I Stay?

Gail Turley Houston's essay, "My Belief" (38, no. 4 [Winter 2005]: 114-22) and Heidi Hart's story of leaving the Church ("Householding: A Quaker-Mormon Marriage," *ibid.*, 141-52) resonated with me on several levels. My wife and I have experienced many of the same epiphanies and feelings. But so far, at least, our journey has gone in a somewhat different direction.

We were both raised Catholic, but I had left organized religion and vacillated between agnosticism and atheism. But I am a very right-brained, "feeling" male, and those feelings always spoke to me of a God and a purpose to my life. Those feelings led me to join the LDS Church in 1978. So did my wife. We were both married to others at that time. It has been my observation that the majority of converts do tend to be the intuitive, right-brained types (more women than men join as converts) who allow their feelings to override any practical, logical obstacles they may face in choosing to be baptized. Nothing wrong with that.

Ironically, that may be precisely the reason that the Church does not retain more converts. Many spiritual, intuitive people find themselves smothered by the rules and procedures imposed on them by the left-brained, literal-minded, control-oriented male hierarchy that runs this church.

Eventually, I came to the conclusion that, as in all other churches, the flowing gowns and transcendent layers of eternal truths which were its genesis

have been replaced by the rigid "armor of God" with all the dogmatic stiffness and inflexibility that image evokes. I came to reject most of Mormon doctrine, favoring instead the view espoused by Joseph Campbell in *The Power of Myth*. Truth and the "keys" to salvation do not reside in any organization, but in our understanding of the divine. (Joseph Smith had that part right!) Our beliefs have evolved to the point where my wife and I believe we need go to no man or woman to be absolved of any offense. No man or woman, by virtue of having a title or office conferred upon him or her, has the authority, wisdom, or inspiration to tell us what we are or where we are or are not worthy to go, to do, or to participate in.

Neither can anyone tell us what we must or must not believe, whom we may or may not pray to, or whom anyone else may or may not intimately love. We place as much value on a blessing, message, prayer, or prophecy from a spiritual woman or man of any faith (or no faith) as from a man who just happens to hold the priesthood in this church.

I told our bishop all that and was threatened with a disciplinary council for "apostasy." "Hey, I'm not preaching this to anyone," I said, "and I have a right to my private beliefs." I quoted Joseph Smith. The stake president decided to leave me alone. Nevertheless, I was offended. We stopped attending.

We attended some Unity and Unitarian Universalist churches, which seem to have a theology somewhat

similar to Heidi's Quakers. We loved them with their tolerance for all, lack of rigid doctrine, spontaneous meetings, and openness for all beliefs.

I have some observations about the differences between those "right-brained" organizations and the Latter-day Saints. There is a complete difference in the gender dynamics. I can imagine how that must have resonated with someone like Heidi. Pastors were female. Most of the auxiliaries were headed by women. That was just fine with me. I needed a vacation from serving in bishoprics, high councils, branch presidencies (yes, I was all of those), etc. I was tired of feeling that I was not working hard enough. Great! Here the women do it all, and I can just sit back and enjoy their spirit! Inasmuch as I am a great admirer of women and their capabilities, I had no problem with that.

In every LDS branch or ward I have moved into, I was quickly given high callings and responsibilities. Here, it was my wife who was asked to serve on leadership committees and even to help conduct their meetings—not surprising, considering her intelligence, spirituality, and eloquence.

I will admit to some thoughts of "Hey, what about me?" But I can now understand what many highly competent LDS women must feel watching others (men) of lesser capabilities (not the case with my wife) called to the positions of authority and responsibility primarily because of their gender.

Their meetings were great, with folk singing, inspirational speakers from a variety of spiritual backgrounds, diversity, gays, transsexuals, etc. Very refreshing.

So why do we still retain LDS membership, remain active, tithe, and outwardly conform to the behavior expected of us? (Except for refusing to subject ourselves to temple recommend interviews, we do "behave" naturally like good Latter-day Saints.) I have been asked that question many times. Hidden beneath the suit of armor of Mormonism lie many great and profound eternal truths found in few other places. We are raising our four children in it (adding a healthy dose of "don't believe everything they tell you") because this is more than just a church or religion.

It is a culture and way of life much like what "Jewishness" is to non-practicing Jews. It is traditions, a system of values including integrity, education, and thinking ("the glory of God is intelligence"), a work ethic, service to others, family loyalty, and more. It contains some of the most wonderful people we have ever met, and it does more good in the world, "pound for pound," than any other organization we know of. In short, we love this danged church and the people in it, with all their warts and pimples, the occasional misogyny, and the pompous self-righteousness. We want to give our children the full "Mormon experience" so that they can come to their own decisions, at the appropriate time, about whether they choose to be a part of it.

I have seen many inactive families whose children cannot fairly evaluate the Church because it is so foreign to them that they do not feel comfortable around other Latter-day Saints. We want our children to be able to decide

for themselves, without recrimination or guilt, with a complete knowledge of all the positives that the Church has to offer as well as the negative aspects.

Mormonism gets in your blood. We stayed, in part, because we could see past the myths and into the deeper meanings in the teachings. Our good friends “loved” us back in. We also consider ourselves to have a “mission” to interject “commercials” when the opportunity presents itself (and we are often asked to give sacrament meeting talks without censorship) about the unconditional love of God (comments from General Authorities notwithstanding), tolerance for LGBTs, the oneness of all life, and the presence of God in everyone, regardless of their beliefs or lack thereof. I think we live in an exceptional branch, and the leadership knows in their hearts that we are right. Sometimes change works its way up from the bottom to the top.

In fact, I was asked to give a talk January 15, 2006, and based it on Frances Lee Menlove’s “The Road to Emmaus” (*Sunstone* 138, [September 2005]: 11–13). It was received fantastically well.

Lest anyone wonder, it was not just me, the male, who brought us back to LDS activity. I just wanted to visit our old ward once in awhile to see old friends. However, they quickly gave my wife a calling in Young Women, and our sixteen-year-old girls were fellowshipped mercilessly. They renewed friendships. We came again and again. Now one daughter wants to go to Brigham Young University and marry in the temple!

When I said to my wife, “Let’s go back to Unity or UU,” she responded,

“No way! I have to teach one of the girls’ classes, and you have to come because I’m not going to suffer through sacrament meeting alone. Look what you got us into by wanting to visit!”

So here we are. We have reached a pleasant sort of “truce.” We act like orthodox members and are treated (more or less) like that. We see the great good beneath (or above) the myths.

It’s not a bad life. The best part is that my wife and I share the marvelous experience of walking nearly lockstep down the same spiritual path. No coercion, no disputes. We just happen to be on nearly identical wave lengths. It adds such a dimension of love and closeness. Our hearts go out to couples who struggle with divergent paths.

Please do not use my name, for fear of embarrassing my children.

Name Withheld

Praise for Ford

Dialogue is of only passing interest to me. As the years have gone by, the predilection of writers for delving into vague concepts, always with a heavy dose of pedantry, has dulled my interest. But when an article comes along like the one by Clyde D. Ford on religious/philosophical doctrines at the time Joseph Smith did his work, it keeps my interest above water (“Lehi on the Great Issues: Book of Mormon Theology in Early Nineteenth Century Perspective” 38, No. 4 [Winter 2005]: 75–96).

I happen to be one who rejects the notion that Joseph Smith is the author

(or the sole author anyway), of the Book of Mormon. But I am also skeptical of “the Church’s” position (and, of course, it follows on Joseph Smith’s) regarding authorship, and I say this while conceding that, so far as I am aware, no credible explanation for a substantial portion of the book has emerged. Of course, this is a point cited endlessly by Church defenders as proof of the book’s authenticity.

In reading Dr. Ford’s excellent article, it struck me he was on one of the best tracks to scrutinize the concepts (including, of course, the theology) presented in the Book of Mormon. Thus, the expansion of his effort is something I would like to see him and/or others pursue. It would also be interesting to see someone compare the theology in ten or twelve of the doctrinally significant sections of the Doctrine and Covenants with then-extant theological premises.

John D. Rice
Cincinnati, Ohio

A Neutered Dialogue?

I have read and re-read Nathan Oman’s admonishment to *Dialogue*’s board of directors (“Open Letter to the *Dialogue* Board,” 38, no. 4 [Winter 2005]: 227) with interest, amusement, and even bewilderment.

Oman essentially asks the *Dialogue* board to save the journal by killing it.

Surely converting *Dialogue* into yet another venue that would pass muster with the Church’s correlation committee would put the journal in its grave. A plethora of publications promotes “codified” messages about the Church.

Dialogue’s purpose is not one of overt testimony building; but the manner in which *Dialogue*, *Sunstone*, and other intellectual inquiries are conducted within the safe haven of committed Mormonism rescues faltering testimonies.

Among other current responsibilities, I teach the Gospel Principles class for new converts. The Brethren have directed that Church classes, including Melchizedek Priesthood, Relief Society, and Gospel Doctrine are not appropriate forums for many of the questions and discussions that are addressed by *Sunstone* and *Dialogue*. When I teach or speak in church, I respect their authority and try not to stray from the Brethren’s desires.

However, the indisputable fact of the matter is that many Church members have both a spiritual and intellectual need to go beyond the simplified approach of our official lessons and to explore some issues beyond what is appropriate in Church-sponsored classes. It has been my experience that understanding a principle or matter intellectually strengthens my faith. Since the Brethren have made no room for intellectual study of the gospel in classes taught during the three-hour Sunday meeting block, there is an unfulfilled need that can be met only through such venues as *Dialogue*.

While I certainly hope that my testimony would have been strong enough to carry me through, I cannot in honesty state that it wouldn’t have failed somewhere along the way were it not for the good fortune of meeting and coming under the influence of

faithful intellectuals such as those who write and edit *Dialogue* and *Sunstone*.

To put it quite simply, Oman's suggestions would doom *Dialogue* as we know it, as we need it, and as we love it. Improvements can and should be made in *Dialogue*, but none of them are compatible with Oman's view of a neutered journal.

Oman's concern about the marginalization of *Dialogue* authors and readers would be better directed to those who foster negative perceptions of legitimate, faithful, intellectual inquiry.

Terence L. Day
Pullman, Washington

RESPONSES TO OMAN

Editor's note: The comments below by Jeremy Grimshaw and Kevin Barney, which also respond to Nathan Oman's "An Open Letter to the Dialogue Board," were posted on the Times & Seasons weblog (<http://www.timesandseasons.org/index.php?p=2510>) on August 11, 2005, and are published here with their permission.

More of a Novelty

I thought I'd weigh in, since I recently published in *Dialogue* ("Music of a 'More Exalted Sphere': The Sonic Cosmology of La Monte Young," 38, no. 1 [Spring 2005]: 1-35) while navigating the academic job market. Among the faculty at the institution where I was completing graduate studies, as well as at the schools where I interviewed, the Mormon-ness of my *Dialogue* article didn't seem to be a liability—more of a novelty, really. Most

scholars were surprised to learn of the relatively nascent field of Mormon studies and seemed rather intrigued by the idea.

Of course "the Mormon candidate" isn't a very compelling shtick in and of itself. I suspect that my *Dialogue* article complemented my other publications/papers in journals and venues directly related to my field (musicology) but wouldn't have carried much weight on its own. I got the impression that, in an academic climate in which "interdisciplinarity" is a buzzword, listing the *Dialogue* article among my publications demonstrated an ability to extricate my work from the shop talk of my field and present it to an alternate audience.

This may or may not speak broadly to the point Nathan raised about whether it is worth it for emerging scholars to go to the effort to publish in *Dialogue*. In my case, I adapted work I had published elsewhere, simplifying/laymanizing the more discipline-specific aspects on the one hand and, on the other, making the Mormon stuff more extensive and nuanced. In other words, I didn't have to do an entire article's worth of additional research; rather, I had to reformulate, repackage, and rewrite my work in order to speak to an audience ostensibly interested in the topic for entirely different reasons than fellow scholars in my field would be. So, in my case, it was definitely worth it to add another line to my publications list and, I suppose, add another interdisciplinary feather to my cap. However, if I hadn't already established a publication record in musicology jour-

nals and venues, it probably wouldn't have been wise to take time away from those areas.

Of course, I can't say the extent to which the *Dialogue* publication in and of itself influenced my eventual hire, but I did feel it added something unique to my resume and served to complement rather than detract from credentials more directly affiliated with my field.

One other point: I echo Jan Shipps, Harold Bloom, and others in wishing that more scholars of the arts and literature would explore Mormon culture. This is not just a personal academic preference. Since the particularities of artistic style are more broadly perceived as a matter of taste and less a matter of moral rightness or wrongness, discussions of Mormon cultural expression, I think, are less prone to divisive polarities like conservative/liberal or orthodox/heterodox, and thus less prone to perpetuating the problems Nathan observes in the pages of *Dialogue*.

Jeremy Grimshaw
Granville, Ohio

Three Times Published

I have subscribed to *Dialogue* since my first real post-college job when I could afford it (1985), and before that I would read the back issues in the Institute at the University of Illinois (back in the good old days when Institutes were allowed to subscribe) or in the UoI's graduate library, which had a full collection.

Although by most Mormon standards, I'm a flaming liberal, I suppose by *Dialogue* standards (and certainly by

Sunstone standards) I'm either a moderate or maybe even somewhat conservative (since I am indeed a believer).

I've published three articles in *Dialogue*: "Reflections on the Documentary Hypothesis," 33, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 57-99; "Joseph Smith's Emendation of the Hebrew Genesis 1:1," 30, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 103-35; and "The Joseph Smith Translation and Ancient Texts of the Bible," 19, no. 3 (Fall 1986): 85-102. The most recent one (on the documentary hypothesis) was one that the editors actively sought me out to write; it was not my idea. They wanted to get a believer's perspective on it, and they got one. I was pretty darned impressed that they went to the trouble and made the effort to get me to write it.

I also publish a lot with FARMS and am on the board of FAIR. So my participation in *Dialogue* may be a small sampling of what Nathan is hoping for. Admittedly I'm a lawyer, not an academic, so I don't have the pressures of tenure committees that so many here seem to be worried about.

I remember being somewhat shocked at the professional sacrifices Bob Rees made in order to edit the journal, for which he got basically no academic credit or support. In my naivete I had assumed that *Dialogue* was recognized as a journal of academic value.

I love the tone of the *Times & Seasons* weblog, and I think that if some of the participants here would start writing for *Dialogue*, it would make a significant difference. I know, for example, that *Times & Seasons* blogger Kristine Haglund Harris has recently

published in *Dialogue* (“Who Shall Sing If Not the Children?": Primary Songbooks, 1880–1989," 37, no. 4 [Winter 2004]: 90–127). It is certainly a trend that I would like to see continue and accelerate.

Yes, there have occasionally been critical articles, but they don't bother me as they seem to others. I have the capacity to let such things roll off my back, which perhaps explains why I am able to immerse myself in LDS apologetics and yet maintain both faith and a sense of equanimity about such things

I think getting the back issues online at the University of Utah was a very im-

portant development. Most people have no idea what treasures lurk in those back issues. I would highly recommend some browsing through the collection to get a sense of what's there. Having been a regular reader of *Dialogue* over the years has been of tremendous value in my apologetics work when I am called upon to answer some difficult question for a Church member who is struggling with some challenging faith issue.

Anyhow, I am a fan of *Dialogue* and wish it much success in the future.

Kevin Barney
Hoffman Estates, Illinois

The Prophet Elias Puzzle

Samuel Brown

Early Mormonism is notable for a proliferation of angels, scriptural luminaries who visited the Prophet Joseph Smith and his close associates.¹ These visitations not only established prophetic authority generally but were also often associated with specific innovations, rites, and doctrines. Thus, Moroni delivered the Book of Mormon, John the Baptist bestowed the lesser priesthood, and a triumvirate of Christian apostles granted the higher priesthood. Perhaps most important in this august pantheon is Elijah, the biblical patriarch who ascended living to heaven (was translated) as a reward for exemplary faithfulness. For early Mormons, Elijah shouldered a burdensome mission: to oversee LDS temple rites and integrate the human family into an organic whole, sealing up personal relationships against death.

This seemingly pluripotent Elijah is shadowed by a doppelganger in the angelic tumult of early Mormonism named Elias, the King James rendering of the Greek transliteration of the prophet's Hebrew name. This Elias, according to Joseph Smith, was present at Christ's transfiguration and its Kirtland Temple reenactment and plays an important if confusing role in Restoration events. Furthermore, Elias was distinct from Elijah, as Smith confirmed in his 1844 sermon: "[I] preached on the subject of the spirit of /Elias/ Elijah, and Messiah clearly defining the offices of the 3 personages."²

This paper explores the significance of this Elijah-Elias bifurcation, seen by critics as emblematic of Smith's imaginative if inaccurate appropriation of the biblical lexicon. Writers from within Mormonism have historically focused, with precedent in the Prophet's teachings, on a "Spirit of Elias" borne by various angelic ministrants while positing the existence of a minor but essentially unknown prophet actually named Elias who stays away from center stage.³ Later writers, exemplified by Bruce R. McConkie, have described these several instances of Elias in impressive

detail.⁴ These creative solutions have been a response to incredulous critics who see only a glaring error of transliteration made corporeal, a chink in the armor of Joseph Smith's seerhood.

To my eye the debate about whether Elias is a separate individual—indeterminate except by fiat or faith—misses a crucial point. Whatever their genesis, there can be little doubt that Joseph Smith saw Elijah and Elias as distinct entities. I believe that they both arise from Elijah, that Elias assumed the traits of the standard Christian Elijah, and that understanding the bifurcation sheds light on early Mormonism's approach to the conquest of death.

To this end, I will contextualize the prophet Elijah and attempt to solve the puzzle of Elias, investigating the linguistic evidence, exploring Joseph Smith's discussions of Elias, and providing a theoretical framework for the significance of the Elijah/Elias bifurcation.

I would like first to visit the linguistic argument in hopes of setting it aside. Joseph Smith has a long and intriguing history of inspired translation coupled with a fascination with ancient languages, ranging from his "Egyptian Alphabet" to his limited training in Hebrew, Greek, and German.⁵ There is also evidence of considerable philological creativity, along with a certain animated fastidiousness about getting biblical names just right.⁶

The problem in this instance is that the divine Hebrew suffix *-jah* is transliterated *-as* in Greek, a distinction fixed by the standard biblical translation of Joseph Smith's America. Whether Joseph Smith realized this is not entirely clear, but evidence suggests that he probably did. Textually, the clearest evidence is his approving quotation of a selection from Benjamin Winchester's *Gospel Reflector*, published in Philadelphia, in the *Times and Seasons*, the Church's official paper in Nauvoo, then being edited by Joseph Smith's brother, William. The article, a plug for the apocryphal books of Esdras, attempts to validate these extracanonical accounts by reminding readers that Esdras is, in fact, the familiar prophet Ezra. Winchester adduces further examples of the identity of name variants between "translations" from Greek and Hebrew texts: "The difference in the name, no doubt, arose from the different languages from which it was translated. . . . For instance, Isaiah, and Jeremiah in the Old Testament, are Esaias and Jeremias in the New."⁷

While this explanation suggests a self-taught linguist, it is basically correct. While it is possible that Joseph did not consider the linguistic

point carefully, such a view is by no means required. His failure to split Jeremias from Jeremiah—the tempting phrase in Matthew 16:14 notwithstanding—may argue for such awareness.⁸ In at least one instance, Joseph Smith clearly intends Elias as Elijah’s name, when he recounts the New Testament report (James 5:17–18) of 1 Kings 17:1 and 18:1.⁹ Oliver Cowdery agreed in an essay published in the *Times and Seasons* in 1840.¹⁰ In another New Testament reference, Joseph seems clear that Esaias was Isaiah.¹¹

The evidence is not uniform, however. In another setting Joseph Smith refers to Isaiah and Esaias separately in a list of Christian factions. This superfluous name may have been included to make a point: The use of various prophetic names as sectarian banners represents sinful disunity. Esaias in this interpretation would simply be a name among many others with no specific person standing behind it.¹² B. H. Roberts apparently tried to eliminate the duplication in his redaction of the revelation, though it has survived to the modern version of Doctrine and Covenants 76:100.¹³ Joseph Smith’s contention that Esaias was a contemporary of Abraham strongly suggests that his 1835 reference was more personal than rhetorical (D&C 84:13), making it difficult to adopt Roberts’s position. Finally, an abortive attempt on Joseph’s part to fit Alpha and Omega into male declensions suggests minor but inconsistent familiarity with New Testament Greek.¹⁴

Ultimately Joseph Smith was not governed by the rules that constrained philologists. A folk etymological response to detractors, attributed to Joseph Smith but likely penned by W. W. Phelps in 1833, suggests a remarkable freedom to control languages for the good of the kingdom. Phelps combined the English “more” with a perceived variant of an Egyptian root “mon” which he took to mean “good,” and from them generated the conclusion that “Mormon means more good.”¹⁵ Terryl Givens has discussed this etymology in terms of Bakhtin’s “authoritative discourse,” claiming that the idiosyncratic explication demonstrates that even the fabric of language could be modified by revelation.¹⁶ In the final analysis, we are left with this understanding of the bifurcation’s linguistic origins: Whatever Smith’s familiarity with biblical languages (or lack thereof), he revealed Elias and Elijah to his followers as separate entities.

Elijah Traditions

In the biblical account, Elijah, like Enoch and perhaps Moses, es-

aped death. This unique form of immortality bestowed special status which, coupled with his reanimation of a child (1 Kgs. 17:17–24), tied Elijah closely to the conquest of death in a variety of traditions. In addition to possible translation, biblical and extra-biblical authors saw several other parallels between Elijah and Moses, yielding a view of Elijah as a second Moses. In later Jewish tradition, Elijah was primarily associated with the Wandering Jew—another intriguing immortal—while the New Testament generally sees him as the harbinger of the coming Messiah with a millennial interpretation of Malachi’s prophecy of Elijah’s return (Mal. 4: 5–6).¹⁷

Several of these elements are present in two pseudepigraphical works (one Hebrew, one Coptic) called the *Apocalypse of Elijah*, which also emphasize Elijah’s capacity to raise the dead.¹⁸ In later Christianity, we find a tradition that places Elijah in a recapitulation of the Garden of Eden, close to Adam.¹⁹

For the occult hermeticists whose worldview was informed by the alchemist Paracelsus and the archetypal, if possibly pseudepigraphical, Hermes Trismegistus, Elias was an important figure, referred to specifically by this Greek name, apparently as a distinct incarnation of Elijah.²⁰ According to Paracelsus, “The Prophet Elias foretold many things by his cabalistic numbers.”²¹ Indeed, [at] the coming of Elias the Artist, . . . there shall be nothing so occult that it shall not be revealed.”²²

Closer to the Protestant mainstream, Jonathan Edwards spoke of Elias/Elijah as the immortal prophet, favoring one name over another for rhetorical rather than doctrinal reasons.²³ Many standard reference texts, including two owned by Joseph Smith, conflated Elijah/Elias with John the Baptist, who had come in Elijah’s “spirit and power.”²⁴ They are consistent with the simple sense of the New Testament (explicitly in Matthew 3:1–6 with parallels in Mark 1:1–6 and Luke 3:1–6) with clear support in Jesus’s preaching (Mark 9:11–13; Matt. 11:13–14; Matt. 17:10–13; Luke 1:17). The only exception to this identification is John 1:19–28 in which the Baptist rejects this association, an act that both Smith and contemporary Bible dictionaries saw as identifying Jesus with Elijah. These identifications were not seen as mutually exclusive.²⁵

Elias’s Visitations

Having established this context, we turn now to Joseph Smith’s reported encounter with Elias and his reports of two biblical visitations. On

the first Sunday after the March 1836 dedication of the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery sought wisdom in the new House of the Lord. Standing behind the veil of the temple, they reported a vision strongly reminiscent of Christ's transfiguration.²⁶

Elias appeared and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying, that in them and their seed all generations after them should be blessed. After this vision had closed, another great and glorious vision burst upon them, for Elijah the Prophet, who was taken to Heaven without tasting death, also stood before them, and said, "Behold the time has fully come which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi, testifying, that he should be sent before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come, to turn the hearts of the Fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse."²⁷

Joseph Smith had previously reported the presence of John the Baptist as Elias at the New Testament transfiguration in his inspired Bible revisions, though later authors have backtracked some.²⁸ His 1836 vision did not require the same identity.²⁹ During revisions of *Book of Commandments* 28, Joseph reported that Elias, as Gabriel-Noah, visited Zacharias and prophesied that his son John "should be filled with the spirit of Elias," a scene with parallels in the angelic announcement to Mary that she would conceive Jesus.³⁰

Though these are the chief recorded visitations of Elias, Joseph Smith and his followers identified Elias or his spirit with multiple individuals. The oldest and most persistent identification of Elias is the contemporary Christian one: John the Baptist. Joseph himself made clear associations between John the Baptist and Elias, his failure to mention Elias by name in the 1839 history draft notwithstanding.³¹ Regarding his receipt of the Aaronic Priesthood, Joseph reported: "An angel came down from heaven and laid his hands upon me and ordained me to the power of Elias and that authorized me to bap-tise [sic] with water unto repentance."³² In Joseph's gloss of Mark 9:3, the Elias present at Christ's transfiguration was identified as John the Baptist. This association with John dated to his birth, as evidenced by the visit of Gabriel-Noah.

The lesser-known Philip is said to have played a similar role.³³ Others who are identified as Elias at some point in Joseph Smith's writings include Jesus Christ,³⁴ Sidney Rigdon,³⁵ various unnamed prophets,³⁶ and John the Beloved (D&C 77:14). Parley P. Pratt saw Joseph Smith as an Elias with some precedent in the Prophet's own writings.³⁷ Later Orson F.

Whitney, in his epic poem *Elias*, adopted the term for Christianity as a religion (preparing the way for the restored gospel) and as Moroni (preparing the way for the Book of Mormon dispensation)—and even as the founding fathers in general.³⁸ B. H. Roberts proposed Shem and Melchizedek as candidates for Elias.³⁹ Though later writers have tended not to add additional candidates, the identities of Elias assume an impressive array of possibilities, and one current scholar has identified Elias as a spirit not unlike the Holy Ghost rather than simply a prophetic aegis.⁴⁰

The Spirit of Elias and the Gospel of Abraham

Though Joseph Smith's Elias assumes various identities, certain associations do predominate, including the Aaronic Priesthood, restoration and preparation generally, and the "gospel of Abraham." Elias had a clear and persistent role in early Mormonism: Marquardt's comment that the inclusion of Elias is a "scribal error" is clearly wrong.⁴¹

The primary source of information regarding the significance of Elias comes from a sermon Smith delivered shortly before his death, during a period of frenetic doctrinal and ritual developments.⁴² Delivered on the day of King Follett's burial but four weeks before the astounding sermon Smith gave as his funeral oration for Follett, the Elias/Elijah sermon was, according to Wilford Woodruff, "one of the most important & interesting subjects ever presented to the saints."⁴³ According to the newspaper report of the March 10, 1844, gathering, the audience "listened with an almost breathless silence; their minds apparently being completely absorbed with the subject, while with a rapturous delight they heard so exquisite a dissertation upon these important principles."⁴⁴ This sermon superseded a prior speculative editorial published in the *Times and Seasons*.⁴⁵

Joseph Smith very clearly states that anyone who has a preparatory mission (particularly that limited to the Christian rite of baptism) partakes of the spirit of Elias. For the Latter-day Saints, "Elias is a fore runner to prepare the way," and the "doctrin of Elias" was sending a man to "prepare for a greater work."⁴⁶ Elias was "a going before to prepare the way for the greater."⁴⁷ Indeed as we noted, an Elias was his own harbinger, thus connecting a Mormon Elias (Gabriel-Noah) with his Christian counterpart (John).

It is not surprising that Elias is also identified with a preparatory priesthood. This overlap of Elias and the Aaronic Priesthood seems to be more than just an identification with John the Baptist, the messenger who

delivered that priesthood to Joseph Smith. Joseph specified that “the Priesthood of Elias [is] the Priesthood that Aaron was ordained unto.”⁴⁸ This introductory priesthood, invoked as Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery explored the contours of the Christian church and the basic rites of believing, included baptism, the act of Christian salvation so important to Joseph that he wept uncontrollably when his father finally received it.⁴⁹ This priesthood, like the very idea of Elias as harbinger, would have been familiar to many Christians.

The gospel of Abraham, represented by Elias in the Kirtland visitation, is less certain of definition. George Q. Cannon taught that it referred to “the promises that were made to Abraham.”⁵⁰ D. Michael Quinn maintains that it represents the authorization of the office of patriarch, following Roberts’s discussion and with some precedent in Church organization. While there is some overlap between the two, such a view is unnecessarily limited in scope.⁵¹ I believe that Bruce R. McConkie has, on the other hand, overstated Abraham’s significance by attempting to include in his purview the act of temple marriage, of which the major significance is more closely associated with Elijah.⁵² While Joseph Smith was translating the Abraham papyri at the time, thereby disclosing a mystical cosmogony, the Kirtland reference to the gospel of Abraham does not appear to be specifically tied to the papyri.

Abraham’s promise was that his offspring would be numberless and that his name would be used as a blessing, presumably by token of the righteous progeny who would immortalize his name.⁵³ Joseph Smith’s report of the 1836 vision supports this view in its contemporary Christian interpretation: “In them [Smith and Cowdery] and their seed all generations after them should be blessed.”⁵⁴ Smith also later included the hope that Abraham’s blessing could save his offspring.⁵⁵

As the archetypal patriarch, Abraham promised to his charges a reproductive immortality.⁵⁶ Joseph Jr.’s choice of his own father as the first Church patriarch confirms the understanding of Abraham as *pater familias*. Joseph Sr. was the “father” to the multitudes of Latter-day Saints who accepted his son as their prophet. In this sense, the office of patriarch was in fact subsumed within a gospel of Abraham.

Ultimately, though, this promise of blessed offspring is unidirectional, descending rather than ascending the family tree. Abraham’s promise applied to his children; his gospel did not look back to his own

progenitors.⁵⁷ As we shall see, Elijah would outdo Abraham by promising and enabling continuity with both progeny and progenitor.

Joseph Smith's Elias, even with these Abramic overtones, was a familiar figure to antebellum Americans. His basic priesthood, his anticipation of the millennium, and his association with baptism are all consistent with the contemporary Christian view of Elijah. Abraham's promise was fundamentally the blessing of a righteous kindred, a common hope and idiom. In an important sense Elias (with Abraham in this particular setting) represents, to a rough approximation, the Protestant Elijah, and this identity made possible Joseph Smith's revelation of a new and startling vision of Elijah.

The Spirit of Elijah and the Priesthood of Melchizedek

Where Elias fit well in the Christian mainstream, Elijah betokened a grander theology. Where Elias was Aaronic, Elijah was Melchizedek; where Elias baptized, Elijah sealed. Where Elias was preparatory, Elijah was definitive. According to the Prophet's 1844 sermon, the "office & work of Elijah . . . is one of the greatest & most important subjects that God has revealed."⁵⁸

The association with Melchizedek and his priesthood is a natural counterpoint to Elias's identity with the Aaronic Priesthood.⁵⁹ Just as the baptizing authority defers to the higher priesthood (with its gift of the Holy Ghost), believers ascend the priesthood scale as Elias gives way to Elijah. In Joseph Smith's words this "shows the distinction between the two powers" of Elias and Elijah.⁶⁰ While the Aaronic is a priesthood of "outward ordinances," the Melchizedek represents "the privilege of receiving of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven."⁶¹ According to Joseph, "the spirit power & Calling of Elijah is that ye have power to hold the keys of the revelations ordinances, oracles powers & endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood."⁶²

While the Aaronic Priesthood filled the Church, the Melchizedek filled the temple, Elijah's sacred venue. In Joseph's words, "the spirit & power of Elijah is to come after [Elias] holding the keys of power building the Temple to the cap stone placing the seals of the Melchizedek priesthood up on the house of Israel." Elijah's association with the temple is explicitly to unite the generations of the human family. "This is the spirit of Elijah," Wilford Woodruff recorded Joseph as saying, "that we redeem our dead & connect ourselves with our fathers which are in heaven & seal

up our dead to come forth in the first resurrection & here we want the power of Elijah to seal those who dwell on earth to those which dwell in heaven.”⁶³

There are two senses in which Elijah could seal, one personal, the other familial. The promise of one’s own salvation was an elusive and paradoxical goal in American Protestantism. A Puritan legacy left the dying believer uncertain of salvation even on his deathbed—to know heaven before the judgment was to commit the sin of pride. Smith rejected the uncertainty of Puritan salvation in explicit terms during his 1844 sermon: “Here is the doctrin of Election that the world have quarreled so much about but they do not know any thing about it.” His solution to the uncertainty was the prophet of the Mormon temple: “Elijah is sufficient to make our Calling & Election sure.” After this pronouncement, Joseph devotes some energy to fleshing out the details of this salvational surety: the nature of sin after sealing; the temporary hell for Elijah’s sealed; and the problem of David, Jesus’s fallen ancestor.⁶⁴ The message is clear: Joseph’s Elijah had the power to promise heaven to the faithful Saint.⁶⁵

But sealing the righteous individual to an isolated salvation was insufficient for a prophet who pled, “Let me be resurrected with the Saints, whether to heaven or hell or any other good place. . . . What do we care if the society is good.”⁶⁶ We must not forget that the Puritan heaven, hard enough for a believer to achieve individually, could never reliably accommodate a family whole. The doctrine of election required that parents admit their uncertainty about whether their children would be saved at all.⁶⁷ Even if they were exalted, their bonds would be attenuated at best in the presence of the all-encompassing God.⁶⁸ Attachments to family and friends were subsumed by an overall disavowal of so-called *avaritia* (ultimately the deadly sin of avarice, but initially simply a significant attachment to possessions and companions in the present world) since at least medieval Christianity, transmitted through Puritanism.⁶⁹ Though occasionally tempted by the pain of bereavement, Joseph would ultimately reject the traditional fear of attachment: The faithful could not be saved without their loved ones.⁷⁰ In playful language, modulated in the official report, Joseph emphasized the capacity of Elijah to seal earthly attachments against the erosive force of mortality and the Protestant afterlife:

If you have power to seal on earth & in heaven then we should be crafty. The first thing you do go & seal on earth your sons & daughters

unto yourself & yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory & go ahead and not go back but use a little Craftiness & seal all you can & when you get to heaven tell your father that what you seal on earth should be sealed in heaven. I will walk through the gate of heaven and Claim what I seal & those that follow me & my Council.⁷¹

Not only did Elijah promise believers salvation as intact families, but the immortal prophet also promised to place those nuclear families in an endless, organic network of eternal beings. Where Elias's gospel of Abraham moved forward in time, prophesying righteous progeny, the gospel of Elijah reified relationships connecting the faithful to their first parents. In analogy with the King Follett sermon that would shortly follow, Elias could reveal that there was no end to the family, while Elijah could promise no beginning, the true mark of eternity according to the Prophet.⁷² In George Laub's paraphrase of Joseph's preaching, the Saints would perform Elijah's ordinances "till they are connected to the ones in the dispensation before us" with implicit extension through Adam to Jesus.⁷³ We thus see Elijah's influence in the vicarious rites for the dead, celestial marriage, and the resultant connection of every righteous soul with every other in an eternal and miraculous network.⁷⁴

While the subject is larger than this article, the Elijah of the afterlife differed radically from the horizontal community of the blessed in traditional Christianity.⁷⁵ Elijah was the steward of a hierarchical schema capable of uniting the vast concourses of the righteous dead into a simultaneous genealogical coherence, perhaps a muffled echo of the sentiment underlying the great chain of being.⁷⁶ The Mormon Elijah, far more than his Christian counterpart, had the capacity to defang the Puritan doctrine of mortality, thereby vanquishing death. While Elias could prepare a people for the coming of the Lord, Elijah could deliver to them a glorious and integrated afterlife.

Conclusion

In his receipt of wisdom at the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith demonstrated to the world that he meant to take the religion he was founding from the realm of American Christianity to the luminous and frightening world of the Old Testament patriarchs, and in so doing he sought to distill from the figure of Elijah two separate missions, both of which were hinted at in Malachi's prophecy. Joseph was no simple millenarian primitivist; the Christian Elijah would have sufficed for those needs. A second figure was required to distinguish the simple wait for the return of the Lord, held

in common with much of Christendom, from the dramatic new world vision that Smith was unfolding—generations of godlike humans eternally integrated into a single hierarchical family.

What to others was an issue of minor rhetorical significance was to Joseph Smith the clue to the retrieval of Elijah's miraculous and mystical role. Even if the name Elias had been rejected for its philological ambivalence, another would have been chosen to serve as the prefatory prophet, a way to preserve and highlight Elijah as the guiding angel of the Mormon conquest of death.⁷⁷

In a sense this dichotomy between Elias and Elijah speaks to the fault line of early Mormonism, racked by dissension and schism in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois. Elias was the familiar figure who animated millenarian Christians to prepare for Christ's return. This was the prophet of David Whitmer and William Law, of Emma Hale and Lucy Mack Smith. But Elias was just the beginning. Elijah drew the Church of the Latter-day Saints from antebellum Protestantism beyond the second coming into the creation of a new world beyond death.

Notes

1. The most convenient list of the major visitors is in H. Donl Peterson, "Moroni: Joseph Smith's Teacher," in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint History: New York*, edited by Larry C. Porter, Milton V. Backman, Jr., and Susan Easton Black (Provo, Utah: BYU Department of Church History and Doctrine, 1992), 65. For a longer treatment, see Alexander Baugh, "Parting the Veil: Joseph Smith's Seventy-six Documented Visionary Experiences," in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, edited by John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2005), 265–306.

2. Scott Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 458. "Elias" was written above the line in the holograph record.

3. It is not clear what is meant by maintaining a distinction that does not actually exist in Hebrew in reference to an ostensibly Hebrew name. If this prophet did exist as a distinct human individual, his name would likely also be Elijah rather than its Greek transliteration. There are certainly other known Elijahs in the Old Testament (1 Chron. 8:27; Ezra 10:21, 26; Judith 8:1), though none of them is an obvious candidate. See Siegfried Johnson, "Elijah, 2–4," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 2:466.

4. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 219–22. See also George Horton, "Elias," and James Hudson, "Elias, Spirit of," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York, Macmillan, 1992),

2:449. Orson Whitney seems to offer the most straightforward discussion: "Elias and Jeremias are Greek forms of the Hebrew names Elijah and Jeremiah. Joseph Smith, however, drew a distinction between the spirit of Elias and the spirit of Elijah." Whitney, *Elias: An Epic of the Ages* (Salt Lake City, n.d.) in *LDS Collectors Library 2005*, CD-ROM (Salt Lake City: Infobase Media Corporation, 2004), 36, note to Canto 4, line 973.

5. Louis Zucker, "Joseph Smith as a Student of Hebrew," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 41–55. See also Richard Lyman Bushman with Jed Woodworth, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 484.

6. This explains Smith's rejection of "James" instead of "Jacob" in the King James translation or "Shalom" over "Salem." See Stan Larson, "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 202; Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 409.

7. "From the Gospel Reflector. The Beauty of the Writings of the Prophet Esdras," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 17 (July 1, 1841): 464.

8. I've been unable to find any examples of Jeremias being proposed as a distinct personage in my research or in searches of the publications on the CD-ROMs *New Mormon Studies: A Comprehensive Resources Library* (Salt Lake City: Smith Research Associates, 1998) and the *LDS Collectors Library, 2005* (Salt Lake City: Infobase Media Corporation, 2004).

9. Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 48, entry for November 6, 1835.

10. Oliver Cowdery, "Rise of the Church, Letter II," *Times and Seasons* 2, no. 2 (November 15, 1840): 212.

11. Dean Jessee, ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 381. Smith is quoting Matthew 13:14 which is a paraphrase of Isaiah 6:9.

12. D&C 1835 edition, Section 91:7.

13. B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), 1:385–86, *LDS Collectors Library*, CD-ROM, 2005.

14. H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 240.

15. Joseph Smith, "To the Editor of the Times and Seasons," *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 13 (May 15, 1843): 194. For Roberts's discussion of authorship, see Truman Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 291–92.

16. Terryl Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 81.

17. Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: The Art of Dying* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 164–65; and Jerome Walsh, "Elijah," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 2:463–66.

18. Orval Wintermute, "Apocalypse of Elijah," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 2:466–69.

19. C. H. Grandgent, "Cato and Elijah: A Study in Dante," *PMLA* 17, no. 1 (1902): 78.

20. John Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 15, 19. I see nothing in Smith's Elijah bifurcation to support a hermetic reading of this specific aspect of Smith's worldview except in the general sense in which both were concerned with death. As I argue below, Elias's main role was to liberate Elijah for his mystical roles, not as a gnostic/perfectionist borrowing. Brooke (221) has misapprehended Elias/Elijah in Mormonism.

21. *Paracelsus His Aurora, & Treasure of the Philosophers . . .* (London: J. H. Oxon, 1659), chap. 1, <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/paracel3.html> (accessed March 24, 2004).

22. *Paracelsus His Archidoxis: Comprised in Ten Books, Disclosing the Genuine Way of making Quintessences, Arcanums, Magisteries, Elixirs . . .* (London: J. H. Oxon, 1660), chap. 4, <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/paracel2.html> (accessed March 24, 2004).

23. Edward Hickman, ed., *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Vol. 2, Sermon III, <http://www.ccel.org/> (accessed March 24, 2004).

24. John Wesley, *Notes on the New Testament*, Commentary on Matt. 3:4, and Wesley, *Notes on the Old Testament*, Commentary on Malachi 4:5, and Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 2 Kings 1:7-8, <http://www.ccel.org/> (accessed September 8, 2005). See also John Brown, *A Dictionary of the Holy Bible*, 2d American ed., 2 vols. (Pittsburg [no state designated]: Zadok Cramer, 1807), 1:448–49, and James Wood, *A Dictionary of the Holy Bible* (New York: Griffin and Rudd, 1813), 401–2; both on microfilm, Widener Library, Harvard University. These British sources were American staples at the time. See also Thomas Horne, *Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, 4th ed., 4 vols. (Philadelphia: E. Littell, 1825), 1:627, which clearly identifies John the Baptist as "appear[ing] in the spirit and power of Elijah." Smith owned a copy of Brown's *Dictionary*, according to Kenneth W. Godfrey, "A Note on the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute," *BYU Studies* 14 (Spring 1974): 386–89; and Horne's *Introduction*. Smith's signed copy of Horne's *Introduction* is in the Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

25. Brown, *A Dictionary of the Holy Bible*, 449; Wood, *A Dictionary of the Holy Bible*, 402, both describe Jesus as the "antitype" of Elijah.

26. Bushman, *Joseph Smith*, 319–21. I suspect that the timing was more associated with the anniversary of the Church's founding and the dedication of the Kirtland Temple than the overlap with the Passover season specifically, despite the tantalizing association with Elijah's role in the seder. For the opposite view,

see Stephen D. Ricks, "The Appearance of Elijah and Moses in the Kirtland Temple and the Jewish Passover," *BYU Studies* 23, no. 4 (1983): 483–86.

27. Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 158. See D&C 110:12–16.

28. Thus, the "Bible Dictionary" of the LDS edition (1979) of the King James Bible (p. 663), reports, "The curious wording of JST Mark 9:3 does not imply that the Elias at the Transfiguration was John the Baptist, but that in addition to Elijah the prophet, John the Baptist was present."

29. Indeed, Joseph Fielding Smith has claimed that it was Noah. *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 3:138–41.

30. Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations*, 72; D&C 27:6–7.

31. "Joseph Smith History, 1839," in Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996-2003), 1:75.

32. "James Burgess Notebook, March 10, 1844," in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:188. See James Burgess Notebook, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Franklin D. Richards, "Scriptural Items," stated that the angel reportedly said, "this . . . is the Spirit of Elias," emphasis his.

33. Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev. (6 vols. 1902–12, Vol. 7 reprinted 1932, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1971 printing), 6:250.

34. The Joseph Smith Translation (JST) of John 1:28 has John the Baptist clearly identify Elias as the Savior "whose shoe's latchet" he is "not worthy to unloose."

35. Rigdon was sent forth "as John before Elijah." Bruce N. Westergren, ed., *From Historian to Dissident: The Book of John Whitmer* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 5; this revelation ultimately became D&C 35:3–4.

36. Andrew Ehat and Lyndon Cook, eds., *Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 2d ed. rev. and first electronic version, *LDS Collector's Library 2005*, 9–10.

37. It seems possible that Smith was meant to be the "Elias to restore all things," clearly distinguished from both Jesus and John the Baptist in the JST (John 1:26; Matt 17:9–14). See also Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations*, 77. There is precedent for LDS scripture referring prophetically to its author. Pratt makes the association of Smith with Elias explicit in his *Key to the Science of Theology* (Liverpool: L.D. Saint Depot, 1855), 79–81, scanned PDF of the first edition available from the online collection, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, print-out in my possession.

38. Whitney, *Elias*, 36 (footnote to Canto 4, line 1,008) and 45, 115 ("Epilogue," line 6,067).

39. B. H. Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1994), 436–37.

40. Stevan Davies, "But I Say unto You, Who Is Elias?" paper presented at a seminar, "Joseph Smith and the Origins of Mormonism," Summer 2005, Brigham Young University, electronic version in my possession.

41. Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations*, 280. The specific context is Elias's Kirtland visitation.

42. *History of the Church*, 6:250 is the official version, drawn from Woodruff's transcript. See Scott Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, typescript, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-85), 2:359-65.

43. *Woodruff Journal* 2:359.

44. "Our City, and the Present Aspect of Affairs," *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 6 (March 15, 1844): 472.

45. "The Elias," *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 8 (March 1, 1843): 120-23. This unattributed article refers to Joseph Smith in the third person and was likely written by the editor, John Taylor. This article explores the relationship between John the Baptist and Elias but does little to clarify the relationship between Elijah and Elias, beyond a nod toward the contemporary Christian identity of the two.

46. *Woodruff Journal* 2:360, 365.

47. *Ibid.*, 2:359.

48. *Ibid.*, 2:360.

49. Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 477.

50. George Q. Cannon, "Beware Lest Ye Fall," 1896, in Brian H. Stuy, comp. and ed., *Collected Discourses Delivered by Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others, 1886-1889*, 5 vols. (Burbank, Calif.: BHS Publishing, 1987-92), 5:82.

51. D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 32; Roberts, *The Truth, the Way, the Life*, 546.

52. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 219.

53. James Kugel, *The God of Old: Inside the Lost World of the Bible* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 38. While nineteenth-century Christians misinterpreted the Hebrew slightly, the distinction is of little significance. The key concept is a plentiful offspring that would vouchsafe genealogical immortality.

54. Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 158.

55. "This is why Abraham blessed his posterity: He wanted to bring them into the presence of God." Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 9-10. Smith preached this sermon sometime before August 8, 1839.

56. That the "bosom of Abraham" was a common trope for the blessed afterlife is not irrelevant. See Luke 16:22-3 and Fred Collier and William Harwell, eds., *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, 2d ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing Company, 2002), 126.

57. Though the patriarchal blessings given under his aegis ultimately did

look back by assigning an Israelite ancestor to essentially every supplicant, this practice came somewhat later and arguably partakes rather more of Elijah than Elias. Douglas Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2000), 205–7, has correctly associated the patriarchal blessings with death conquest.

58. *Woodruff Journal* 2:362.

59. Reuben Miller, however close to events, has misunderstood the relationship between Melchizedek Priesthood and Elijah. See his 1846 anti-Strang pamphlet reprinted in Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 255.

60. *Woodruff Journal* 2:360.

61. Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations*, 268; D&C 107:14, 19.

62. Quoted in *Woodruff Journal* 2:361.

63. *Ibid.*, 2:362, 365.

64. *Ibid.*, 2:363–64. Joseph's mention of a sure election is likely a reference to the higher ordinances of the temple. See Devery S. Anderson, "The Anointed Quorum in Nauvoo, 1842–45," *Journal of Mormon History* 29 (Fall 2003): 137–57; and David John Buerger, "'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.

65. On the concept of individual sealing, see particularly Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 20–22.

66. Faulring, *An American Prophet's Record*, 398. See also *ibid.*, 366.

67. David Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study of Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 52, 60.

68. Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History*, 2d ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), 92, 258.

69. On *avaritia* in Christianity, see Philippe Aries, *The Hour of Our Death* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 130–31, 308–9. For the same concept in American Puritanism, see Philip J. Greven, *The Protestant Temperament* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 30–31, 34.

70. See particularly his eulogy at Ephraim Marks's funeral, *Woodruff Journal* 2:168, printed in edited form in *History of the Church*, 4:587. M. Guy Bishop, "Celestial Family: Early Mormon Thought on Life and Death, 1830–1846" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, 1981), 102, does not sufficiently appreciate the complex interplay of these variant visions of sealing.

71. *Woodruff Journal* 2:364. The official account in *History of the Church*, 6:253 substitutes "wise" for "crafty." While "crafty" had both positive and negative connotations then as now, I suspect that Smith intended that term for rhetorical effect. His emphasis in the sermon—a clear attack on traditional Christian

teachings—is to claim that Elijah could enable the persistence of mortal ties in the afterlife.

72. Larson, “The King Follett Discourse,” 204. This notion is quite clearly present in Heber C. Kimball’s anointing: “Thou shalt have Power to redeem thy progenitors & thou shalt have power over thy Posterity & shall Save all of them.” Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–1846: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), 376.

73. Eugene England, ed., “George Laub’s Nauvoo Journal,” *BYU Studies* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1978): 174.

74. Don Carlos Smith, in a letter to his wife, Agnes, wrote of “Elijah’s God” in connection with his eternal affection for her, although the July 25, 1839, letter was written before the formal revelation on celestial marriage. Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 766.

75. McDannell and Lang, *Heaven*, 58, 155, 258.

76. The best summary of this idea is Elijah Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948). See also Herbert Leventhal, *In the Shadow of the Enlightenment* (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 3, 62–63, 267–68. Orson Hyde’s schematic “Diagram of the Kingdom of God,” *Millennial Star* 9 (January 15, 1847): 23, is perhaps the simplest visualization of this non-horizontal celestial community of the Saints. In Joseph’s view, exalted humans rather than supra-human celestial agents populated the upper reaches of the chain of being. I pursue this topic further in “Joseph Smith’s Conquest of Death: Sacerdotal Genealogy and the Chain of Being,” paper scheduled to be presented at the annual meeting of the American Academic of Religion, November 2006.

77. Douglas Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, 145, has misapprehended the role of Elijah in his otherwise thoughtful and compelling study of “death transcendence” in Mormonism.

“To Set in Order the House of God”: The Search for the Elusive “One Mighty and Strong”

Bill Shepard

When Orson Pratt, apostle and LDS Church historian, revised the Doctrine and Covenants in 1876 at the direction of Brigham Young, he included Section 85 among some twenty-five other new sections. Section 85 is a portion of a letter written by the Prophet Joseph Smith at Kirtland, Ohio, on November 27, 1832. Presumably dictated by Joseph Smith to his scribe Frederick G. Williams, the letter was mailed to William Wine Phelps, a leading high priest and editor of the Missouri church’s newspaper the *Evening and the Morning Star*. It contained information concerning the efforts of Bishop Edward Partridge to implement the law of consecration amidst grumbling and disorder on the part of the Saints gathered there.

Phelps, in turn, printed a lengthy excerpt from the letter in the *Evening and the Morning Star* under the heading “Let Every Man Learn His Duty,” without any context or editorial commentary, thus implying that this message was designated for the Saints in Zion at that time.¹ The complete letter was printed in the *Times and Seasons* in October 1844 and the *Millennial Star* in June 1852, both times without explanation. The letter ended with: “I have obtained ten subscribers for the Star, &c. Love for all the brethren. Yours in bonds, Amen. Joseph Smith, jun.”²

It is not known why Orson Pratt determined that portions of Joseph Smith’s letter to Phelps should be canonized by placement in the LDS Doctrine and Covenants. It is doubtful, however, that he realized that a few verses from the letter, those referring to “one mighty and strong,” would become a divisive issue in his church. These verses read:

Yea, thus saith the still small voice, which whispereth through and pierceth all things, and often times it makes my bones to quake while it maketh manifest, saying:

And it shall come to pass, that I, the Lord God, will send one mighty and strong, holding the scepter of power in his hand, clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words; while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth, to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot, the inheritances of the saints whose names are found, and the names of their fathers, and of their children, enrolled in the book of the law of God;

While that man, who was called of God and appointed, that putteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God, shall fall by the shaft of death, like as a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning. (D&C 85:6-8)

Strangely, the “one mighty and strong” who would “set in order the house of God” is not identified, nor is it revealed when he would perform this wonderful work, what “set in order” means, and the criteria for determining if the “setting in order” has been completed. The assertion that this individual will hold “the scepter of power in his hand” and that he will be “clothed with light for a covering” only add to speculation about the meaning of these verses. The issue is further confused by the statement that this person will die while attempting to “steady the ark of God.” Finally, the verses can be interpreted as referring to two individuals: (1) one mighty and strong and (2) the man who is called of God and appointed to steady the ark of God.³

The foregoing ambiguities have invited private interpretations by dissenters among the branches into which Mormonism has been divided since the death of Joseph Smith, particularly the two chief branches, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS/Community of Christ). This article examines the relationship between these two traditions and the persons who claim to be or are thought by others to be the one mighty and strong who will set a supposedly errant church in order.

In the LDS tradition, those claiming to be or to know the one mighty and strong tend to be fundamentalists, persons who believe the Church went wrong by abandoning polygamy or other important doctrines. A key element of this struggle is the failed attempt by the 1905 First Presidency to give a definitive interpretation which would quash speculation among both the faithful and dissenters about the identity and duties of the one mighty and strong. The inability of LDS scholars to agree about

the identity of the one mighty and strong and their diverse teachings about when and where the mission will take place emphasize the complexity of this topic. Diversity is also the keyword among fundamentalist claimants to this title, for they differ widely in their beliefs about this fabled individual. Although the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints did not canonize any part of the November 27, 1832, letter from the Prophet to Phelps, some missionaries taught that Joseph Smith III was the one mighty and strong. Smith did not confirm or deny this interpretation until after 1900 when the Church essentially agreed that the verses referring to the one mighty and strong best described the future mission of Jesus Christ. By 1905 Smith was telling inquirers he did not claim to be the one mighty and strong, and speculation on this point diminished. As we shall see later, it is one of the ironies of Mormon history that RLDS fundamentalists⁴ of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints currently believe that their president and prophet, Frederick Niels Larsen, is the one mighty and strong.

The One Mighty and Strong in the LDS Tradition

Interestingly, William W. Phelps,⁵ the Church official who received the 1832 letter from Joseph Smith and who should have been the best qualified to give the correct interpretation, wrote a complicated explanation to Brigham Young on May 6, 1861. After quoting the verses in question, Phelps, possibly wanting to foster Young's good will by agreeing that Adam was God, explained: "Now this revelation was sent to me in Zion, and his [Joseph Smith's] reference to the time when Adam, our father & God, comes at the beginning of our Eternal Lot of inheritance.—according as our names are found in the law of the Lord, while the fools that received the priesthood, like the fool that took his 'one talent' and hid it, or reached out to steady the ark, will find themselves where the rich man did—in hell, with plenty of fire, but no water." ⁶

As the LDS Church distanced itself from previously acceptable practices and doctrines such as polygamy, the Adam-God doctrine, and the law of consecration, conservative schismatic elements did their best to maintain these and other fundamental beliefs as tenets of their faith. Fundamentalists, as they are now called among the Latter-day Saints, generally believed that John Taylor was the last prophet who was acceptable to God.⁷ It should be noted, however, that George Q. Cannon, speaking at Tooele, Utah, on October 29, 1882, suggested that a considerable level of

dissent was already present in the Church during Taylor's presidency. Cannon, a member of the First Presidency and a territorial representative to the U.S. Congress, explained that, since his recent return to Utah from Washington,

I have heard more of new prophets and revelators, and their revelations, than I have heard of for several years. I do not know how many prophets I have heard of who have arisen; I do not know how many revelations I have heard of that have been given; but there have been quite a number. Many revelations have been sent to me by persons who claim the right to preside over the Church and to be the Prophet of the Church. President Taylor has been the recipient of a number of similar communications, each one setting forth his claim to the presidency of the Church, and to the prophetic office; and some of them requiring us to accept the author as the person whom God has designated to be the revelator to and the President of the Church.⁸

Evidence of early dissent among the Utah Mormons may also be seen in a polemic attack on them by Joseph Luff, editor of the RLDS *Saint's Advocate* in November 1885. Luff, in an article titled "Mighty and Strong," quoted Doctrine and Covenants 85:7, then explained that members of the RLDS were aware of public and private remarks made by Utah Mormons concerning the "expected coming of a 'Mighty and Strong' one to deliver the Saints in Utah from bondage."⁹

Two years later, the year of John Taylor's death, LDS fundamentalist James Brighouse, who believed in reincarnation, published the first of five tracts setting forth perceived deficiencies in the LDS Church and his claims to be not only the one mighty and strong but also the Son of Man, Adam, Enoch, and Joseph Smith. Not surprisingly, he claimed that God had commissioned him to "set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the Saints." However, Brighouse faded into obscurity without founding a church.¹⁰

Early in the twentieth century, other individuals claiming to be the one mighty and strong may be identified. In 1904, Samuel Eastman announced his call to be the one mighty and strong. Like Brighouse, he felt that the LDS Church should be reformed and did not organize a new church. He was apparently excommunicated by a bishop's court on December 1, 1905, and also faded into obscurity.¹¹ His excommunication was preceded by that of John T. Clark in May of 1905, who was excommunicated not for involvement with plural marriage but for his claims that he was the one mighty and strong.¹²

B. H. Roberts of the LDS First Quorum of Seventy indicated the need for a formal interpretation of the verses about the one mighty and strong because some of the German Saints and others, including a counselor of a Bishop Ek in Salt Lake City, were “disaffected in their faith” due to varying interpretations about the one mighty and strong. Accordingly, Roberts was directed “to write a paper setting forth a full explanation of this revelation.”¹³ The First Presidency, consisting of Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund, in their efforts to end speculation about the one mighty and strong, met with Apostles John Henry Smith, Reed Smoot, Hyrum M. Smith, George Albert Smith, and B. H. Roberts¹⁴ of the First Council of Seventy on November 9, 1905. A document “on the question of the one spoken of in Section 85 of the D&C” was read and was presumably discussed. The following day the hierarchical group was joined by Apostle Charles W. Penrose, the rest of the First Council of Seventy (Seymour B. Young, George Reynolds, J. Golden Kimball, Rulon S. Wells, and Joseph W. McMurrin), Patriarch John Smith; and William B. Preston and Robert T. Burton of the Presiding Bishopric. The collective leadership of the Church “decided to publish a Document on the question of the one mighty and strong spoken of in the D. & C.”¹⁵ The document titled “One Mighty and Strong” was signed by Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund and was published in the *Deseret Evening News* on November 11, 1905, and the *Deseret Semi-Weekly News* two days later.¹⁶

In their introductory remarks, the First Presidency acknowledged: “Perhaps no other passage in the revelations of the Lord, in this dispensation, has given rise to so much speculation as this one.” They then vented their displeasure with men who claimed to be the one mighty and strong: “It has been used by vain and foolish men to bolster up their vagaries of speculation, and in some cases their pretensions to great power and high positions they want to attain in the Church.”¹⁷ After emphasizing that the Church is “completely organized,” the First Presidency indicated that, “when the man who would divide unto the Saints their inheritances comes he will be designated by the inspiration of the Lord to proper authorities of the Church, appointed and sustained according to the order provided for the government of the Church.” They emphasized, however, that as an authorized First Presidency currently stood at the head of the Church and would in the future—the individual who would divide the inheritances to

the Saints would be inspired to report to them and work under their supervision.

Thus, they appeared, at this point in the statement, to endorse the idea that one mighty and strong would come in the future. However, after quoting the complete 1832 letter from Smith to Phelps, the First Presidency explained that the portion about the one mighty and strong “relates to the affairs of the Church in Missouri, the gathering of the Saints to that land and obtaining their inheritances under the law of consecration and stewardship.” Bishop Edward Partridge was identified as “the one called and appointed to divide by lot unto the Saints their inheritances” and also as the person who would die “by the shaft of death.” They then rhetorically asked, “Now, as to the ‘one mighty and strong,’ who shall be sent of God, to ‘set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritance of the Saints.’ Who is he?” In answer, they first explained that since Partridge repented of his rebellious actions and did not “fall by the shaft of death,” the part of the prophecy relating to setting in order the house of God and arranging by lot the inheritances of the Saints “may also be considered as having passed away and the whole incident of the prophecy closed.” Then, in a statement that would further damage their credibility, the First Presidency continued their “authorized” interpretation with the explanation that Orson Pratt, an apostle and Church historian, had taught that Bishop Partridge was the one mighty and strong:

We do not feel that his [Partridge’s] sad and early death was the fulfillment of the threatened judgment of the revelation. But that he was the man so threatened in that revelation, there can be no question; not only on account of what is here set forth, but also because Orson Pratt, one familiar with Edward Partridge, and an active participant in all these historical matters, publicly declared from the pulpit in Salt Lake City, about the time of the death of President Young, that the man referred to in that passage of the revelation in question, was Bishop Edward Partridge. Of the fact of his statement, there can be no doubt; and at the time he was the historian of the Church as well as a member of the quorum of the Apostles.¹⁸

Strangely, the Presidency then added: “If however, there are those who will still insist that the prophecy concerning the coming of ‘one mighty and strong’ is still to be regarded as relating to the future, let the Latter-day Saints know that he will be a future bishop of the Church who will be with the Saints in Zion, Jackson county, Missouri, when the Lord shall establish them in that land.” This individual, according to the First Presidency, would be filled with spirit and power to the degree that he

“will be able to set in order the house of God pertaining to the department of the work under his jurisdiction; and in righteousness and justice will ‘arrange by lot the inheritances of the Saints.’” Then, in an effort to rule out the possibility that Joseph Smith or any individual designated to be Church president would be the promised deliverer in the future, they continued that the one mighty and strong would be only a bishop and that “this prophecy does not allude in any way to any President of the Church, past, present, or to come.”¹⁹

The First Presidency had not clarified the identity of the one mighty and strong. Rather they had further muddied the waters. Their letter ambivalently asserted, first, that the one mighty and strong was Bishop Partridge and that he had completed his mission and, second, that this mission might yet be carried out in the future by an unidentified individual who would be only a bishop. The most controversial part of the letter, however, was its report that Orson Pratt had identified Bishop Partridge as the one mighty and strong. Fundamentalists have traditionally responded by citing a discourse delivered by Orson Pratt in the Logan Tabernacle, November 1, 1879, in which he said, speaking of the return to Jackson County:

You may perhaps ask when this time will come? For the Saints to receive Bona fide inheritances. The time will come for the Saints to receive their stewardships, when they shall return to the lands from whence they have been driven; but the inheritances will not be given, until the Lord shall first appoint to the righteous dead their inheritances, and afterwards the righteous living will receive theirs. This you will find recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants; and in the same Book it is predicted that there is to be one “mighty and strong,” as well as to be an immortal personage,—one that is clothed upon with light as a garment:—one whose bowels are a fountain of truth.²⁰

For unknown reasons, the First Presidency not only overlooked Pratt’s November 1, 1879, address, but it also ignored his footnotes to Doctrine and Covenants 85 about the one mighty and strong which had been in print since 1879. For verse 7, Pratt inserted two footnotes which conveyed his belief that the one mighty and strong would be a future immortal personage. The note “g” preceded “send one mighty and strong” and Pratt explained in the footnote: “A future messenger promised.” Note “h” preceded “light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words” and the footnote explained “brilliant and glorious in appearance.”²¹

A representative response to Pratt’s alleged comments about Bishop Partridge appeared in *Truth*, a magazine published by fundamentalist Joseph White Musser, in October 1943. Musser explained that extensive searches had failed to locate any article in which Pratt identified Bishop Partridge as the one mighty and strong. He further reasoned that Pratt’s footnotes to Doctrine and Covenants 85:7 stated that the one mighty and strong would be “a future messenger” who would be “brilliant and glorious in appearance,” making it difficult to believe Pratt made radically different statements “about the time of the death of Brigham Young” (August 29, 1877). Musser concluded:

In light of this information, is it reasonable to suppose that Orson Pratt, Church Historian and as thorough a student as he was, would claim in 1877 that Sec. 85 of the D. & C. had reference to Edward Partridge, then in 1879—two years later—add an explanatory foot-note to the effect that the revelation did not have reference to Edward Partridge, but to a future messenger? Edward Partridge died May 27, 1840, and 39 years later (1879) the foot-note reference to, promising a future messenger, was published and continued to be published until taken out by Dr. Talmage in 1920—41 years later. The facts in this case do not support in the least degree the claim that Orson Pratt made the statement attributed to him.²²

Many fundamentalists agreed with Pratt that the one mighty and strong would be a future immortal personage. This line of reasoning led many to decide that the resurrected Joseph Smith would return and complete the work of “setting in order the house of God.” This belief was grounded in the understanding that “Joseph Smith holds all the keys pertaining to the present dispensation” and thereby “holds in his hand the scepter of power.” Moreover, a resurrected Joseph Smith would be “clothed with light for a covering” and “his words will be eternal as he is eternal.” It was therefore fitting, according to the reasoning of many fundamentalists, because God used Joseph Smith to organize his church and kingdom, for God to also use him to “clean up the mess they are in and set them in order.”²³

The belief that Joseph Smith will return as one mighty and strong has not been universally accepted by all fundamentalists. The obvious reason is that, if Smith is to be the one mighty and strong, all other claimants to this title are impostors. For example, Art Bulla, a former Seventy in the LDS Church, who claimed to be the one mighty and strong in the mid-1990s, denied that a resurrected person will be the one mighty and strong. One of his revelations dated May 21, 1995, characterized the belief

that Joseph Smith would be the one mighty and strong as “a fable.” It also explained, speaking in the voice of Christ, that “whenever there is a legally constituted administrator of my laws and my gospel in mortality upon the earth that the heavens defer the performance of any duty connected to those in mortality, to that legal administrator upon the earth.” The revelation identified Bulla, in his capacity as the one mighty and strong, as God’s administrator on the earth.²⁴

Ogden Kraut, a Mormon fundamentalist author and publisher, gave a limited list of individuals in the LDS tradition who claimed they were the one mighty and strong: James Brighthouse, Samuel Eastman, Paul Feil, LeRoy Wilson, John Tanner Clark, Benjamin LeBaron, Joel LeBaron, John Bryant, Elden Hollis, Sherman Russell Lloyd, Frank Miller, Jasper No. 7, Art Bulla, and Alonzo Langford. He then added: “The author is acquainted with many others still living, who claim to have all the keys and authority to put the house of God in order. They are not mentioned because most of them do not want it ‘revealed’ as yet.”²⁵

Kraut’s elaboration about ten “of the most interesting” LDS fundamentalists who claimed to be the one mighty and strong in a paper delivered at the August 1991 Sunstone Symposium sheds light upon some of these individuals. For example, Paul Feil, secretary to Samuel Eastman, “believed Sam was the [One] Mighty and Strong. But when Sam died, Paul thought he should take his place. Paul lived on Redwood Road in Salt Lake [City] with a herd of goats. One was named ‘Holy Ghost’ that was supposed to live through the Millennium. Paul died in an auto accident; the goat died of old age.” LeRoy Wilson “set up a colony near Veyo, Utah. He was a genius, an inventor who claimed his inventions would save the economy of the Church. He was shot to death over a mining claim in 1953.” Joel LeBaron “was the leader of nearly all of the fundamentalist LeBarons. His group published a series of pamphlets called ‘The Ensign,’ one of which stated, ‘Joel F. LeBaron is the One Mighty and Strong.’ (‘The Seventies,’ p. 6) However, after some disagreements over authority, his brother, Ervil, had Joel killed.”²⁶

The number of claimants to the title of the one mighty and strong with whom Kraut was acquainted was large and diverse:

Most of these individuals have been dissenters from the LDS Church, proclaiming their reasons why the Church needed to be set in order; and naturally each has claimed authority to accomplish the task. Usually he claims revelation from God assuring him that he has been “appointed” . . . There

is an admixture of names, titles, and offices under the banner of the One Mighty and Strong. Some claim that all these titles apply to just one person, while others claim that different men will hold the various titles. For example, the scriptures mention the "Root of Jesse" (Isa. 11:10, D&C 113:5-6), "A Man Like Unto Moses" (D&C 103:15-18), the "Marred Servant" (3 Ne. 20:44, D&C 43:4), the "Lamanite Prophet" and the "Indian Messiah" (3 Ne. 21:23-24; D&C 101:55-62).²⁷

Just as there is diversity of thought about the identity of the one mighty and strong among the LDS fundamentalists, historians also differ in their conclusions. For example, in 1962, Duane S. Crowther, an LDS historian who has written extensively about how former and latter-day prophecies will impact the world, concluded: "Many will be given inheritances during this period [the Millennium] on which to dwell. These will be appointed by 'one mighty and strong,' according to the Doctrine and Covenants."²⁸

In his 1974 dissertation, Robert J. Woodford cited a passage from Edward Partridge's journal, obviously written by someone else after Partridge's death, which identifies Partridge as the one mighty and strong: "At his [Partridge's] funeral says mother Partridge John E. Page, speaking and referring to the revelation, predicting the rising up of one who should be mighty, who should divide the inheritances to the saints, and said he did not know but the one should be Bishop Partridge. The Prophet Joseph spoke up and said he was the one referred to."²⁹

In 1977, Duane S. Crowther again chose to disagree with the 1905 First Presidency statement and explained in depth why Jesus Christ will be the one mighty and strong:

"One mighty and strong," probably the Savior himself, will come to the New Jerusalem to set in order the house of God and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints. He may be counteracting the influence of the son of perdition who will sit in the temple of God. One called of God will put forth his hand "to steady the ark of God" and be struck down. Apostates will be denied inheritances in the new Zion, which seems to indicate that these events will transpire relatively early in the New Jerusalem era.³⁰

In 1985, Lyndon W. Cook cited a January 1, 1834, letter from Oliver Cowdery to John Whitmer which provided a different identification of the individual who is to "steady the ark of God." Cowdery quoted the Prophet as saying: "[It] does not mean that any one had at the time, but it was given for a caution to those in high standing to be ware, lest they should fall by the shaft of death."³¹ In 1999, H. Michael Marquardt inter-

preted the crucial verse 7, with its reference to the one mighty and strong, as referring to Joseph Smith while the ark-steadier in verse 8 was a reference to Bishop Partridge.³²

This pattern of disagreeing with the 1905 First Presidency over the identity of the one mighty and strong continued in 2004 when two Brigham Young University educators, Stephen E. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett, in a volume published by Deseret Book, identified him as Jesus Christ and argued that “the idea proposed by some” that the one mighty and strong would arrive on the scene prior to Christ’s second advent “is incorrect.” In clarifying their thesis, they explained that, following the Savior’s return and establishment of his kingdom, he could be thought of as a “millennial presiding bishop.”³³

The following year, two other LDS scholars, Timothy G. Merrill and Steven C. Harper, supported the 1905 First Presidency interpretation, declaring that their pronouncement “became the definitive statement on the meaning of verses 7 and 8 and later formed the bedrock for all future commentary written upon the subject.” Rather puzzlingly, they then added, “The Presidency did not believe, however, that their analysis of verses 7 and 8 was either comprehensive or final.” Merrill and Harper attribute the ambiguity of Section 85 to the imperfection of language, asserting: “Scriptural language is saturated with the Spirit, and the meaning can be diluted by careless readings, intellectual curiosity, or excessive commentary.”³⁴

The One Mighty and Strong and the RLDS

In the RLDS tradition, the doctrine of the one mighty and strong has gone through three stages: first, an association with the first president of the RLDS Church, Joseph Smith III; second, a cautious and uncertain tendency to associate the one mighty and strong with Jesus Christ; and third, a resurgence of the term among dissenters following the radical reorganization of the RLDS Church into the renamed Community of Christ.

The ordination of Joseph Smith III on April 6, 1860, to the presidency of the Reorganized Church was the culmination of efforts by dissenters, largely from the organizations of James J. Strang and William Smith, to facilitate the reorganization of the Church with a son of Joseph Smith Jr. at its head. Some of these dissenters, often referred to as the New Organization, had tirelessly worked for a decade to bring about this reor-

ganization. A signature event in their early history was a conference held at Palestine, Illinois, on October 8, 1851, in which William Smith, the only surviving brother of Joseph Smith Jr., was rejected as the Church leader when the attendees became aware he was advocating or practicing polygamy. One of the participants, Jason W. Briggs, returned to his home near Beloit, Wisconsin, and sought divine guidance through fasting and prayer. A month later, according to Briggs, he received a vision which confirmed William Smith’s rejection by God and contained the promise that “in mine [God’s] due time will I call upon the seed of Joseph Smith, and will bring forth one mighty and strong and he shall preside over the high priesthood of my church.”³⁵ If this revelatory experience signified that Joseph Smith III or one of his brothers would be the one mighty and strong, it missed the mark as other references to that effect are rare or nonexistent prior to 1865. In fact, in March 1862 the RLDS newspaper, the *True Latter Day Saints’ Herald*, printed the portion of the November 27, 1832, letter from Joseph Smith Jr. to W. W. Phelps about the one mighty and strong without comment.³⁶ The failure of the editor, Jason W. Briggs, to explicitly identify the one mighty and strong with Joseph Smith III is surprising in that members of the New Organization and the early RLDS universally believed that God had rejected Joseph Smith’s original Church because of the excesses of false leaders like Brigham Young, James J. Strang, James C. Brewster, and William Smith.³⁷ Such a rejection implied that a restoration was necessary, and it would have been logical for members of the New Organization to loudly proclaim that a son of Joseph Smith Jr. would be the one mighty and strong and equally logical for early RLDS missionaries to announce in unison that Joseph Smith III, in his capacity as the one mighty and strong, was “setting in order the house of God.”

Regardless, from 1865 onward, frequent references to Young Joseph as the one mighty and strong appear. RLDS elder Thomas Job was apparently making that association in October 1865 when he told an LDS congregation: “For the Lord’s covenant was to raise up unto His people a man . . . even as Moses was; a man mighty and strong, such a man as young Joseph Smith is, and a mightier man you can not meet with.”³⁸ “Watchman” (a pseudonym) unquestionably identified Joseph III as the one mighty and strong in a front-page article of the *True Latter Day Saints’ Herald* in early 1870. After explaining that “Election is predicated upon the foreknowledge of God” and that God “foresees and foreknows what persons will do while working out their probation,” the author wrote:

God foreknew the character of sister Emma [Smith]—that she would be faithful and true to him who had called her—and he *elect*ed her to be the mother of the successor of the Martyr—the ‘one mighty and strong,’ who is “to set in order the *house* of God [i.e., the Church; see 1 Tim. 3:15, 1 Pet. 4:17, Heb. 3:6,], and arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints;” the “man who shall lead them [the Saints] like as Moses led the children of Israel,” [which was by direct revelation from God,] and who, when sent of God, would find the saints in “bondage,” from which they should be “led out” “by power” [of God], “and with a stretched out arm.” See D&C 101:3.³⁹

In January 1880, William W. Blair, then a member of the RLDS First Presidency, took it upon himself to explain Joseph Smith III’s connection with the one mighty and strong. Being led by “impressions” of the Holy Spirit, he concluded that verses 6–8 in section 85 were a prophecy by Joseph Smith about his newborn son and successor, which designated him to be the future one mighty and strong. Furthermore, Blair said the Reorganized Church was founded on the “grand revelation” of the one mighty and strong.⁴⁰ Blair announced to his RLDS audience:

. . . that the prophecy itself was *incidental in the letter*; that it was *originally* given to *Joseph himself* rather than *through* Joseph to the Church *through* Phelps; that the *prophecy* of the “one mighty and strong” did not *directly* concern those *then* in Jackson county, but rather people who to this day have not set their foot in Jackson county—the *children*, rather than their fathers;—and that the mission foreshadowed related to his son Joseph, who, like his father, should be sent in the spirit of the “one mighty and strong” to *restore* the “house of God” to “*order*” after it shall have been ruled *out of order* and the fathers plucked up out of the land of Zion because of their iniquities. Numerous other prophecies and revelations may be compared to corroborate this, and the *facts* of history to this day confirm this view. Moreover it would seem that the prophecy of the “one mighty and strong” was not *originally* given on the 27th of November, 1832, but was probably given nearer the birth of “Young Joseph” and about the 6th of November. Since that time the Spirit had pursued the Prophet with the burden of his son’s mission, for mark—history itself proves it was not his *own* mission, which also proves that it was not a revelation “concerning” the Saints *then* in Jackson county, and strangely suggests that the prophecy was incidental in that letter to Phelps by the very law of association which connected with his son.⁴¹

Fourteen months earlier, Blair had written in the October 1878 *Saints’ Advocate*: “We have shown that the Church was rejected of God because of transgression, and thus the ‘house of God’ became disordered.

We have also noticed the promise of one being sent to 'set it in order.'"42 In March and November 1883, Blair told the readers of the *Saints' Advocate* that, since Young Joseph's calling and ordination in 1860, he "has been setting the house of God in order."⁴³

In November 1885, the new editor of the *Saints' Advocate*, Joseph Luff, made a dramatic appeal to the Utah Saints to accept Joseph Smith III as their leader. As noted above, Luff first explained that RLDS members had heard publicly and privately that Utah Saints were expecting the one mighty and strong to begin a healing ministry in Utah and deliver them from their "bondage." Then Luff artfully explained that the "deliverer of Latter Day Israel" had for years been quietly going about the work of establishing unity and peace among the Latter Day Saints. Indicating that many had prayed for the coming of the one mighty and strong, he advised the Utah Mormons that "by returning to the former paths they will again realize the former glory." The appeal ended with Luff appearing to hedge his bets by asserting the RLDS leader's primacy regardless of whether he was to be recognized as the one mighty or strong or as the instrument by which the one mighty and strong would effect his restoration: "And if in the developments of time and patient toil it shall be revealed that in "young Joseph" are the essential elements of "one mighty and strong," you shall from his hand receive your inheritances; and if he be found but an instrument in the hands of God to "prepare the way" for the coming of that Mighty deliverer, by making his paths straight, you will be the better prepared for His advent." ⁴⁴

During the last few years of the nineteenth century, the second phase of RLDS formulation of the doctrine of the one mighty and strong was clearly evident as representatives of the RLDS Church and the Church of Christ, or Hedrickites, attempted to agree on doctrinal issues in preparation for the union of their organizations. The Church of Christ, often called the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) to distinguish it from larger Protestant denominations, was composed of some fifty to a hundred followers of Granville Hedrick. The April 1900 RLDS general conference received a report issued by representatives of that organization which retracted a prior firm declaration that the one mighty and strong must be identified as Jesus Christ. They substituted a resolution apparently more palatable to their RLDS confreres, which cautiously asserted the utility of such a belief.

The Elders of the Church of Christ presented the following as received by them previous to the meeting of the joint council:

The teachings of the Spirit unto the elders of the Church of Christ is that the acceptance of the belief that Jesus Christ is the One Mighty and Strong, will mightily move the cause of Zion and assist in a solution of the differences that have long existed between the people of God. (Signed by the committee)

The RLDS report on the same issue took a slightly different yet similarly cautious stand on the identity of the one mighty and strong:

Whereas, we have received no divine communication authorizing any particular interpretation of the revelation before us; and as the Reorganized Church has never taken action upon the matter;

Resolved, that we leave it an open question, to be decided as God may develop his purposes among us, while we acknowledge the leading features in it to be prominently characteristic of Jesus Christ. (Signed on behalf of said committee by chairman and secretary)⁴⁵

Joseph Smith III took a pragmatic approach, neither affirming nor denying that he was the one mighty and strong from his ordination as RLDS president in 1860 until after the 1900 general conference. As information in RLDS Church publications identified him as the one mighty and strong, John R. Haldeman, editor of the Church of Christ *The Evening and Morning Star* commented in September 1900: "Joseph Smith, president of the Reorganization, has not made a definite claim to the title [one mighty and strong]; yet he has permitted literature to be issued from the Reorganized publishing house wherein the claim is definitely made for him."⁴⁶ In February 1901, Haldeman observed that, since the Latter-day Saints and the Reorganized Latter Day Saints claimed to be fully organized, the one mighty and strong would not come to them as they had no need to be "set in order." However, as the Church of Christ was in a disorganized condition, they "could welcome his labor with perfect consistency, since it is a part of their belief that the church is out of order and needs regulation."⁴⁷

Four years later, in response to a question about the identity of the one mighty and strong, Smith reviewed in the *Saints' Herald* the resolutions of the RLDS and Church of Christ committees relating to the one mighty and strong at the 1900 general conference. He correctly noted: "No action of conference was had upon this report," then explained that "interpretation" of the revelation might occur in the future and that attempts to identify the one mighty and strong "have been conjectural, re-

quiring tissues of affirmation, argument, and reasoning to give support to them."⁴⁸

In addition to calling a halt to speculation about this personage's identity, Smith continued to remain disengaged from the issue. He stated in a 1905 letter: "I do not personally claim to be 'the one mighty and strong.'"⁴⁹ The following year, he explained to another correspondent: "I am not prepared to state who the 'one mighty and strong' is; that is, who he is in person. There has been much speculation about and some have affirmed and defended by evidences and arguments that I was the one. This I neither affirm, nor deny; for this reason, I believe that the statement in the letter to Phelps has been much over estimated in importance."⁵⁰

In the fall of 1908, Smith published a sharply worded editorial criticizing the members of the Church of Christ for charging that his father had failed to "set in order the house of God." This failure, according to members of the Church of Christ, meant that the one mighty and strong would be required to "complete the work which Joseph failed to do." Smith charged that members of the Church of Christ were "confessing their own sins and shortcomings" when they acknowledged they were desirous to be set in order by the one mighty and strong. Then, after acknowledging it would be unlikely for someone other than Jesus Christ to be the one mighty and strong, Smith said his church had "taken no ground" about the identity of this individual.⁵¹

The *Saints' Herald* of June 5, 1912, contained a warning by Elbert A. Smith, Joseph Smith III's nephew who was then a counselor in the First Presidency, titled "A Word of Caution Regarding Candidates to the Position of 'The One Mighty and Strong.'" Smith said he had been approached recently by "a number of our men who are aspiring to very high position"—namely, that of being the one mighty and strong, a claim that "astonished" him. Smith reasoned that only one could be this deliverer and that, therefore, all the rest were deceived. He found in the announcement itself evidence for eliminating such claimants, for surely "the individual called of God to do such a great work would be discreet enough and in possession of sufficient saving common sense to keep his own counsel and wait for God to move in the matter and reveal in proper ways the one so called." Suggesting that even the claimants of pure character and integrity are "victims of auto-suggestion," he insightfully observed:

It is possible for one to brood over a certain idea until he becomes dominated by it and is in fact a monomaniac. Constant dwelling on one theme

and upon one plan of operation may at last lead one to believe that it is the only solution to existing problems, and that he is the one divinely appointed to put it into execution; and so he may come to identify himself with some prophetic character that is to appear in time and do great things. . . . It is needless to say that along this road of suggestion and auto-suggestion lies the way toward insanity. It is a dangerous path.⁵²

Throughout the mid-decades of the twentieth century, the historical record is generally silent about the one mighty and strong in the RLDS tradition. That changed with a number of traumatic events which shook the church following the ordination of W. Wallace Smith in 1978 as Church president. A generation of Church leaders who had attended Protestant religious seminaries⁵³ replaced conservative members of the hierarchy, educational system, and *Saints' Herald* staff. This shift of power to men with more moderate beliefs forever changed the RLDS Church. Church leaders and educators deemphasized the sacredness of the Book of Mormon or even questioned its validity as scripture. Similarly, they questioned the belief that Zion would be reestablished in Jackson County. A key belief in lineal descent (that the president must be a direct descendant of Joseph Smith Jr.) was forever shattered in April 1996 when W. Grant McMurray became Church president.⁵⁴ The most important single event in the factionalizing of the RLDS, however, was the ordination of women to the priesthood in 1984. William D. Russell, a professor at Graceland University and an authority on the changing RLDS Church, wrote in 1991:

There were only a few small fundamentalist groups meeting outside the authority of the institutional church when Wallace B. Smith announced his revelation permitting the ordination of women in 1984. For many fundamentalists this was the last straw. To their way of thinking the gospel is unchangeable. They argued that no women had been called before, and therefore it was obvious that God did not want them in the priesthood.

In the years since the women's ordination revelation was announced, many separatist branches and congregations have been organized. At the present time I have identified more than 200 independent local groups in thirty-two states, Canada, and Australia. Fifty-five of these groups are in Missouri, many in the Independence area. Other states with large numbers of such groups are Michigan, Oklahoma, and Texas.⁵⁵

It is against this background of reassessment and change that many RLDS fundamentalists longed for a deliverer to be sent by God to "set in order the house of God." Richard Price,⁵⁶ a leader of the independent

fundamentalist churches who was excommunicated from the RLDS Church in 1987, expressed this sentiment:

But after Joseph [Smith III]'s death, the Church was again "held captive a long season." Her "captors" were [and are] as before the Church leaders. They brought in supreme directional control and the present liberal Apostasy. They have "degraded and dishonored her" by rejecting the precious distinctives of the Restoration Movement. Today she is again in a "pitiable condition." But just as Christ intervened to cleanse his only true Church after the 1844-1860 Apostasy by sending a true prophet, He will send another prophet who will give the guidance and power that is needed.⁵⁷

According to William Russell, Price proposed this strategy: "Faithful Saints should withdraw from participation [in a liberally controlled congregation] and establish an 'Independent Restoration Branch' controlled by local elders who were ordained by proper authority and who adhered to the traditional RLDS doctrines."⁵⁸ Efforts by Price and others to keep independent fundamentalist churches from formally organizing, however, have been largely unsuccessful. In May 2002, Price lamented that thirteen churches "had been organized since the Liberal Apostasy began." Among those claiming that God had called them as prophets were Eugene Walton, Robert Baker, and Marcus Juby. Price also said that each of these individuals "claims that his church is the true successor of the RLDS Church."⁵⁹

The most crushing blow to the independent fundamentalists, however, was the establishment of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in April 2000. The inspired statement which authorized the formation of that church was printed in the May 2000 issue of its newspaper, *Hastening Times*. Among its instructions was this statement: "Be faithful little flock, and in My time I will send you one mighty and strong, again, to be your President, Prophet, Seer, and Revelator."⁶⁰ After the calling and ordination of seven men as apostles on September 23, 2000, the Church was fully organized after Frederick Niels Larsen received a revelation given "by the voice of inspiration" which called him to be the "President of the High Priesthood and President of my Church in these last days." He was ordained to that office on April 6, 2002.⁶¹ This church presently has a membership of about a thousand persons in seventeen branches.⁶²

Larsen is a son of President Frederick M. Smith's daughter, Lois Smith Larsen. (Fred M., a son of Joseph III, was second president of the

RLDS Church.) He claims the office by divine calling and the doctrine of lineal descent. This claim has not set well with the independent fundamentalists who chose not to unite under the leadership of Larsen. Richard Price discounts the legitimacy of Larsen's ordination because "priesthood lineage does not descend from mother to son, but rather from father to son." Furthermore, Price concludes: "The revelation in Joseph's letter to W. W. Phelps could not apply to Larsen, or any other man, because the wording of it bears evidence that it is describing Christ. It is undoubtedly referring to Christ, as the One Mighty and Strong, for only He can set in order the house of God—and only He has the right to give the Saints their inheritances in Zion. Christ has promised that He will build Zion, which includes assigning inheritances there."⁶³

Conclusions

Mormonism is a religion with the core belief that God communicates with his chosen people by revelation. Furthermore, even though it has been a fundamental belief that the prophet receives revelation for the Church, it is also a fact the membership has carefully monitored the prophet's behavior and teaching to see if they are acceptable to the members. When leaders are perceived to have strayed from the truth, members often accuse them of being rejected by God and announcing that a restoration of "true" principles must take place. This process of rejection and restoration has been, and will continue to be, spearheaded by individuals claiming divine authority from God to purify and stand at the head of the institutional church. If the Church leader cannot be overthrown, the strategy usually is to convert members from the institutional church into an alternate "true church."

It was logical for RLDS stalwarts to introduce the one mighty and strong into their struggles with rival Mormon factions and to claim that Joseph Smith III was "setting in order the house of God." Smith pragmatically encouraged this belief by his silence, and this polemic process continued until RLDS and Church of Christ negotiators agreed that the prophecy about the one mighty and strong probably referred to a future mission of Jesus Christ. Ironically, some hundred years later, fundamentalists in the Remnant Church claim that the RLDS Church/Community of Christ is being set in order by the one mighty and strong.

The LDS Church had to cope with RLDS claims that Joseph Smith III was the one mighty and strong for four decades and should have been

able to respond meaningfully to this fundamentalist critique. Inexplicably, the 1905 pronouncement by the First Presidency about the one mighty and strong was so flawed it had the opposite effect. After saying that individuals who claimed to be the one mighty and strong and their supporters were not very smart, the First Presidency set forth an "authoritative" Church position on the subject which was both contradictory and confusing. However, the part that was the most damaging to their argument was their apparently fictional claim that Orson Pratt had delivered a discourse about the time of Brigham Young's death which identified Bishop Partridge as the one mighty and strong. When this undocumented assertion was compared with documented Pratt statements which said that the one mighty and strong would be a future immortal being, the credibility of the LDS leaders suffered and their adversarial relationship with the fundamentalists intensified.

The century following the First Presidency's message has seen a considerable number of men in the LDS tradition who have claimed to be one mighty and strong. Typically, they were obscure individuals who made little impact before dying along with their visions, prophecies, and revelations. Most were relatively harmless, but some have been mentally unstable and have exercised unjust dominion over their followers and, in some cases, their innocent victims.

In spite of all the speculation about the one mighty and strong, the weight of evidence suggests the references to this individual or individuals in Joseph Smith's November 27, 1832, letter to William W. Phelps were never considered to be a revelatory message to the Church. Apparently, the primary participants in this drama—Joseph Smith, William W. Phelps, and Edward Partridge—considered the information about the one mighty and strong to refer to events in Zion in late 1832 or early 1833. After that time, it was not an issue for them. If this explanation is correct, all of the past, present, and future speculation about the one mighty and strong has been and will be in vain. This line of reasoning leads me to generally agree with H. Michael Marquardt that Joseph Smith Jr. considered himself to be the one mighty and strong and that Bishop Edward Partridge was the individual who was warned against putting "forth his hand to steady the ark of God."

It is difficult to generalize about many topics relating to Mormon history. It is safe, however, to assume that numerous individuals will continue to claim the role of being the one mighty and strong and that some

of these “strong ones” will misuse their followers. Another certainty is that Church leaders will continue to vigorously defend themselves against would-be “deliverers” who tell Church members that the leaders are apostate and God has sent them to take their place.

Personal Epilogue: Observations of a Strangite

As a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Strangite), I find it relevant to mention that this organization, currently with a membership of roughly one hundred persons, had a disastrous experience with an ex-member who claimed to be the one mighty and strong in the mid-1970s. This schismatic experience resulted in the excommunication of roughly one-third of the then-active membership, split families, and seriously damaged the small church.

Individual Strangites, like members in the other Mormon factions, continue to speculate about the identity of the one mighty and strong. Some cite the undated statement made by Apostle L. D. Hickey, the last surviving apostle of James J. Strang, that Strang was the one mighty and strong: “The man referred to in that Revelation to Joseph in 1831 [1832] (regarding the one mighty and strong) was J. J. Strang. I saw the scepter in his hand—and felt its power. James J. Strang was the one mighty and strong, and he held a scepter in his litteral [sic] hand—just as Joseph [Smith] said.”⁶⁴ An opposing interpretation about the one mighty and strong was set forth in 1915 by Wingfield Watson, the Presiding High Priest of the Strangites, which repudiated the teachings of the Church of Christ and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints that the one mighty and strong would be Jesus Christ. Instead, Watson taught that the one mighty and strong would be a future prophet of the tribe of Judah.⁶⁵

Some Strangites look to the past to examine the components of righteousness that they believe their church once exclusively possessed and, at the same time, expect that God will redeem and elevate their church to similar or greater heights in the future.

Notes

1. “Let Every Man Learn His Duty,” *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (January 1833): 5.

2. This closing was published as part of the letter’s appearance in “Brother William W. Phelps,” *Times and Seasons* 5 (October 15, 1844): 673–74 and “History of Joseph Smith,” *Millennial Star* 14 (June 26, 1852): 284–85. The closing was

cut, however, from Phelps’s version printed in the *Evening and Mormon Star* as “Let Every Man Learn His Duty,” 5. The LDS official history introduced the letter in this manner: “In answer to letters received from the brethren in Missouri, I wrote as follows . . .” Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev. (6 vols. 1902–12, Vol. 7 1932; reprinted, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976 printing): 1:297. Three pages later the history explained: “On the 6th of December 1832, I received the following revelation explaining the parable of the wheat and tares . . .” *Ibid.*, 300. In other words, the verses relating to the one mighty and strong in the November 27, 1832, letter may not have been a traditional revelation to the Church. Joseph Smith evidently intended to convey revelatory direction, however, because of its divine attribution: “thus saith the still small voice” and “I the Lord God will send . . .” (vv. 6–7).

3. The genesis of the term “one mighty and strong” is presumably Isaiah 28:2–3: “Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet.”

4. RLDS fundamentalists or restorationists generally want the Church to be restored to the level of purity it enjoyed under the leadership of Joseph Smith Jr. and Joseph Smith III. William D. Russell, an authority on the fragmentation of the Reorganization, used the phrase “Old School Saints” to describe the fundamentalists or restorationists. William D. Russell, “The Remnant Church: An RLDS Schismatic Group Finds a Prophet of Joseph’s Seed,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38 (Fall 2005): 75–106.

5. Phelps died on March 7, 1872, thirty-three years before the 1905 First Presidency issued their “authoritative” interpretation about the one mighty and strong.

6. W. W. Phelps, Letter to Brigham Young, May 6, 1881, holograph, Brigham Young Papers, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives), emphasis his.

7. After presiding for three years as president of the Quorum of the Twelve, John Taylor officially became the third president of the LDS Church on October 10, 1880, and died on July 25, 1887. Wilford Woodford was sustained as LDS Church president on April 7, 1889, and served until his death on September 2, 1898.

8. George Q. Cannon, October 29, 1882, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855–86), 33:358–59.

9. Joseph Luff, "Mighty and Strong," *Saints' Advocate* 8 (November 1885): 587.
10. Lyle O. Wright, "Origins and Development of the Church of the First-born of the Fulness of Times" (M.S. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1963), 30–33.
11. *Ibid.*, 34.
12. See the accompanying article by Brian C. Hales, "John T. Clark: The One Mighty and Strong," in this issue.
13. Minutes of the First Council of the Seventy, November 8, 1905, D. Michael Quinn Papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut; original in LDS Church Archives.
14. LDS fundamentalist historian Ogden Kraut said that Brigham H. Roberts was the author of the one mighty and strong document and that it was published with the First Presidency as the authors. Ogden Kraut, *The One Mighty and Strong* (Salt Lake City: Pioneer Press, 1961), 31–32.
15. Quoted in Jean Bickmore White, ed., *Church, State, and Politics: The Diaries of John Henry Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1990), 556.
16. This message is most easily located in James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 4:107–21. It was originally printed as "One Mighty and Strong" in the *Deseret Evening News*, November 11, 1905, 4, and reprinted under the same title in the *Deseret Semi-Weekly News* on November 13, 1905, and in the *Improvement Era* 10 (October 1907): 929–43.
17. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 4:108. Members of the LDS hierarchy have episodically followed the lead of the 1905 Presidency and attacked fundamentalists who claim to be the one mighty and strong and their supporters. For example, in 1969 Joseph Fielding Smith, then Church historian and a member of the First Presidency, said that Doctrine and Covenants 85:6–8 has caused "no end of needless speculation due to a misunderstanding of what is written." He also aggressively charged: "There have arisen from time to time men of doubtful intelligence who have laid claim to being the 'one mighty and strong.' Some of these, notwithstanding their limitations of intellect and power of understanding, have succeeded in gathering around them a few followers of like spirit and lack of understanding." Quoted in *ibid.*, 107.
18. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 117.
19. *Ibid.*, 108–20. Samuel Eastman called the First Presidency's directive about the one mighty and strong a "sham prophetic epistle" and lamented that it was published "a few days before I was brought to trial before the church courts." As a result, he felt it "prejudiced the church courts against me so that it was impossible for me to be heard in my own defense before them, so as to receive an honest

and impartial trial at their hands." Quoted in Wright, "Origins and Development of the Church of the First Born," 34.

20. Orson Pratt, November 1, 1879, *Journal of Discourses*, 21:150–51. Pratt also expressed his belief that Joseph Smith, as a resurrected personage, might be sent to lead the Mormons back to Independence, Missouri, shortly before the "winding up scene." March 9, 1873, *Journal of Discourses* 15:363.

21. Pratt's footnotes about the one mighty and strong were deleted from the 1921 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. However the footnotes in Section 85 in the editions from 1921 to 1980 skip from "f" to "i" and the absence of footnotes "g" and "h" shows where Pratt's original footnotes had been. The 1981 Doctrine and Covenants uses a different system of footnoting and does not comment on this question.

22. Musser, "The 'One Mighty and Strong,'" *Truth* 9 (October 1943): 117.

23. *Ibid.*, 118. See also Musser, "The One Mighty and Strong," *Truth* 14 (August 1948): 69–72; Musser, "Who Is the 'One Mighty and Strong?'" *Truth* 16 (October 1950): 130–34; and Kraut, *The One Mighty and Strong*, 101–11.

24. "Revelation from the Lord to Art Bulla on Why the One Mighty and Strong Cannot be a Resurrected Being as Taught by Such Men As Ogden Kraut (and others of the willfully blind who attempt to lead the blind that they both have fallen into the ditch together)," BX 8608 A1 no. 3903, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, Archives and Manuscripts Department. Bulla maintains a website: <http://www.artbulla.com/zion/about.htm>.

25. Kraut, *One Mighty and Strong*, 91–99.

26. Ogden Kraut, "The One Mighty and Strong," 10–11, paper presented at the Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, August 1991; photocopy in my possession.

27. Kraut, *The One Mighty and Strong*, 84–85; form of scripture citations standardized. Kraut acknowledged that his not accepting the "Mighties and Strongs" has been "stressful, and even life-threatening." He gave his opinion that some of these individuals are "prone to mental disorders" and listed five somewhat overlapping reasons why these "super prophets" claimed to be the one mighty and strong: (1) They have done something that makes them susceptible to the influence of false and delusive spirits. (2) They desire the "scepter of Power" promised to accompany that servant. (3) They have become bitter and want to retaliate against the Church because they were mistreated or excommunicated (4). By rejecting the revelations of God, they open themselves up to receive revelations from the devil. (5) Some men are prophets of the devil (99–100).

28. Duane S. Crowther, *Prophecy: Key to the Future* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1962), 253–55. Strangely, in a footnote Crowther quotes most of the 1905 explanation by the First Presidency about the one mighty and strong and, in

the text, quotes Orson Pratt's November 1, 1879, discourse describing the one mighty and strong as a future immortal personage.

29. Quoted in Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," 3 vols. (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1974), 2:1083.

30. Duane S. Crowther, *Prophetic Warnings to Modern America* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers and Distributors, 1977), 257–58.

31. Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Books, 1985), 178–79.

32. H. Michael Marquardt, *The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), 219–20.

33. Stephen E. Robinson and H. Dean Garrett, *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004), 3:73–74.

34. Timothy G. Merrill and Steven C. Harper, "It Maketh My Bones to Quake': Teaching Doctrine and Covenants 85," *Religious Educator* 6 (2005): 85.

35. "History of the Reorganization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," *The Messenger* 2 (November 1875): 49. See also Roger D. Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 84–85.

36. "One Mighty and Strong," *The True Latter Day Saints' Herald* 9 (March 1862): 215–16. The portion of Smith's November 27, 1832, letter to Phelps about the one mighty and strong was never canonized by the RLDS Church but was, however, quoted in its official history without comment. Joseph Smith III and Heman Hale Smith, *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1805–1890*, 4 vols. (continued by F. Henry Edwards as *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vols. 5–8) (Independence: Herald House, 1897–1903, 1967 printing), 1:259–60.

37. See *True Latter Day Saints' Herald* articles: "The Keys," 10 (May 15, 1869): 289–93 and "The Rejection of the Church," 17 (October 1, 1870): 577–82. See *Saints' Advocate* articles: "The Latter Day Apostasy," 1 (July 1878): 2–5; "Rejection and Succession," 1 (October 1878): 25–31; "The Remnant," 4 (November 1881): 137–41; "The Successor," 5 (March 1883): 289–94; "The Rejection of the Church," 6 (November 1883): 377–83.

38. Thomas Job, "Captivity and Redemption of Zion," *True Latter Day Saints Herald* 8 (December 15, 1865): 180–81. A similar example is a letter from W. Nosredna ("Anderson" backwards) in "Who Then Shall Preach!," *True Latter Day Saints' Herald* 19 (March 15, 1872): 173: "Joseph [III], the one mighty and strong holding the scepter of power in his hand, to set the house of God in order, and arrange by lot the inheritance of the saints; brought this key of revelation and mystery, and on the sixth day of April, 1860, did commence his great and noble work . . ."

39. Watchman (pseud.), "The Elect Lady," *True Latter Day Saints' Herald* 17 (February 1, 1870): 66; emphasis his, scriptural citations standardized.
40. W. W. Blair, "The One Mighty and Strong," *Saints' Advocate* 2 (January 1880): 79.
41. *Ibid.*, 74, emphasis Blair's. Edward W. Tullidge included this long thesis in *Life of Joseph the Prophet* (Plano, Ill.: Board of Publication of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1880), 802–27. Tullidge printed Blair's account without acknowledging its authorship.
42. W. W. Blair, "Rejection and Succession," *Saints' Advocate* 1 (October 1878): 30.
43. William W. Blair, "The Successor," *Saints' Advocate* 5 (March 1883): 293; and "The Rejection of the Church," *Saints' Advocate* 6 (November 1883): 386. In his 1892 debate with Wingfield Watson, a Strangite elder, Blair said: "Since that time he has been setting the house of God in order, pouring in the oil and binding up the wounds; and he has thus overcome prejudice, removed reproach and brought honor to the church." W. J. Smith, ed. and comp., *The Watson-Blair Debate* (Clifford, Ont.: Printed for W. J. Smith by Glad Tidings Office, 1898), 179.
44. Luff, "Mighty and Strong," 587–91.
45. "Minutes of General Conference, 1900," *Supplement to the Saints' Herald* (Independence: Herald House, 1900): 180–83.
46. John R. Haldeman, "The One Mighty and Strong," *The Evening and Morning Star* 1 (September 15, 1900): 2.
47. *Ibid.*, 1–2.
48. Joseph Smith III, "Query and Reply," *Saints' Herald* 51 (January 1904): 26–27.
49. Joseph Smith III, Letter to James C. Hambleton, February 1, 1895, Joseph Smith III Letter Book 6, p. 1, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence.
50. Joseph Smith III, Letter to James A. Hedrick, April 28, 1896, *ibid.*, 6:386.
51. "Editorial. The Three Books: and the One Mighty and Strong," *Saints' Herald* 55 (October 28, 1908): 1,033–35.
52. Elbert A. Smith, "A Word of Caution Regarding Candidates to the Position of 'The One Mighty and Strong,'" *Saints' Herald* 59 (June 5, 1912): 535–36.
53. W. B. "Pat" Spillman, a former Community of Christ bishop and current editor of the *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal*, concluded: "It is widely agreed that the influence of higher education in the late 1960s played a major role in laying the groundwork for the specific events that pointed the church beyond its sectarian past and toward the direction of mainstream Protestant Christianity. It is the thesis of this paper that the institution that con-

tributed more to this change than any other was St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Missouri." Spillman, "Taking the Road More Traveled," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 24 (2004): 135.

54. Among many references to the ordination of a person not of the Smith lineage as Church president, see Adam Mueller, "Lineal Priesthood," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 24 (2004): 93–110.

55. William D. Russell, "The Fundamentalist Schism, 1958–Present," in *Let Contention Cease*, edited by Roger D. Launius and W. B. "Pat" Spillman, (Independence: Graceland/Park Press, 1991), 134. In addition to articles in *Let Contention Cease*, information about schism in the RLDS Church includes: Richard P. Howard, "The Evolving RLDS Identity," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 14 (1994): 3–10; W. B. "Pat" Spillman, "Adjustment or Apostasy? The Reorganized Church in the Late Twentieth Century," *Journal of Mormon History* 20 (Fall 1994): 1–15; Roger D. Launius, "Coming of Age? The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in the 1960s," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20 (Summer 1995): 31–57; Roger D. Launius, "The Reorganized Church, the Decade of Decision, and the Abilene Paradox," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 31 (Spring 1998): 47–65; Russell, "The Remnant Church," 75–106.

56. For information about Richard Price and the independent fundamentalist movement, see William D. Russell, "Richard Price: Leading Publicist of the Reorganized Church's Schismatics," in *Differing Visions: Dissenters in Mormon History*, edited by Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 319–42.

57. Richard Price, "God Will Cleanse His Church Again," *Vision* 23 (September 1996): 9. In a phone conversation I had with Price on October 24, 2005, Price said: "The one mighty and strong would be Jesus Christ." It is apparent, however, that if a prophet did come to the fragmented Reorganization/Community of Christ prior to the advent of Jesus Christ, he or she would possess attributes similar to those associated with the one mighty and strong and would essentially have to "set in order the house of God."

58. Russell, "The Remnant Church," 81–82.

59. Richard Price, "Remnant Church Ordains Frederick Larsen as Prophet," *Vision* 40 (May 2002): 8. Russell, "The Remnant Church," 86, lists fourteen RLDS groups extant in 1999 that had formally organized or that claimed to have a prophet.

60. "General Conference Highlights," *Hastening Times* 2 (May 1, 2000): 4. As early as 1996 the group which became the Remnant Church was told that one mighty and strong would be a future leader. An "inspired message" at the May 1996 conference at Independence stated: "Many of you have discussed the coming of one mighty and strong. I say to you that one mighty and strong will come

when My people have sufficiently purged themselves of all unrighteousness." *Genesis of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Independence: Remnant Church, 2003), 43–44. David W. Bowerman, Larsen's counselor in the First Presidency, told me on February 28, 2003, in an interview at the Remnant Church headquarters in Independence that Larsen is one mighty and strong in the same sense that Joseph Smith Jr. and Joseph Smith III were "mighty and strong." In an email to me on March 17, 2003, Larsen explained: "I do not attach any great significance to that term [one mighty and strong], only that it denotes a person of leadership, in this case the Presidency and Prophetic leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ in these Last Days."

61. "Time to Take One More Step . . . Section R-145," *Hastening Times* 3 (May 1, 2002): 9.

62. Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Joseph Smith Descendant at Helm of LDS Remnant Church," *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 20, 2002, C1–2.

63. "Remnant Church Ordains Frederick Larsen as Prophet," *Visions* 40 (May 2002): 9.

64. L. D. Hickey, quoted in Wingfield Watson, *The Revelations of James J. Strang* (N.p., 1939 printing), 22.

65. Wingfield Watson, "The One Mighty and Strong" (Burlington, Wis.: Wingfield Watson, March 1915).

John T. Clark: The “One Mighty and Strong”

Brian C. Hales

This article examines John T. Clark, a relatively little-known but influential figure in the rise of fundamentalism among the Latter-day Saints during the early twentieth century. By 1921, small groups of excommunicated polygamists had begun to congregate at homes, offices, industrial buildings, and even in open-air settings. While no identifiable leaders would emerge until the 1930s, these groups would eventually coalesce to form the fundamentalist movement. Several individuals, including Clark, became prominent within the informal gatherings, either because of their testimonies, convictions, publications, financial successes, or claims to priesthood authority.¹ Clark is unusual, however, because he was apparently never a polygamist. Rather, it was his doctrinal unorthodoxy and creative theological speculations that distanced him from the official LDS Church and made him an appealing figure to others whose ideas included the continuation of post-Manifesto polygamy.

The Beginnings of Unorthodoxy

John Tanner Clark left no personal papers, diaries, or autobiography, to my knowledge, so biographical background is sparse.² He was born January 4, 1865, in Provo, Utah, to John Clark and Alvira Jane Pratt Clark and raised in the LDS Church. He served a three-year mission on the Uintah Indian reservation and was apparently, for a time, a member of the BYU faculty, although no details seem to be available about his education, field, or the period of this employment. He married Alice Scow in 1896 in the Salt Lake Temple. However, they had no children, she died in 1898, and Clark apparently never remarried.

Intellectually keen, he served in World War I, developing a shield for ships that would explode a torpedo before it made contact with the

hull. Later he invented a puncture-proof automobile tire and a special rim. He formed the John T. Clark Mechanically Inflated Tire Company in 1913, but it never generated any income.³

Despite his evident early dedication to Church teachings, John was excommunicated in May 1905 at age forty, but not for involvement with plural marriage.⁴ His Church discipline was, instead, for his claims that he was the “one mighty and strong” named in Doctrine and Covenants 85:7: “And it shall come to pass that I, the Lord God, will send one mighty and strong, holding the scepter of power in his hand, clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words; while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth, to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the Saints whose names are found, and the names of their fathers, and of their children, enrolled in the book of the law of God.” (For the historical context of this scripture and the various interpretations of it in the LDS Church and RLDS Church/Community of Christ, both mainstream and schismatic, see the preceding article by Bill Shepard, “‘To Set in Order the House of God’: The Search for the Elusive ‘One Mighty and Strong.’”)

Mormon Fundamentalism and the “One Mighty and Strong”

The activities and identity of the “one mighty and strong” play an immensely important role in the theology and expectations of many followers of the restoration including most LDS fundamentalists today. Of all scripture, no single verse is referred to more often by fundamentalists than Doctrine and Covenant 85:7.⁵ Consequently, it is nearly impossible to comprehend the fundamentalist movement among the Latter-day Saints without understanding this concept of the “one mighty and strong.” Mormon fundamentalists generally teach that Joseph Smith will return to fill the role of the “one mighty and strong,”⁶ but many variant beliefs and numerous claimants also exist.

Three interpretations regarding the coming of the “one mighty and strong” can be identified in commentaries by Church leaders and fundamentalist writers over the years: (1) it was a conditional prophecy specific to circumstances in Jackson County in the 1830s and hence is no longer relevant; (2) it applies to the future visit of a personage to Jackson County who will be responsible for specific duties in that geographic area, such as setting in order the temple complex and assigning building lot “inheritances” there; and (3) it applies to a future “setting in order” of the entire

Church by a powerful figure raised up for that purpose. This last position is tenaciously held by nearly all contemporary fundamentalists.

Unlike every other reference to the “house of God” found in the Doctrine and Covenants, this third interpretation holds that the “house of God” mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 85:7 is not a temple structure,⁷ but instead refers to the entire Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which fundamentalists affirm is currently “out of order.”⁸ Fundamentalist writer Ogden Kraut described an impressively comprehensive role for this future “one mighty and strong”: “The setting in order of the House of God will be a greater event than the Restoration. What failed in the beginning will succeed in the end. The miracles will be greater, the number of converts will be more numerous; the power and wealth of the Saints will be richer; and Zion—the New Jerusalem—will finally be built.”⁹

Fundamentalists proclaim that, through the efforts of the “one mighty and strong,” they will be vindicated and the practice of plural marriage restored.¹⁰ Reportedly, also “set in order” would be Church finances;¹¹ the redemption of Zion and the return of the Saints to Jackson County, Missouri;¹² the establishment of fundamentalists in positions where they will preside over the First Presidency;¹³ the restoration of divine revelation to guide leaders in the Church, which is now in apostasy;¹⁴ the clarification of which priesthood ordinations performed since Heber J. Grant became Church president in 1918 have been valid;¹⁵ and the implementation of the law of consecration throughout the Church.¹⁶ In Jackson County, the one mighty and strong will accomplish his second duty by arranging “by lot the inheritances of the saints,”¹⁷ probably after first designating the building site for the temple complex (the “house of God”) that will be located there. That building site will establish “order” by delineating the reference coordinates used to survey all of the surrounding inheritance lots that will be assigned.¹⁸

Although a psychological exploration of motives is beyond the scope of this article, it is easy to see why the mysterious yet dazzling and near-omnipotent characteristics of the “one mighty and strong” would work powerfully upon the imaginations of talented but ignored and marginalized figures. John T. Clark seems to have been such a person; but since the dawn of the twentieth century, dozens of men besides him have asserted claims to the identity and responsibilities of the “one mighty and strong.”¹⁹

For example, Joseph E. Robinson, who presided over the California

Mission between 1901 and 1919, commented in October 1918 general conference: “We have had five such [claimants as the ‘one mighty and strong’] in the California mission since I have had the honor to preside in it. They have come to naught, and dwindled away.” Robinson continued:

One in particular that I have in mind, who gathered about him quite a little body of honest people, God-fearing people, humble and contrite and repentant when they were shown the error of their ways, for I had the privilege of baptizing a goodly number of them. This man went on for years, pretending that sometime he would come as a mighty and strong one and set the Church in order. He said that the people would be tried in all things; so frequently he would be drunken with wine, that they might be tried in that way, and he reveled in the use of some drugs and tobacco, so that they might be tried in their faith because of this weakness. He took wives from some men and gave them to others, and then took them himself, and then turned them back to the original husband, that they might be tried in that way. And still they endured it because of their faith in some of his prophecies and the manner in which he interpreted the scriptures. When stricken and about to die, he was taken to a hospital, and several days before his death he told them not to bury him, but to watch over his body for three days and he would come and take it up again and establish them in their inheritance in Zion before God forever. They watched his body for six days, and then they buried him.²⁰

John T. Clark’s Claims

The charismatic John T. Clark was among the earliest to proclaim his identity as the “one mighty and strong.” Part of Clark’s confidence in asserting his identity as the promised “one” seems to have come from a patriarchal blessing he received indicating that he was chosen to fulfill several scriptures including Doctrine and Covenants 85:7.²¹ In early 1905, Clark published a pamphlet containing his unorthodox beliefs and claims that he was the individual chosen by God to fill the role of the “one mighty and strong.” Although I have found no contemporary evidence of specific reactions to Clark’s claims or whether he gained a significant number of adherents, his activity was evidently noticed by Church members and became sufficiently disturbing to Church leaders that Clark was excommunicated in May 1905.

Undoubtedly, Clark’s case contributed to the fact that six months later, the First Presidency (Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund) printed an official statement that explicated the context of Doctrine and Covenants 85 (which had been extracted from a letter Joseph Smith wrote William W. Phelps in 1832) and officially proclaimed that

the need for the “one mighty and strong . . . may also be considered as having passed away and the whole incident of the prophecy closed.”²² The First Presidency did not entirely foreclose the possibility that he could “be a future bishop of the Church who will be with the Saints in Zion, Jackson county, Missouri, when the Lord shall establish them in that land.”²³

In the decades following the publication of Clark’s original pamphlet, he continued to promote himself as the “one mighty and strong.” His ideas expanded; and seventeen years later in 1922, he dictated the manuscript of *The One Mighty and Strong* to Joseph White Musser, then age fifty, who acted as his scribe for the 165-page book.²⁴ Nathaniel Baldwin, a briefly affluent local radio manufacturer, contributed \$750, underwriting the printing of five thousand copies. Baldwin also temporarily provided economic security for Clark by appointing him to the board of directors of his company. By November 1922, those directors were a veritable “Who’s Who” of the fundamentalist movement: John T. Clark, Clyde Neilson, Daniel Bateman, Paul Feil,²⁵ former Apostle Matthias F. Cowley, John Y. Barlow, Israel Barlow, Ianthus Barlow, Albert Barlow, Lyman Jessop, Joseph S. Jessop, Moroni Jessop, Margarito Bautista, Leslie Broadbent, Joseph W. Musser, and Lorin C. Woolley.²⁶

The first section of *The One Mighty and Strong* reprints the First Presidency’s 1905 statement regarding the “one mighty and strong.” A significant portion of the rest of Clark’s book discusses Doctrine and Covenants 85:8: “While that man, who was called of God and appointed, that putteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God, shall fall by the shaft of death, like as a tree that is smitten by the vivid shaft of lightning.” Clark argues that this passage could not be a reference to a bishop but instead predicts “the removal of a President of the Church in a very strange manner. . . . This strange way in dealing with a President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is not a savory dish to be altogether relished by individuals of high authority in the Church. . . . The falling of a President in a strange way is necessary in order to fulfill scripture and carry out the plan of salvation of the children of men in our day and time.”²⁷ After the Church president dies in this “strange” manner, the “one mighty and strong” will take his place and set the Church in order, restoring, among other things, the practice of plural marriage. “It is inevitable that a President must fall,” asserted Clark, “in order that the ‘Mighty and Strong One’ chosen of the Lord may be established at the head of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in the place of the deposed and fallen

leader, in or that the house of God (His Church, 1 Tim. 3:15) may be set in order, as the Lord shall direct."²⁸

Although Clark's main thesis is clear, *The One Mighty and Strong* consists of a pastiche of scriptural references and religious teachings organized only loosely into a rambling and repetitive message. Historian Lyle O. Wright assesses Clark's writings as "generally very disorganized, repetitious, and somewhat confusing."²⁹ Clark and his followers recognized the problems with the paperback, which prompted him to initially limit its distribution. Clark himself attributed the weaknesses of the book to a "lack of proof-reading." Baldwin refused to fund a second printing "unless he [Baldwin] could change some things in the book." Sometime between 1922 and 1930, while trying to decide whether to actively distribute the faulty copies, Clark had a vision in which "President John Taylor, (from the other side) came to me [John T. Clark] and said 'YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!' Then striking his right clinched fist into his left hand said, 'AND WOE BETIDE THEM THAT OPPOSE YOU IN THIS WORK.'³⁰ Clark obediently circulated copies of the book.

In 1930, eight years after the book's publication, Clark reflected on his decision to publish it despite the lack of editing:

After having completed the pencil writing of the manuscript of the book entitled "THE ONE MIGHTY AND STRONG," in the spring of 1922 A.D. which was just off-handedly done and the same rolled up and placed away until I should feel like publishing it; and then in a short time afterwards, while thinking whether or not it was time to publish it, the Lord Jesus Christ came to me and said, speaking in a firm and positive manner, "PUBLISH IT; YOU SHOULD HAVE GONE ON AND PUBLISHED IT: PUBLISH IT: THERE IS NO REDEMPTION FOR THE LAMANITES: THERE IS NO RESTORATION OF THE FULLNESS OF THE GOSPEL: THIS MUST BE PUBLISHED FIRST."³¹

Clark's Other Prophecies and Teachings

In addition to the topics Clark treated in his book, he issued other prophecies and teachings that were never published. According to Joseph White Musser, a theme Clark often returned to involved "hidden records and other valuables in a mound near Alpine, Utah County, land owned by his father." He claimed that "it has been made known to him that he is to bring the records forth." Allegedly, "Pres. Wilford Woodruff blessed the spot where the records are and Pres. Young told of their being there.

Several men, it is stated, have lost their lives by interfering with the premises, and many others have become disabled temporarily."³²

On several occasions, Clark led dozens of followers, including Harry Shewell (born 1903), Nathaniel Baldwin (born 1878), Lorin Woolley (born 1856), and Joseph Musser (born 1872), to Alpine, Utah, to this hiding place. Musser recorded on June 10, 1928: "Took John T. Clark . . . to Alpine to visit the place where the 'records' are supposed to be hid. John T. explained again that Pres. Woodruff had set the place apart. That almost untold wealth had been hid there by the early Mexican Indians and that the time was about right for the bringing of them forth."³³ In 1930, follower Harry Shewell recorded: "Brother Clark said that the Sealed Records were buried near the mouth of American Fork Canyon, and that there was a vast treasure buried with them. A lot of this treasure was in gold bars with the stamp of Spain of the year 1519 upon it."³⁴ Early in 1931, Clark also told his followers "that with the Records were the following: The Sword of Laban, the sixteen stones of the Brother of Jared, the Urim and Thumim [sic], a large pot of the most costly jewels and immense quantities of gold."³⁵

In 1922 before he published his book, Clark had predicted that "a President of the Church will die suddenly as a result of swimming, and the one mighty and strong will be raised up in his stead to see the Church in order and lead the people back to Jackson County."³⁶ On May 6, 1930, he prophesied: "Heber J. Grant and Charles W. Nibley will be removed from their places by death and Pres. Ivins will remain to help carry on the work. Pres. Grant will make the announcement that [John T.] Clark is to succeed him as leader and is the one Mighty and Strong to lead the church out of bondage spoken of in 85th Sec. D&C and that the records are about to come forth through him."³⁷

Later that month Joseph Musser wrote in his journal:

[John T. Clark] saw one like unto the Kaiser of Germany, facing the north and proclaiming his power in the U.S. As they fought, he saw great chasms open up in the earth and whole regiments swallowed up. He saw the country swept clean to the base of the Rocky Mountains. 1,700,000 Lamanites were killed. Then the Japs [sic] (who are of the House of Israel) came in U.S. by way of Mexico and assisted the Lamanites until peace was declared and only the Righteous only were left in Zion. After this, work commenced in the building of Zion in Jackson County by the Lamanites, assisted by the Gentile Saints.³⁸

Although Germany and Japan were both involved (along with several

other countries) in World War II, none of the details match this picture created by Clark.

John T. Clark also testified that he had “seen the Savior several times also Joseph Smith and his successors in office”³⁹ and that he [Clark] was “the most literal descendent of Jesus Christ on the earth today, and he also carries indial [sic] blood in his veins.”⁴⁰ His mission was “to lead the people back to Jackson County and assist the Lamanites in building the Temple.”⁴¹

Further indication of Clark’s influence can be traced in the diaries of Musser and Shewell. During the summer and fall of 1930, Musser asked Clark to administer to his wife, Mary, who was ill with cancer.⁴² In February 1931, Shewell “met at the Diamond Oil Co. Office with J. W. Musser, John T. Clark, and my father, Hal and had a word of prayer in behalf of the Oil Company.”⁴³ They met again in March “in solemn prayer assembly.”⁴⁴ Four months later, Musser wrote: “Last night I awoke—could not sleep. Arose and bowed to the Lord asking about . . . just who John T. Clark was, who is making so many claims. Today Brother [Peter] Westman came to office, introduced himself and without any preliminary proceeded to testify that John T. Clark, is one ‘Mighty and Strong’ spoken of. . . . He was very definite and had a marvelous spirit. Perhaps it was the Lord’s answer to my prayer.”⁴⁵

Musser’s confusion regarding John T. Clark’s identity is surprising since Lorin C. Woolley had told Musser more than two years earlier that Clark was “in error in supposing he is the ‘one Mighty and Strong, like unto Moses.’”⁴⁶ Also, a little later in 1929 Musser was reportedly “ordained a High Priest Apostle⁴⁷ and a Patriarch to all the world by a High Priest Apostle [Lorin C. Woolley].”⁴⁸ Nonetheless, for two years after this “ordination” and counsel, Musser continued to be attentive to Clark’s teachings.⁴⁹ In any event, Musser evidently remained in contact with Clark’s protégé Westman, for eight days after Westman had testified to Clark’s identity as the one mighty and strong, Musser invited him and Clark to return to the office. There “Bro. Westman gave John T. Clark a blessing . . . pronouncing him the one ‘Mighty-Strong.’” Immediately thereafter, Clark gave Musser a blessing that “greatly strengthened” him, although he records no details of its contents.⁵⁰ The three again met in November 1931 where they “supplicated the Lord in behalf of our company.” Musser added, “A splendid spirit prevailed, and we felt the Lord had heard our prayers.”⁵¹

Over the next few months, however, Musser realigned his allegiance away from Clark and toward Lorin Woolley, who was privately promoting a priesthood office that he claimed was greater in authority than the calling of the “one mighty and strong.” Woolley’s teachings would be published in 1933–34 by Musser and J. Leslie Broadbent, detailing the existence of a previously unknown super-powerful priesthood council called the Council of Friends.⁵²

It appears that a competitive spirit existed among some of the followers of Woolley and Clark. One evening in May of 1932, a gathering of Woolley supporters apparently interfered with a prayer meeting scheduled by the followers of John T. Clark. Harry Shewell lamented: “It is exactly five months today since we started to meet, daily, at the Diamond Oil Company’s offices to supplicate the Lord in behalf of the Oil Company and also the redemption of Zion. However, we couldn’t hold our meeting tonight as the office was being polluted by the ‘Old and Young Patriarchs’ and their flock, or apostles, or something. Anyway, the Woolley crowd were deciding the destinies of mankind and we didn’t care to interfere in the counsels of the ‘High and Mighty.’”⁵³

LDS Church leaders were obviously exasperated by Clark’s claims, and Harry Shewell recorded that his own bishop “had definite instructions from Pres. Grant, through the Stake Presidency, to oppose Bro. Clark.”⁵⁴ Individuals who sympathized with Clark were disciplined.⁵⁵ In 1931, Shewell recorded hearing an address in Shewell’s home ward by J. Golden Kimball, one of the seven presidents in the First Council of Seventy. Kimball “spoke of meeting a certain man on the street the other day (this man was Bro. John T. Clark) who told him that he had seen the Savior and had shaken hands with Him and asked Him many questions etc. Bro. Kimball said that they always used to call a fellow ‘nutty’ who made such claims as that, and that is what he thought this fellow was, ‘a nut.’ He also added, concerning the man’s having seen the Savior, that such things just don’t occur.”⁵⁶

Clark’s Death

Clark’s influence did not last much longer, for he died in Provo on September 16, 1932, at age sixty-seven. Musser recorded in his journal: “He was under medical attention. He had claimed to be the one ‘Mighty and Strong,’ the one like unto Moses and the Indian Prophet and had created quite a stir. He was clean and apparently sincere and honest. But it

appears he was misled by the spirit he followed. There are among his followers now [those] who claim he will come back to do his work of setting the Church in order."⁵⁷

Harry Shewell, a staunch follower, was "almost stunned" by Clark's death, because he had strong faith in Clark's mission and could not conceive of his death before it was completed. He recorded in his journal a remarkable dream that another follower, Ferd (sic) Olsen, had had the previous year. In that dream, John T. Clark died and "was brought back to life and fulfilled his great mission."⁵⁸ Believing that perhaps the dream was prophetic, Shewell, Olsen, and a third believer, Clyde Neilson, drove to Provo to visit the mortuary where Clark was being embalmed. Shewell recorded:

Upon entering the room we saw his body lying upon a table, it was all covered but his head, and on the floor were two buckets full of blood and water etc. which had just been taken from his body, in fact the tubes were still connected to him. It was an extremely gruesome sight to thus behold the mortal remains of a prophet of Almighty God. We all stood around the table for a few minutes, and when I thought that the awful reality of Bro. John's passing had sufficiently reached the heart and soul of each one of us, I said, "Do you brethren still feel the same way about it? Shall we proceed with the administration?" They all answered that they were ready to. . . . In sealing the anointing I was mouth, and, among a few other words, I felt impressed to speak thus, "That the scriptures might be fulfilled, and that the many testimonies given us of Almighty God might also be fulfilled, by virtue and authority . . . we command you to come back to this life and finish your great mission, which is not completed."⁵⁹

They waited for a few minutes, but nothing happened. Shewell then explained: "I told them that as I spoke, I felt that he would come back but not at that moment, but in God's own time, which would be soon."⁶⁰

At the funeral two days later, Harry's brother Harold "bore his testimony to the fact that Bro. John T. Clark was a prophet of the Living God." Another follower affirmed that "Bro. Clark's mission on this earth was not finished and that we would yet hear more from him."⁶¹ The more pragmatic Olsen told Shewell about six weeks later: "Now that John was dead and things hadn't happened etc. that he couldn't see what else there was to do about it except forget it."⁶² But even three years later, Shewell wrote a tract, *Who Is John T. Clark?*, outlining his reasons for believing that Clark would still come back to fulfill his mission.⁶³

Clark's claims, his unfulfilled prophecies, and his significance have

faded. Still, he was emblematic of other would-be leaders who would discover a new identity in that 1832 scripture. Ignoring the circumstances which prompted Joseph Smith to write the original verses, they would isolate a passage into which they could read themselves, gather followers, foster hopes of fabulous wealth, and bask in a feeling of specialness. While the true identity of the “one mighty and strong” remains a mystery even today, expectations of his reality and his future responsibilities have beckoned eccentrics, puzzled historians, and buoyed up Mormon fundamentalists for decades. Doubtless this pattern will continue.

Notes

1. In addition to Clark, I include Nathaniel Baldwin (1878–1961), Lorin C. Woolley (1856–1934), and Joseph White Musser (1872–1954) among these influential earlier figures. Baldwin, after initially making a heavy personal and financial commitment, withdrew completely after about 1925, while Woolley and Musser went on to provide significant doctrinal and organizational developments for the nascent movement.

2. My research has uncovered the apparent existence of a publication entitled: *Letters and Sermons of John T. Clark: Regarding the Records of the Book of Mormon, the Root of Jesse*, which I have yet to locate. Clearly, there is room for additional research into the life of this fascinating man.

3. “John T. Clark,” obituary clipping, n.d., from unidentified newspaper; photocopy of clipping in my possession.

4. Nathaniel Baldwin, Journal, May 18, 1905, Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives).

5. Gilbert Fulton, *The Most Holy Principle*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Gems Publishing, 1970–75), 4:43, 244, 245, 256; Rulon C. Allred, *Treasures of Knowledge: Selected Discourses and Excerpts from Talks*, 2 vols. (Hamilton, Mont.: Bitterroot Publishing, 1981), 1:107, 154; 2:21, 39; Arnold Boss, “Spiritual Bondage,” *Truth* 1 (October 1935): 58; Joseph S. Musser, “Mass Excommunications” (editorial), *Truth* 1 (March 1936): 135; “Priesthood Matters” (editorial), *Truth* 2 (October 1936): 73; “Slanderous Statements Refuted” (editorial), *Truth* 2 (January 1937): 120; “Men Not the Truth Change” (editorial), *Truth* 3 (July 1937): 26; “Comments on Conference Topics” (editorial), *Truth* 3 (May 1938): 203; “Economic Law of Heaven” (editorial), *Truth* 4 (November 1938): 105; “Let Principle Rule” (editorial), *Truth* 4 (April 1939): 210; “Magna Carta” (editorial), *Truth* 6 (October 1940): 105; Lorin C. Woolley quoted in “President John Taylor” (editorial), *Truth* 6 (November 1940): 136; *The Sermons of Joseph W. Musser, 1940–42*, edited by Nate Allred (Salt Lake City: Messenger Publications, 2005), 52, 90, 144,

176, 179; *A Selection of the Sermons of John Y. Barlow, 1940–49*, on *Fullness eBook Collection*, CD-ROM (N.p.: 2005), February 6, 1944, available at ebooks@thoughtfactory.biz. Leroy S. Johnson, *The L. S. Johnson Sermons*, 7 vols. (Hildale, Utah: Twin Cities Courier, 1983–84), contains 131 references to the “one mighty and strong”: twenty-four occurrences in Vol. 1, nineteen in Vol. 2, eighteen in Vol. 3, twenty-six in Vol. 4, nine in Vol. 5, twenty-one in Vol. 6, and fourteen in Vol. 7. In contrast, a computerized search of the *Ensign* 1970–2000, published by the LDS Church, showed only one reference. Elder Mark E. Petersen, speaking in general conference on April 8, 1973, warned his listeners to avoid individuals who claimed to be the “one mighty and strong.”

6. *Sermons of Joseph W. Musser*, 128–29; Joseph White Musser, *Journal*, November 28, 1920–March 6, 1944, restricted, LDS Church Archives, photocopy in my possession, entry of August 12, 1938; *The L. S. Johnson Sermons*, 1:233; Ogden Kraut, *The One Mighty and Strong* (Salt Lake City: Pioneer Press, 1991 paperback edition), 15.

7. See D&C 45:18; 88:119, 129, 130, 136; 109:8; 138:58. It might be argued that some of these verses refer to non-temple meeting houses, but in every case they refer to physical buildings in which religious meetings occur.

8. Lorin Woolley reportedly taught that even fundamentalist priesthood councils would be out of order prior to the coming of the “one mighty and strong” because “the ‘one mighty and strong’ would not come to set the Lord’s house in order until all quorums of priesthood were out of order from the highest to the last quorum of deacons.” Quoted in Barbara Owen Kelsch, *Louis Alma Kelsch* (N.p., n.d.), 83–84. See also Lynn L. Bishop and Steven L. Bishop, *The Keys of the Priesthood Illustrated* (Draper, Utah: Review and Preview Publishers, 1971), 286–88.

9. Kraut, *The One Mighty and Strong*, 136.

10. Melissa Merrill (pseud.), *Polygamist’s Wife* (Salt Lake City: Olympus Publishing, 1975), 150, a plural wife, wrote of her hopes regarding the changes to be effected by the “one mighty and strong”: “Ultimately, we believed, plural marriage along with the United Order would be returned for all Latter-day Saints and we would receive the recognition and blessings we had earned. To be baptized, achieve the Mormon priesthood and be married in the temple is something for which we yearned for our children.”

11. According to Joseph Musser, *Journal*, June 14, 1922: “Had a long talk with John T. Clark. Told me of conversation had with Loren [sic] C. Woolley a few days ago. Brother Woolley told him that at the time Pres. John Taylor received his revelation in 1886, at his father’s home, and while surrounded with a halo of light, among other things, Pres. Taylor said in substance: At the time of the 7th President in the Church [Heber J. Grant], the Church will be in spiritual and fi-

nancial bondage, and then the Lord will raise up a deliverer as spoken of in the 85th Sec. of the Doctrine and Covenants.”

12. Ogden Kraut, *One Mighty and Strong*, 15, took the position that Joseph Smith was the “one mighty and strong,” arguing: “Since Zion was not redeemed during the Prophet’s mortal lifetime, isn’t it likely that the Lord would allow him to return at a future time to set things in order and to bring about the redemption of Zion?”

13. Musser, Journal, March 8, 1933: “It is strange that after being called to embrace the Patriarchal order of Marriage, I should be persecuted by my brethren for upholding the practice of it; that I should be cut off the Church, as they suppose they have done and ostracized. They little know that under the ordination I have received—that of Apostle and Patriarch in the Kingdom of God—that I am the Church, insomuch as I remain faithful (See D&C 84. Sec.) [sic]. The Church as an organization has gone astray and soon the hand of the Lord will be upon it, to bring back to order as written in the 85th Sec. D&C. Until this is done the Church cannot progress. It has surrendered the great principle that made for progress and without which it must die. The world is in turmoil as is the Church. No leaders who are inspired.” See also Johnson, *Leroy S. Johnson Sermons*, 4:1377. These positions are consistent with those expressed in my personal conversations and correspondence with several Mormon fundamentalists.

14. Arnold Boss, “Spiritual Bondage,” *Truth* 1 (October 1935): 58, wrote: “In the time of the 7th President of this church, the church would go into bondage both temporally and spiritually and in that day (the day of bondage) the one Mighty and Strong spoken of in the 85th section of the Doctrine and Covenants would come. . . . Since the official action taken which repudiated Plural or celestial marriage (at the general conference of October, 1890), there has been no revelation given through the heads of the church.”

15. Fundamentalists believe that many of the priesthood ordinations that occurred in the early twentieth century were performed incorrectly and, hence, the ordainee did not actually receive priesthood authority. Musser complained in “Priesthood Ordinations,” *Truth* 14 (June 1948): 12: “Our missionaries in the field; those acting as priests Elders and High Priests at home, operating without the Priesthood produce a serious and tragic problem, that, as we see it, only the ‘one Mighty and Strong’, (D&C Sec. 85) can unravel and bring order out of the chaotic condition the Church finds itself in.” See also “Priesthood Ordinations,” *Truth* 12 (July 1946): 39–44; *Messenger of the Fullness of the Gospel, Selections*, 2d ed., Vol. 1: 1994–2004 (N.p.: Messenger Publications, n.d.), 48–59.

16. Ogden Kraut, *The United Order* (Salt Lake City: Pioneer Press, 1983), 252–71.

17. Kraut, *The One Mighty and Strong*, does not mention the role of the “one

mighty and strong" in constructing the future temple in Jackson County. Joseph Musser, "Who Is the 'One Mighty and Strong?'" *Truth* 16 (October 1950): 130–34, acknowledges: "The second assignment could hardly be undertaken until the first is completed. Naturally the 'house of God' will have to be in order before the Saints can receive their inheritances." But apparently in Musser's view, the "house of God" mentioned in Doctrine and Covenants 85:7 has nothing to do with the temple to be built in Jackson County.

18. A review of an 1833 drawing of the plat of the City of Zion reveals that the "house of God" or temple, composed of twenty-four buildings, will occupy two full city blocks in the very center of the downtown area. This drawing shows additional blocks then stretching out in all four directions, each subdivided into private building "lots" or "inheritances." What is also obvious from the layout is that these surrounding blocks utilize the central temple plats as their point of reference. All property lines throughout the city parallel the sides of the temple site blocks. In other words, it appears that before any specific lots could be surveyed and assigned, the central temple plats would need to be accurately identified and precisely mapped out ("set in order," perhaps) or the property lines of all surrounding blocks, "lots," and "inheritances" might be skewed and geographically imprecise. See Richard O. Cowan, "The Great Temple of the New Jerusalem," in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Missouri*, edited by Arnold K. Garr and Clark V. Johnson (Provo, Utah: BYU Department of Church History and Doctrine, 1994), 139–44; Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 6 vols. published 1902–12, Vol. 7 published 1932), 1:357–62.

19. Kraut, *The One Mighty and Strong*, 83–100, lists James Strang, James Brighthouse, Samuel Eastman, Paul Feil, LeRoy Wilson, John Tanner Clark, Benjamin LeBaron, Joel LeBaron, John Bryant, Elden Hollis, Sherman Russell Lloyd, Frank Miller, Jasper N. 7 [sic], Art Bulla, and Alfonzo Langford. See also Kraut, *One Mighty and Strong* (pamphlet) (Salt Lake City: Pioneer Press, August 1991), 9–11. The pamphlet is the published version of paper presented at the Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, August 1991, which was expanded in his 137-page paperback with the same title printed later that same year.

20. Joseph E. Robinson, *Conference Report*, October 1918, 119–20. I have not been able to determine the identity of this individual.

21. Lyle O. Wright, "Origins and Development of the Church of the First-born of the Fulness of Times" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1963), 35; Joseph Musser, *Journal*, June 10, 1928. It was not uncommon before about World War II for Church members to receive multiple patriarchal blessings. John T. Clark received several from different men.

22. First Presidency statement, *Deseret News*, November 13, 1905, reproduced in James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–71), 4:107–20. The quotation is from p. 117.

23. *Ibid.*, 4:118–19. This future perspective is also preserved in the headnote to Section 85, 1981 LDS edition of the Doctrine and Covenants: “One mighty and strong *shall* give the saints their inheritance in Zion” (emphasis mine). This wording constitutes an official position on a definite future role for such a being.

24. Joseph White Musser, Journal, May 20, 22, 24, 1922; July 21, 29, 31; and August 4, 1922. Musser found Clark “humble and clear” and was “deeply impressed with [Clark’s] claims” (May 24, 1922). Musser remained closely involved with Clark for much of the decade, and Clark’s teachings undoubtedly influenced Musser’s own doctrinal beliefs and scriptural interpretations. Musser himself can confidently be called the father of contemporary Mormon fundamentalism, both in establishing its organizational structure and in defining its primary doctrines. See Martha Sonntag Bradley, “Joseph W. Musser: Dissenter or Fearless Crusader for Truth?” in *Differing Visions: Dissenters in Mormon History*, edited by Roger D. Launius and Linda Thatcher (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1994), 262–78, and Brian C. Hales, “‘I Have Been Fanatically Religious’: Joseph White Musser, Father of the LDS Fundamentalist Movement,” paper delivered at the Mormon History Association annual meeting, May 1992, St. George, Utah.

25. Paul Feil was initially a follower of Samuel Eastman. Eastman claimed in 1904 to be the “one mighty and strong” and was excommunicated in 1907. Following Eastman’s death, Feil asserted that he was the “one mighty and strong” in a 1943 pamphlet, *Zion Standard Watchman*. At general conferences in the 1940s, he could be seen distributing his printed revelations. Wright, “Origins and Development,” 34, 38.

26. Merrill Singer, “Nathaniel Baldwin: Utah Inventor and Patron of the Fundamentalist Movement,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (Winter 1979): 51. Singer also includes the name of former Apostle John W. Taylor as a director; however, Taylor died in 1916, several years before Baldwin’s companies were formed.

27. John T. Clark, *The One Mighty & Strong* (N.p., 1922), 20–21. This book was republished in the 1990s by Willard E. Palmer, 835 Garfield Ave., Salt Lake City 84105. Apparently Clark was unaware of Oliver Cowdery’s 1834 explanation to John Whitmer that the threat of being “smitten” was conditional: “Brother Joseph says, that the item in his letter that says, that the man that is called etc. and puts forth his hand to steady the ark of God, does not mean that any had at the time, but it was given for a caution to those in high standing to beware, lest they should fall by the vivid shaft of death as the Lord has said.”

Cowdery, Letter to John Whitmer, quoted in Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith: A Historical and Biographical Commentary of the Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 179.

28. Clark, *The One Mighty & Strong*, 56, 150.

29. Wright, "Origins and Development of the Church of the Firstborn," 35.

30. Preface insert placed in copies of the 1922 printing that were distributed after 1930; emphasis Clark's. See also Wright, "Origins and Development of the Church of the Firstborn," 35–36.

31. Preface insert. See also Wright, "Origins and Development of the Church of the Firstborn," 35–36.

32. Musser, Journal, May 16, 1922.

33. *Ibid.*, June 10, 1928.

34. Harry Shewell, Journal, December 12, 1930, photocopy of typescript in my possession. According to Edward Leo Lyman and Linda King Newell, *A History of Millard County* (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society/Millard County Commission, 1999), 53–54: "From the beginning of the Mormon colonization of Utah Territory, rumors abounded of buried Spanish treasure and mines rich with gold and silver, and seekers after the hidden wealth were numerous. At the root of the rumors was a reported visit of an Indian to Brigham Young when the latter was in Fillmore in 1852. The Indian told Young of a silver mine in western Millard County that he believed had been worked by the Spaniards. Upon his return to Salt Lake City Brigham called and commissioned John Brown and several others to investigate the tale and 'take possession' of the mine and any others found." No silver mine was ever found.

35. Shewell, Journal, January 15, 1931.

36. Musser, Journal, May 24, 1922. No Church president has died while swimming.

37. *Ibid.*, May 6, 1930. Heber J. Grant died of old age on May 14, 1945, followed by Charles W. Nibley, who passed away on December 11, 1931, at age eighty-two. George Albert Smith, president of the Quorum of the Twelve, succeeded Grant, not Clark.

38. *Ibid.*, May 25, 1930.

39. *Ibid.*, May 24, 1922.

40. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1922. See Ogden Kraut, *Jesus Was Married* (Genola, Utah: Pioneer Publishing, 1969), 79–99, for a discussion of this concept.

41. Musser, Journal, May 16, 1922.

42. *Ibid.*, August 4 and September 30, 1930.

43. Shewell, Journal, February 5, 1931. Diamond Oil was one of the companies that employed Joseph Musser.

44. Musser, Journal, March 15, 1931; Shewell, Journal, March 14, 1931.

45. Musser, Journal, July 15, 1931; spelling standardized.

46. Musser, Journal, March 31, 1929.

47. According to fundamentalist doctrine, the highest priesthood office is that of a High Priest Apostle. Musser wrote: "There is an apostolic order designated as the 'Apostleship of the Twelve,' which must be subordinate to the 'High Priest' Apostles." Joseph W. Musser, *A Priesthood Issue* (N.p., 1948), 10. To date, a review of LDS scripture and all known historical sources has failed to identify even one reference to this described lofty calling. Wilford Woodruff used the term in a discourse on December 21, 1856: "Let the *Twelve Apostles*, and the *Seventy Apostles*, and *High Priest Apostles*, and *all other Apostles* rise up and keep pace with the work of the Lord God, for we have no time to sleep. . . . I want to see brother [Orson] Hyde, who is President of the Twelve, walk into all these Quorums and attend their meetings, and we will back him up. . . . It is for the Twelve to rise up and carry off the load." *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855–86), 4:147; emphasis mine. While this is a genuine reference to "High Priest Apostles," Woodruff's "High Priest Apostles" are subordinate to the Twelve Apostles. It appears that Woodruff was speaking of high priests and seventies and "all other" individuals who were "apostles" by virtue of their having received a special witness of Christ's reality and divinity, rather than of men who had been formally ordained to different levels of apostolic authority in the Melchizedek Priesthood. Only one office of apostle has ever been described by priesthood leaders. Brigham Young, April 6, 1853, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:134, explained: "The keys of the eternal Priesthood, which is after the order of the Son of God, are comprehended by being an Apostle. All the Priesthood, all the keys, all the gifts, all the endowments, and everything preparatory to entering into the presence of the Father and of the Son, are in, composed of, circumscribed by, or I might say incorporated within the circumference of, the Apostleship."

48. *Journal of Joseph White Musser* (N.p., 1948), 11. This published work is an autobiography and should not be confused with the holograph journals also cited in this article.

49. See Musser, Journal, August 25, December 29, 1929; February 23, March 31, May 6, 15, 16, 25, July 27, August 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, September 30, October 23, December 10, 1930; January 14, March 14, 15, July 15, 17, 23, August 12, November 23, 1931; May 7, September 6, 18, 1932.

50. Musser, Journal, July 23, 1931.

51. *Ibid.*, November 23, 1931.

52. Joseph White Musser, *New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage* (N.p., 1933), 75–82; Joseph White Musser and J. Leslie Broadbent, *Supplement to a New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage* (N.p., 1934), 91–128; Joseph White Musser and J. Leslie Broadbent, *Priesthood Items* (N.p., 1934), 13–54.

53. Shewell, *Journal*, May 19, 1932.

54. *Ibid.*, June 29, 1931.

55. *Ibid.*, June 28, September 3, 1931; January 4, February 11, March 9, 1932.

56. *Ibid.*, August 2, 1931. LDS theology holds that while prophets and other righteous men and women can see God (see, e.g., D&C 67:10, 76:23, 88:68, 93:1, 110:2, 101:38), Clark's claims of informal familiarity with the Savior undoubtedly troubled Elder Kimball. After seeing the Lord, Isaiah and Moses were overcome (Isa. 6:5; Moses 1:9–10), which seems to be the more common response to such a rare and transcendent experience.

57. Musser, *Journal*, September 16, 1932. For the Indian prophet, see 2 Nephi 3:23–24.

58. Shewell, *Journal*, September 16, 1932.

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Ibid.*

61. *Ibid.*, September 18, 1932.

62. *Ibid.*, November 7, 1932.

63. Harry Shewell, *Who Is John T. Clark?* (N.p., 1935). See also W. A. Hudson, *Believe It or Not . . .* (Salt Lake City: n.pub., 1953).

The Founding and the Fortieth: Reflections on the Challenge of Editing and the Promise of *Dialogue*

G. Wesley Johnson

From the editorial preface in the first issue of *Dialogue*:

Some of the more general purposes of *Dialogue* are: 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 an 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

We are now celebrating forty years of continuous publication of this journal, quite a feat for an enterprise that was launched on a wing and a prayer. My purpose in this essay is to give a short background on my early interest in becoming an editor, how I wound up at Stanford, met Gene England and my other founding colleagues, how we developed a new publication over a six-year period (including our many trials and tribulations), the reaction to this enterprise, and how we transferred the journal to UCLA and created a mechanism that has provided an orderly transition

for forty years. Also included is a concluding analysis of why I think *Dialogue* has more than lived up to the promise its founders hoped for.

Being able to ruminate over these questions has been a distinct pleasure, and I must pay tribute to the many men and women who over the years, whether as chief editors, associate editors, staff members, or business personnel, have given unselfishly of their time to create the success we now witness. There has been a shared belief from the beginning down to today that exploring the life of the Mormon mind in all its peculiarities and power is a wonderful challenge. I am only sorry for one thing: that my co-editor, Eugene England, is not with us to share in this happy occasion. But his contributions, stimulating mind, and charismatic teaching personality will long be remembered. He and I had a personal, trusting relationship which was essential for the launching of a new enterprise dedicated to exploring terra incognita.

On Becoming an Editor

Everyone has a childhood ambition. Mine was to become an editor; and at age eight, I launched my first magazine—hand written, circulated to family. The next year I was sent to a commercial college to learn how to type and run a mimeograph, which meant that I could now actually produce a printed product. These skills were useful, preparing me to become an editor of my high school paper, and also to help found a monthly magazine for teens in my home town of Phoenix, the *Fadical Newsletter*. This publication, commenting on local politics and society, was important, because we had to learn to walk a narrow path and not overly criticize our school or elders, while still providing provocative commentary. We were an instant success and ran in the black for three years. The exercise was essential in helping me launch *Dialogue* in later years: we started *Fadical* with no sponsorship and few resources but with a great deal of passion and commitment.

After high school, I was admitted to Harvard but decided to spend my freshman year at BYU to learn about my Mormon heritage, associate with other LDS young people, and study with LDS professors. But I had always nurtured a desire to become an editor of the oldest college magazine in the country, so I transferred to Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was elected an editor of the *Harvard Lampoon*. It was a letterpress publication that appeared monthly. That three-year experience writing, editing, and bringing to publication the *Lampoon* would also serve me well later at *Dia-*

logue. Harvard was a great place to discuss the Church and its relationship to society. Some friends I met there, such as Richard Lyman Bushman, Chase Nebeker Peterson, and Cherry Bushman Silver, later played important roles in *Dialogue*. Claudia Lauper, later Bushman, who co-founded *Exponent II*, was also there.

After Harvard the French Mission beckoned. An added benefit of living in France was to become acquainted with the many intellectual reviews published in Paris. Working with the French people was delightful, if at times maddening, since they liked to discuss all sides of an argument and then disagree on the conclusion. My mission was a rich, spiritual, humane, and intellectual experience.

When I got home, I had several options. Through friends of my mother I met Henry Luce, head of Time, Inc., who offered me a chance to join the staff of *Time*. But my experience overseas had changed my angle of vision: I enrolled at Columbia to do a Ph.D. in modern European history. I became editor of the *International Fellows Newsletter*, which allowed me to keep my hand in publishing. I was elected president of the graduate history club, which enabled me to schedule a wide range of authors and editors for speaking dates. One unforgettable evening was spent dining with Alfred A. Knopf, dean of American publishers.

I also met Marian Ashby on the steps of the Manhattan Ward; and after marriage, we embarked on a three-year Ford Foundation traveling grant to France and West Africa. My time in Paris also put me in touch with *Lampoon* friends who had started a new transatlantic literary journal, the *Paris Review*. Marian and I enjoyed living in Dakar, Senegal, West Africa, where I researched my thesis on French African nationalists. We were impressed with our black African friends, who abstained from drinking and smoking, were family oriented, and knew more about genealogy than we did. We believed that some day many of them would become members of the Church.

By late spring 1964, it was time to think about returning to the USA. I received several offers to spend a year writing up my doctoral thesis. One was at the University of Chicago, the other at Hoover Library at Stanford. It was a difficult choice—a real turning point in our lives. Chicago was intellectually more attractive; but since we had been away from the West for many years, we chose Stanford, within striking distance of our families in Provo and Phoenix. That proved to be a fateful choice, since it put us in Palo Alto just at the time that a social ferment was taking place on many

university campuses—sparked by the “free speech” movement at Berkeley. It was also a lucky choice, since later that year Stanford decided to hire a faculty member to teach about the developing areas of Africa, and I got the job since I was on the scene.²

Stanford in 1965: Creating a New Journal

Stanford held the perspective that it was a privilege for young scholars to begin their teaching careers there. Marian was astounded to find out via radio announcements that rookie police officers in San Francisco were going to make \$2,000 a year more than an assistant professor. Housing was so high that we got special permission to live in Escondido Village, the home of married graduate students. That ultimately proved to be fortuitous because it meant meeting a host of LDS graduate students, many of whom would become crucial players in launching *Dialogue*.

Stanford in the 1960s was an aggressive, freewheeling institution, open to innovation, quite different from my experience at the more conservative campuses of Harvard and Columbia. Professors came to class in sports shirts, and there was an informality between faculty and students that took a while to get accustomed to. I spent my first nine months working at Hoover Library on my dissertation and then started teaching in fall of 1965.

The students were bright and outspoken, and it was a pleasure to become acquainted with the LDS graduate students from the different faculties. Stanford was in the midst of becoming a truly national university instead of a first-class regional school, and I found many new colleagues who had also been hired from mainly Ivy League campuses. Two historians, who were chairmen one after the other, Gordon Wright (French history) and David Potter (American history), became great colleagues and friends. Their forbearance and *laissez faire* attitude later made it possible for *Dialogue* to set up offices for five years at History Corner on the Stanford quad. Stanford’s indirect contribution of office space, meeting rooms, phone, typewriters, etc., cannot be underestimated in the founding and success of *Dialogue*. In fact the Stanford University Press advised us on many matters, and at one point we were going to have it print the new magazine until we got a better quote from Salt Lake City.

Let me backtrack for a few paragraphs. The idea and need for an independent, serious LDS publication had been in the air for many years.³ At the Manhattan Ward in the late 1950s, some friends and I discussed

the need to discuss in print what we thought were the two key issues the Church was facing: the black exclusion question and the status of women. When I accepted the Ford Foundation fellowship, it was suggested that I attend UCLA for one semester before leaving for Paris to sharpen my knowledge of Africa at its African Studies Center, at the time a pioneering institute. It was directed by James Coleman, a Harvard-trained political scientist, who was of LDS background and a Provo native.

Jim Coleman took me under his wing and prepared me well for black Africa, since he had lived in and written about Nigeria. At our UCLA ward in 1962, when I was asked to give a long sacrament meeting talk, I chose to speak on the need for an independent, serious, intellectual journal to enrich the Mormon community. It was greeted by much enthusiasm, and several persons asked, "Can't we explore getting such a project started?" That was a thrilling experience, except for the fact that we were leaving in a few months for Paris and West Africa. But that warm reception to the idea stayed with me and confirmed the *need* for such a project.

So now return to Palo Alto, where every day I bicycled to the Hoover Tower to work on the dissertation. Meanwhile, one of my closest mission companions visited Stanford where he had earlier studied. This was Paul Salisbury, then a Salt Lake architect, who had a gift for things esthetic and who was a great fan of French culture. In fact, he flew in on business several times during spring of '65, and we spent hours talking about this idea left over from UCLA. Paul, too, was convinced that, with the civil rights movement underway and the war in Vietnam heating up, there were issues in the Mormon community that needed to be discussed. We agreed that the *Improvement Era*, the official LDS magazine, was family oriented and would never discuss controversial current topics.

I showed Paul some of the French intellectual and cultural journals I had collected. We talked about the fact that in France, the buzz word at this time was to "*dialoguer*"—that is, to discuss important matters by maintaining a dialogue between two parties. We both thought that an LDS magazine, loosely modeled on these French reviews, could make a vital contribution to the Mormon community and also be a lot of fun to do. Sitting outside in lawn chairs at Escondido Village, we had big ideas but no resources with which to carry them out.

Then in May a friend from Harvard days, Diane Monson, stopped off in Palo Alto to see friends. She visited with Paul and me, and we brought up the idea of a journal to see how she, a doctorate in political sci-

ence, would react. She was very positive; but most important, she observed: "Do you know a graduate student in English named Gene England?" We replied that we did not, although we had heard of him. She replied, "You two need to contact him, because Gene and a few other friends—mainly Gene—are talking about doing precisely the same thing you are discussing: to found an independent Mormon publication." To say the least, we were stunned. Some other people with the same idea? And here in Palo Alto?

Needless to say, soon after Diane's news, we contacted Gene England, and he proposed a meeting at another graduate student's apartment in Escondido Village to explore our respective ideas and positions. This was Frances Lee Menlove, who was completing a Ph.D. in psychology. Also present was Joseph H. Jeppson, who had recently finished an M.A. in history and was teaching at San Mateo Junior College, and of course Gene England, obviously a far-seeing individual, who was just as anxious to meet us. Marian and Gene's wife, Charlotte, were also present.

As we discussed our respective ideas, it became clear that the two groups, if combined, would make a good fit. Gene and Joe were graduates of the University of Utah and had contacts in Salt Lake City that I certainly did not have. Moreover, Gene was also teaching at the LDS Institute of Religion at Stanford and, although majoring in English, was really focused on LDS theology. Frances brought high ethical standards to the enterprise, and her essay on honesty in *Dialogue's* first issue has proved to be a classic.

Joe had a somewhat ambiguous agenda. Interested in satire and irony, Joe favored creating a column patterned after Joseph Fielding Smith's "Answers to Gospel Questions" in the *Improvement Era*, but called instead "Questions to Gospel Answers." However, it now seemed to me that a straightforward journal of ideas was called for. Joe was later instrumental in persuading such distinguished scholars as Klaus Baer to participate in a published roundtable on the Egyptian papyri discovered at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the 1960s. Joe served for many years as our "Notes and Comments" editor.

Paul, an architect, was particularly interested in the publication's format and design. He wanted us to be known for impeccable artistic and esthetic standards. He had an unerring eye for good taste. But as a veteran of observing the French intellectual scene, like me, he also favored a publication that would openly discuss a variety of intellectual matters.

It soon became apparent at that meeting that, if we were to join forces, Gene and I would have to share responsibility. We were the only members who had extensive editing and publication experience. After that meeting, there were several more exploratory sessions where we talked about commitment to such an endeavor. It became apparent that, for Gene and me, this project would require a major allocation of time and energy. We became joint managing editors.

Gene had already won a place for himself in the hearts of the Stanford students with his Institute teaching and with his desire to relate current problems and ideas to LDS gospel standards. He was a firm disciple of two outgoing Mormon intellectuals, Lowell Bennion of the Church Educational System, and Elder Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of the Seventy. Gene also had a deep insight into some of the issues the Church would be confronting during the next few years. As discussions progressed, it was apparent that Gene should become our man with special reference to Utah, while I, as a traveling Arizonan, was more at home with other Latter-day Saints who also were outsiders. My earlier experiences living in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles had given me a broad perspective on the Church outside Utah, while Gene had the experience and contacts to be involved with the insiders in Utah. It was a formula which gave both of us spheres in which we could operate and where we could bring to bear our own special talents and experiences. At times, these opposite perspectives created minor differences between us, but it is fair to say it was a dynamic that made the enterprise go. In retrospect, it is doubtful that I could have succeeded on my own, and I think the same is true for Gene. The two of us, so different in many ways, bonded and formed a wonderfully resilient working relationship. Although we had differences, I never remember having an argument. We both knew how far to push on an issue and when it was time to compromise—which happened quite often.

One thing the two groups agreed on instantly was the need for such a publication. The *Era* was not designed to address issues nor was the *Church News*. While *BYU Studies* was around, in those days it was primarily an outlet for BYU professors to publish research papers in a variety of disciplines. It did not primarily address the nature of Mormon thought and culture, which at our journal was the main theme. (Only later did editor Charles D. Tate Jr., under some influence from *Dialogue*, begin to refashion that journal into an excellent Mormon-subject-oriented publication.) So we believed there was a problem—a lack of an outlet for creative expres-

sion for the general LDS public—and that we could fix it. We were united in believing there was a definite need for an independent periodical.

At our second meeting later that week, the five of us decided to put up \$25 each to help launch the enterprise, a pitiful gesture in a way; but we made up for it with passion and enthusiasm. I was just beginning my teaching career in the fall, and Gene was getting his doctorate underway. Everyone was busy, but somehow we believed we could do it, because it was necessary to do. We had an idea but no resources.

For the next several months, we met often to decide what to name the publication, what its content and focus would be, and what format it would take. Paul Salisbury, who flew in from Salt Lake quite often, joined me in favoring the French-oriented dialogue concept and we pushed for that name in the title. Since I believed the Mormon community needed an intellectual journal, I thought it important to describe in detail what we were attempting to do. After several weeks, several suggestions (the list of potential names was long on creativity but not very pragmatic) were put forward. With Gene agreeing wholeheartedly, we finally opted for *Dialogue* and tacked on the subtitle *Journal of Mormon Thought*. (I wanted to get our publication in libraries across the country as a recognized scholarly journal.)

I was very pleased; but now, what would be our main thrust? Here Gene later came to our rescue and wrote up the frontispiece for the journal that still appears on the first page of every issue. To me, that credo is as fresh today as it was some forty years ago last summer:

Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 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.

Our understanding of why the name *Dialogue* was relevant is that we wanted to engage in a dialogue with other churches, other communities, and other intellectuals (both outside and inside the Church) about all aspects of Mormonism. We favored the idea of having discussions by Church members who were part of the great reverse migration which was

taking Mormons to major cities all over the country. But as time went by, rumors spread that our purpose was to engage in a dialogue with the LDS General Authorities, which was patently false. (Once in publication, we sent free subscriptions to the First Presidency, Twelve, and Seventies so they would know from our publication first-hand, not from rumors, what we were attempting to do.)

Creating the Board of Editors

Our non-LDS intellectual friends at Stanford applauded the idea of dialogue, and we had people like Lewis Spitz, a Reformation history professor and former Lutheran pastor, who encouraged us. Robert McAfee Brown, one of Stanford's theological lights, also praised our efforts. Word also began to arrive that at other campuses, such as UC Santa Barbara and Wisconsin, LDS students were exploring similar ideas of publication. The idea was in the air, and we knew there would be a race to see who would publish first. The pace picked up; and the weekly meetings we had were vital, creative, and at times funny. As time progressed, we also picked up endorsements from two mainline Mormon intellectuals: Lowell Bennion at the University of Utah and Leonard J. Arrington at Utah State. They agreed to be advisers to our publication, which gave us a sense of gaining momentum.

To my mind, however, this was not enough. We had already wrestled with the idea of format, with Gene and Joe favoring a more open, popular periodical type of publication, while Paul and I, old Francophiles, held fast to the Parisian journal idea. Moreover, I argued that we needed more than two advisers. We needed a board of editors to review manuscripts. I was given *carte blanche* by the group to see what I could do, so I wrote a number of letters to people I knew around the country, suggesting that the only way this publication could succeed was to have a sense of collective responsibility. That meant that each manuscript would be reviewed three times before it could be accepted for publication. I hoped this process would screen out materials that were not worthy of publication. I firmly believe that this concept is what persuaded many potential board members to join our enterprise. Most of them also anted up donations to help us print the first issue.

The list of whom I approached was long, but most important, almost everybody I contacted accepted the invitation to join our board, even though we had not yet published an issue. An immense help was our

first flyer, designed with great care by Paul Salisbury and mailed in the late fall. It seemed to strike most people who saw it as in good taste. Gene, I, and the others worked on the text of the flyer, which announced our values and ideas. That also seemed to please the public, because subscriptions for this unseen publication began to pour in—more than a hundred in some weeks.

It turned out we had a star salesman but didn't know it. This was Chase Peterson, M.D., who apparently urged patients who walked into his office to subscribe. As the subscribers' coupons and money rolled in, we realized all of this was for real, and the general public was expecting us to put out a smashing first issue. During the winter, we labored greatly, rounding up articles from friends, writing some essays ourselves, and constantly refining our position and point of view. We wanted to be independent, but we decided to keep the LDS authorities apprised of what we were doing at all times—no surprises. Some friends said, "But why don't you get the Church's endorsement?" To us, especially to Gene and me, that would be giving up our independence, which we believed would be the hallmark of our credibility in the dialogues to take place with other churches and intellectuals. Although we didn't (and couldn't) bill ourselves as defenders of the faith, we often felt that it would be one of our major roles.

There is no question that we hoped our audience would be intellectuals both inside and outside the LDS Church. We were careful to avoid any entanglements with anti-Mormon groups, such as Jerald and Sandra Tanner, although some misinformed people often linked us to such groups. In seeking to put together a viable board of editors, I sought to find members of the Church who were engaged in the broader community, people who were beacons of light for the Church. Fitting that profile were such individuals as Carlfred Broderick, the family relations specialist whom I had known, like Chase Peterson, at Harvard. I contacted another Harvard friend, Richard Bushman, who was teaching at BYU. In a very courageous act (this was the Wilkinson era), Richard joined our efforts and became one of our most trusted advisers. Thanks uniquely to his personal efforts, the BYU Bookstore agreed to sell *Dialogue*.

Others who accepted invitations were a diverse lot. There were financier Gary Driggs, from the Phoenix savings and loan family, a high school friend, and Dallin H. Oaks, then a University of Chicago law professor and former BYU social club friend. He would prove to be one of

our most astute reviewers, always getting to the heart of the matter: Should we publish, and if not, why? His counsel and observations were temperate and well informed. Cherry Silver, a friend from Radcliffe days, was one of our most perceptive reviewers. For a season we had the advice of Stanford O. Cazier, a Columbia friend, later to become president of both Chico State and Utah State. We also had the advice of persons such as historian Stanley B. Kimball of Illinois, political scientist Kent Lloyd of USC, Joseph Monsen of University of Washington, De Witt Paul Jr., of Johnson and Johnson, Ed Maryon and Victor Cline of the University of Utah, Doug Bunker of Harvard, Norman Tolk of Columbia, Garth Mangum of Washington, D.C., and many others.

A few persons didn't take the step to join our board but remained closet advisers. One such person, much appreciated, was G. Homer Durham, then president of Arizona State University. On visits to my parents in Phoenix, I never failed to meet with Homer to get his informed commentary on how we were doing. In summary, a number of valiant souls decided to accept our invitation, and the names printed then (as today) on the inside front cover was a roster of courage and conviction, of people who agreed that discussion and dialogue, in their most constructive senses, were necessary at this time.

Getting the Right Format and Creating a Staff

Paul and I worked on the format. At one point, the *Stanford Law Review* became a sort of model for us. We were ready to sign Stanford Press as our printer when Paul found a small letter-press shop in Salt Lake City, Alphabet Press, which better matched our budget. Its first job, our initial flyer, got rave reviews from almost everybody. Paul and I discussed typography, design, and graphics content long into the night on many long-distance phone calls. Paul had taken his architecture degree at the University of Utah and was well connected with its art department. He persuaded a number of talented artists to furnish us with sketches and drawings which visually enlivened a scholarly journal. To suggest our potential permanence, we selected Baskerville, a classic, conservative type font, featured for many years by Columbia University Press.

When the first issue came out, our fellow staff members approved of the appearance wholeheartedly. In fact, without blowing our own trumpets, I think we exceeded the public's expectations. We showed that we could produce a professional quality publication, sophisticated in design,

yet accessible to the general reader. Although there have been minor changes, the general format has remained the same during these past forty years.

Many of us, but mainly Gene and I, accepted invitations to speak at firesides, then a more popular institution among Church wards and stakes than today. We spoke about our hopes and ideas even before the first issue and especially during the first two to three years of publication. We both spoke at many places in California; but since Gene was Utah-bred, he became a very popular speaker at home. Furthermore, Gene was now developing what could only be called a charismatic style, nurtured by his CES teaching at Stanford and now being extended to *Dialogue* evenings.

To our pleasant surprise, the cash flow from the flyer had continued so that we had enough funds in hand to pay for the first issue. That first issue, in the spring of 1966, with the classic woodcut type of cover selected by Paul showing two persons talking under a tree came out in spring and was an instant hit. During the first year, we had to go to a second printing to keep up with demand. (Note for collectors: There's a difference between the first and second printings.)

During fall and winter, it became apparent that we needed staff members to do a lot of routine but important work. Here Gene was essential, because he put out a call to Stanford students, both undergraduate and graduate. The response was vigorous. My History Corner office had also become *Dialogue's* general editorial office, and we had permission from the History Department to use several large seminar rooms next to my office as staff meeting rooms in the evenings, usually Tuesdays. Those meetings were lively, dynamic affairs. Literally dozens of volunteers, over the six years the journal was located at Stanford, would come out on Tuesday nights and lend a hand. A complete list would almost read like an LDS who's who today—so many of these students went on to accomplish great things.

Our volunteers gave needed help in receiving and sending out manuscripts for review, logging in new subscribers, helping with letters Gene and I would dictate to a wide range of people, developing a public relations campaign, locating more artists to grace our pages with drawings, and above all, nurturing our budding authors.

If asked to identify our greatest accomplishment in those half dozen early years of *Dialogue*, I would respond unequivocally that it was the dis-

covery and development of new talent. Where else could the Mormon general public send serious articles, essays, fiction, and poetry? Where else could LDS artists communicate their works to the public? Word quickly spread among both veteran and neophyte writers, and especially wannabees, that here was a new outlet for creative expression. I cannot recall how many times over the six years I edited *Dialogue* that people would write the same letter: "I knew someday someone would create such a publication; there are so many of us out here." It was a great irony that, given the Church's emphasis on participation, there were few ways that anyone who wrote or had ideas could be read. That was the journal's greatest contribution: the discovery and encouragement of Mormon writers and intellectuals.

We needed help even beyond the many students Gene recruited during the first several years. We needed a permanent staff. We found several people who now became key players. One was Ralph Hansen of the Stanford Library who took over our book reviewing and bibliographic chores. Another was Edward Geary, a graduate student in English, who was our very effective manuscripts editor. Later, as a BYU English professor, he became editor of *BYU Studies* and an acclaimed essayist and fiction writer. Others included Bob and Shirley Griffin, Kent Robson, our first employee, Pat Bacon of Palo Alto, a devoted woman who handled our subscriber affairs for many years, and Christie Redford, a loyal secretary.

Summing up why we were able to create a viable publication where other groups had failed: First, we were located on the campus of a major university, with a Stanford mailing address, and we were hosted by a sympathetic administration. Second, we had a mix of interested parties who had the necessary skills to put out a major publication. Gene had edited the *Pen*, the University of Utah's literary magazine, and I the *Harvard Lampoon*. Third, we had committed, volunteer staff members who truly believed it was time for an independent LDS publication to appear that would speak to problems that were surfacing in the 1960s. Fourth, the immense cash flow we generated initially gave us enough capital to finance publication and distribution of the first four issues. Fifth, we had high standards of taste and scholarship which demonstrated that Mormons could put out a sophisticated publication. Sixth, and perhaps most important, we were filling a pent-up need fueled by the great expansion of LDS people who were migrating across the country to many cities and universi-

ties; these people had a need to express themselves and to read what their colleagues had to say.

Spreading the Word

The first two issues of *Dialogue* attracted a fair amount of attention on the national scene. The *New York Times* did an in-depth interview with Gene and me, which led to other phone calls and interviews. *Time* magazine ran a complimentary article accompanied by a photo of our key staff members. These national media were intrigued by the idea that the Mormon community now wanted to establish some intellectual credentials and to have an open dialogue with the rest of the world. They judged it a breakthrough, which it was.

We received congratulations from *Christian Century* and a variety of other independent religious publications. We felt we were paving the way for ecumenical relations that had sometimes been ignored in the past. And we were joining a larger community of independent, religiously oriented publications that every religion we knew—whether Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant—seemed to have—except Mormons. As for me, it was particularly gratifying to send copies to former Harvard and Columbia professors, to former graduate school colleagues, and even to some French intellectual friends, to show them what an invigorated Mormon community could do.

This was before Leonard Arrington became Church Historian, and Church archives were mostly closed to everybody. This was also before President Hinckley's tenure when the Church paid little attention to its public relations. We did not realize it at the time, but we were a new kind of Church spokesperson: committed, articulate, knowledgeable about issues, but not official. Numerous interviews with newspapers, radio stations, and periodicals helped spread the word about our endeavor. We also received invitations to give scholarly speeches and convocation addresses. The round of firesides was continual.

I particularly remember flying to New York where I met with friends and new acquaintances connected with Columbia and the Manhattan Ward. There was great excitement among the New York Saints about the long-term prospects for this new journal, and we drummed up much support for submission of manuscripts. I then flew to Chicago where Dallin Oaks had arranged for Jack Whittle, BYU graduate and son-in-law of banker David Kennedy, to host a gathering at his home. This stimulating

evening drew participants from both Northwestern and the University of Chicago. I think such firesides helped establish that faithful, loyal Saints were putting out this publication and that we wanted to increase the visibility of the Mormons in the larger intellectual community—a goal we thought was worthwhile. After all, didn't we as a people encourage our LDS sports heroes to mingle with the public? Didn't we favor business people participating in the larger world? Didn't we lionize singers and performers such as the Osmonds who were competing in a worldly setting? At times of discouragement, I had simply to remember such evenings and the great interest and enthusiasm we were generating among discriminating yet faithful people.

We also needed financial help. A new acquaintance, Roger Sant, did a study of the journal's financial situation. Roger, who today heads one of the world's largest energy companies and chairs the Smithsonian's board of trustees, said that as long as our cash flow from subscriptions kept pouring in, we would have enough capital to continue. Roger's prediction proved true for three or four years; but subscriptions leveled off, and it became apparent we needed to find donations to stay in the black. I went to the Danforth Foundation in St. Louis, the Lilly Foundation in Indianapolis, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund in New York, all of which had shown some interest in religious endeavors. My reception was cordial, and we were complimented on our efforts, but the Rockefeller staff member summed it up: "You Mormons have a growing affluence and you should really seek help to develop your journal from your own people." Since at the outset we had created the journal as a publication of the not-for-profit educational Dialogue Foundation, we were perfectly positioned to do fund raising. But that was easier said than done.

The first breakthrough came on a visit to Provo, when BYU physics professor John Hale Gardner called and said he understood we needed help. He invited me to meet his neighbor, Charlie Redd, who had endowed the Redd Center for Western History at BYU. Charlie was a no-nonsense person and, after a few tough questions, whipped out his checkbook and gave me a check for a thousand dollars, a rather large sum forty years ago. Word got around that we needed help, and soon donations came in from Ken Handley, a retired New York banker who liked the discussion in *Dialogue*; Lola Van Wagoner, who for years has supported Mormon cultural and history activities; and the family of Barnard Silver, an old friend from MIT, whose Denver family foundation set up the Silver

Awards for good writing in the journal. Over the years *Dialogue* has been fortunate to attract many donors who believe in its mission to promote discussion of Mormon issues. Without their continuing interest, it is doubtful that the journal could have survived and flourished during these past four decades.

Dialogue also developed friends in such places as Washington, D.C., where Garth Mangum and Mary Lythgoe Bradford, later the journal's third editor, put out a special issue on Mormons in the nation's capital. We had a special issue on the status of Mormon history edited by Leonard Arrington and a special women's issue, the first of three so far. We also published a variety of roundtables and symposia in addition to our regular features. We were gaining national visibility, national authors, and a national audience.

Problems Encountered: The Messenger Gets Shot

No feature created more consternation during Gene's and my tenure than the Stewart Udall affair. He was the U.S. Secretary of the Interior under John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, and scion of one of Arizona's most prominent pioneer families. His brother was the humorous congressman, Morris Udall, who became a national figure in his own right. Stewart Udall, like many Mormons of the times, was greatly concerned about the exclusion of worthy African American men from the LDS priesthood. He submitted an article to the journal that called upon LDS General Authorities to rectify this situation in the near future. The editorial staff determined that his article was a case of special pleading that did not meet the criteria for inclusion in our journal. Our three referees who read the article agreed completely.

But how do you turn down cold a colorful, nationally known personality, a member of the U.S. president's cabinet from a famous LDS family? We wrestled with the problem and finally explained to Udall that we could not print his article for the reasons stated above but that we would print a briefer version as a letter to the editor, where he could properly express his personal opinion without having it construed as an implied endorsement by the editors—although it is fair to say many of us agreed with him. Udall took his time in answering, probably shocked by our turn-down. But he graciously took our offered option, and we printed his letter. Yet from the minute it appeared, that letter caused us more grief than any other material we ever printed. The gist of the public outcry

against Udall was that he presumed to tell the General Authorities how to run the Church. Although we believed we were only the messenger, we found out the hard way the truth of the old adage: that the messenger often gets shot. We knew we had to walk on a very narrow path; but a few years later when we published the breakthrough articles by Lester Bush and Armand Mauss on the black issue, the subject was out in the open and subject to comment. Our readers seemed more ready to listen and more inclined to participate thoughtfully in the discussion. In retrospect, the Udall letter, the Bush article, and other articles helped create a conversation about the priesthood issue, since it was on the minds of many LDS members. But it was the Udall letter which broke what had amounted to a taboo on bringing up the subject in print.

The United States is a free nation and we have liberty of opinion; but we learned that, in dealing with a centrally run institution, it was wiser to stay away from any kind of prescribing, even if only implied by a letter to the editor. It took me back to my days on the *Fadical Newsletter* in high school in Phoenix, where we had been obliged to walk a fine line to survive what seemed to be implied slights to the principal, high school faculty, or school board—which we had managed to do. But in the case of Udall, we dropped the ball. It was a good lesson. Privately, I wondered when the policy on priesthood for black men would change. After all, I was a young professor teaching African history. I had lived among the Senegalese. Field research and personal experience suggested to my wife and me that all blacks should qualify for full membership in the Church. But once again, patience was the necessary virtue.

Despite the Udall affair, we had really very few setbacks.⁴ Word trickled in that some stake presidents were suggesting that their faithful not read *Dialogue*. But interestingly enough, for every such story, we heard others about people using the journal to supplement Sunday School lessons, help prepare sacrament meeting talks, etc. It was before the advent of Church correlation. The Church had not yet established its current Sunday School curriculum of dealing with one standard work every year and discouraging teachers from using supplementary materials. It was an era when President McKay's liberality made possible lesson manuals by such people as Lowell Bennion and Obert C. Tanner. During these early years, *Dialogue* enjoyed a vogue with discussion groups, many of which were called *Dialogue* groups. In later years, many of these became *Sunstone* groups, since that new publication tended to enter more controversial ar-

eas than the more cautious *Dialogue*. On the other hand, the solid scholarship that *Dialogue* has always insisted on has kept it in a class by itself.

Toward the end of the fifth year of our joint editorship, Gene finished his Ph.D. and was appointed to a professorship and deanship at St. Olaf's, a distinguished small liberal arts college in Minnesota. For the sixth year, I would be *Dialogue*'s sole editor. Editorial succession weighed heavily on our minds; but at this point a white knight appeared in the person of Robert Rees of the UCLA English Department. During the rest of the fifth year and during the sixth, he became prepared to take over the journal.

Before Gene left, we held a historic meeting of the Dialogue Foundation in the law offices of John Carmack in Westwood, a *Dialogue* subscriber who would soon become president of the Los Angeles Stake. We crafted the transfer of the *Dialogue* name, assets, and authority to Bob Rees and to the new staff he had assembled. Gene and I were, to say the least, relieved, because I, too, would be leaving Stanford later in the year for a tenured professorship at UC Santa Barbara. That meant the end of the glory days at Stanford. But the journal had come of age and would now travel to a variety of new homes over the next thirty-four years.

Meanwhile, in 1970-71 when I became the sole editor, changes were taking place. It was a tumultuous era of anti-war protests, civil rights marches, even the trashing of the Stanford campus—a half million dollars worth of windows broken. History Corner became too crowded, and evening classes meant that our meetings had to be scheduled elsewhere. The Stanford authorities, ever generous, arranged for us to utilize the back part of an older row house on Stanford campus. Here we set up our office for our final year in a verdant setting. It was, in fact, a historical location, near the famous garage where in the 1930s Messrs. Hewlett and Packard founded their computer company. It was ironic to obtain such splendid quarters on the eve of our departure.

Our move turned out to be timely, because in that year of 1970-71, the Stanford sports program broke off relations with BYU because of the priesthood issue. After the murder of Martin Luther King, Stanford had started recruiting African American students in earnest, and some on campus brought pressure on the administration over the Church's policy. Thus began an era of strained relations between the two campuses that would last for a few years until President Spencer W. Kimball's 1978 revelation extending priesthood to worthy black men. The presence of a Mor-

mon journal on the campus during those years would undoubtedly not have been welcome by the Stanford administration, which was now bending over backward to formulate an educational policy vis-à-vis African Americans.

During my last two years at Stanford as a European historian teaching African courses, I took an interest in the university's plight. At one point, in fact, for about six months during my sole editorship of the journal, I was asked to serve as chair of the committee planning the new Black Studies program. At Stanford we wanted to integrate African with American Black Studies, an approach which eventually became the model even at a conservative campus such as Harvard. Most campuses in those early years of racial struggles after the death of Dr. King floundered by looking at the black situation only in America, thus ignoring the relevant history of the Caribbean, Brazil, and black Africa—in other words, the entire black diaspora. At any rate, at Stanford it was a strained time, with many misunderstandings between the races. The new black students were trying to find their way in an almost totally “lily white” environment, and often lashed out at the administration and faculty. Finally, I was able to step down from this difficult assignment with the recruitment of St. Clair Drake, a black scholar from Roosevelt University of Chicago. A prince of a person, Drake agreed with my committee's planning and soon implemented a first-rate program.

The Stanford-BYU break plunged the Mormon community at Stanford into an ambiguous position. At one point, I became an envoy to BYU from the Stanford president's office to see what might be done, but there was no solution. Only the LDS General Authorities and the prophet could rectify the situation. At Stanford, many Saints felt that it was wiser to keep a low profile. Officed in the row house, *Dialogue* escaped the major trashing, window breaking, and confrontations now frequently occurring on the quad. This difficult time also caused us to fall behind on subscription fulfillment and manuscript screening. It seemed that our mail bags were filled every week with new offerings from around the country. By late spring, as the tumult began to die down, Marian and I started packing up to move south.

Dialogue in Transition: Off to Southern California

In the summer of '71, I prepared to go back to Senegal for a year's research on a Social Science Research Council grant. I would then take up

my new professorship at UC Santa Barbara. During spring quarter, Bob Rees shuttled back and forth between Westwood and Palo Alto, overseeing the journal's move to UCLA. Bob's keen interest and devotion to the journal was much appreciated, and it is no wonder that his editorship, despite logistical and financial problems, was editorially a most successful period in the journal's history. It was a nostalgic summer because an exciting era was ending for those of us in Palo Alto who had jointly created what we believed to be an institution of great value, a worthy addition to the larger Mormon community. Stanford, a university dedicated to innovation, had proved to be an ideal birthplace for our own innovation.

I remember thinking that the challenge of creating this journal from scratch was the same thrill, but on a larger scale, I had enjoyed in developing the *Fadical Newsletter*. We had no backing, no guarantors except our own pluck and energy. That is what made the whole enterprise exciting, and it is why Gene, others, and I hung in there to make things go. We had a mission we believed in. We felt we were adding value to the Mormon community, that we were improving public relations with many other religious groups, that we were entering into dialogue with Catholics, Protestants, Evangelicals, Jews, RLDS, and even atheists. We created an interest in our pages in the fact that Mormonism was becoming a world church long before the *Ensign*, successor to the *Era*, wisely began to cover international Mormonism. One of my proudest moments was when I began to read articles in journals, both religious and secular, where the footnotes included articles from *Dialogue*. The fact that we were now taken seriously in the world of scholarship was a great thrill. And we had done all of this on a shoestring, with mainly human capital to make the enterprise succeed. That was perhaps the most gratifying aspect of *Dialogue*; and for my career as a part-time editor, it was indeed a Golden Age.

At a personal level, it was certainly broadening. It brought me in contact with all manner of writers and intellectuals in and out of the Church; it gave me a wonderful overview of current Mormon scholarship in a variety of fields. We were particularly fortunate to have the backing of Leonard Arrington. In San Francisco, in the fall of 1965, I was asked to speak about the new journal at the founding meeting of the Mormon History Association. Arrington backed my plea at that meeting that the new organization should not start its own journal but use the pages of *Dialogue*. This decision was a crucial one because, for many years, a variety of Mormon luminaries published their original articles in our journal. It gave us

instant substance and helped make our effort a credible one in the face of many doubting Thomases. It was 1971 when the MHA established its own scholarly journal.

The editorship also deepened my understanding of what Mormonism was all about, the contributions our people have made to society, and the way in which this Church has been a force for good in the United States and now around the world. Receiving hundreds of manuscripts and letters over six years enabled me to take the pulse of an important segment of the Mormon community. I was lucky to have a co-editor who became one of the most original LDS thinkers of the twentieth century. Gene England was oriented toward Mormon theology while I was oriented toward Mormon society. We were both interested in exploring Mormon cultural life. In retrospect, it was a good fit. Gene was generous and hard working to a fault; he generated infectious enthusiasm everywhere he went. But he was also very sharp and shrewd—no pie in the sky intellectual. In my view, it would be hard to find a person who loved and believed in the Mormon Christian gospel more than Gene England. He was refreshingly original in his ideas and outlook. His tragically early death a few years ago caused a void which probably never will be filled.

In 1972 I returned from my West African sabbatical and settled into my new professorship at UC-Santa Barbara. I thought my editing days were over now that *Dialogue* was transplanted to UCLA in Bob Rees's capable hands. But within several years I helped found a new graduate program called Public History, to train historians for roles in public service other than as teachers. It was the first in the nation, and its visibility soon made it imperative that we publish a national refereed journal. Thanks in part to my experience editing *Dialogue*, I received that assignment and served as editor in chief of the *Public Historian Quarterly* for ten years. Printed by the University of California Press, Berkeley, after twenty-eight years it is still a flourishing journal.

Then after fourteen years at UC, I accepted an offer to join the BYU faculty. It was a new experience to be back in the center of Mormonism rather than on the periphery. This move ended my career as an editor. I had enjoyed it immensely, but it was now time to revivify my own voice rather than helping others find theirs.

Considering the Impact of *Dialogue*

This journal's impact can be measured in several ways. First, it was

the first magazine in modern times issued independently by believing and active Latter-day Saints. The climate was not overly welcoming, since many Mormons thought that, unless it came out of 47 E. South Temple, it must be anti-Mormon. I think *Dialogue* helped reduce that defensiveness with its pioneering issues. Second, soon a number of other independent publications followed; and although the road was rocky for some of them, they too have survived. First was *Exponent II* for women in New England, next came *Sunstone* in Salt Lake City, both publications of opinion. More popular publications have been *This People* and the two recent publications: *LDS Living*, a four-color glossy published in Orem, Utah, and the online *Meridian Magazine*, based in Washington, D.C. In my view, all of these publications benefitted from *Dialogue* paving the way in the 1960s.

The journal also made an impact on other publications. *BYU Studies* was transformed from an in-house publication to a journal of Mormon culture. According to Professor Henry Eyring of the University of Utah's Chemistry Department, who sat on the committee to design the new *Ensign*, *Dialogue* impacted even the Church publications. Today, the situation is quite different from 1965. LDS writers have many venues for publishing in pro-LDS independent periodicals. It can also be argued that the continued discovery of new writers paved the way for the outburst of independent book publishers in our time. That was perhaps *Dialogue's* greatest legacy: identifying and nurturing new talent.

One of the main points we set out to prove was that intellectuals could keep their faith and loyalty to the Church; we believed that persons who valued their thinking could remain active and productive members of the Church. We helped to put to rest the old cliché that intellectuals were doomed to fall away from the Church. The postwar period of Mormon expansion and outward migration from Utah created different circumstances than before World War II, when that cliché was common. All around the nation, campuses were expanding and bright LDS graduate students soon appeared. The campus branches they attended became places where reason could be reconciled with faith. We believed there was no reason for a person to lose one's faith while acquiring higher education. We believed that *Dialogue's* open discussions would help students find their testimonies and their own identities as intelligent and believing members of the Church. Letters from hundreds of readers substantiated this belief.

In preparing this essay, I sampled the new DVD of past *Dialogue*

numbers. I hope a cultural historian will some day analyze the impressive array of materials contained—essays, fiction, poetry, art, roundtable discussions, book reviews, and notes. My guess is that such a study would demonstrate conclusively that this journal has amply fulfilled the promise that the founding editors hoped for forty years ago. Let us not forget the turmoil of that decade—with civil rights demonstrations, Vietnam rallies, movements among ethnics, and heightened awareness among women. Ironically, we are facing many similar challenges today, verifying the old French saying, “The more things change, the more they stay the same.”

We still live in a world in chaos. If there was a need for discussion and dialogue then, there is a greater need now. The LDS community has grown, expanded nationwide and worldwide, and is ethnically diverse. Although the hierarchy is still centrally located, the membership is now global. The dilemmas Mormons faced in becoming part of the larger society are now greatly magnified and more challenging than ever. It seems remarkable to critics of Mormonism that the Church is able to keep control since there is no paid clergy. The secret, of course, has been the leadership skills learned in priesthood quorums, in the Relief Society, and on missions. LDS people are prepared to travel anywhere in the world and replicate wards and stakes. It is likely that, on the eightieth anniversary of this journal, which I am certain will occur, we will still be facing challenges, and there will still be a need for *Dialogue*.

In spring 2006, the Mormon History Association’s annual meeting took place in Casper, Wyoming, on the theme of center and periphery within Mormonism. In one sense, that is the story of *Dialogue*, which has sought to bring the experiences of those on the geographical periphery of the Church to bear on its central areas. One could refer to the old sociological construct of cosmopolitans and locals, with the former as people who have traveled and moved about and have a larger view of society, and the locals as persons more wedded to the perspective and continuity of the center. A related angle of vision would be the difference in perspective between outsiders and insiders. All of these angles deserve to be pursued since Mormon society is becoming more complex year by year. However one fashions it, I believe this journal has served as a messenger for those participating in the larger society.

The increasing number of high achievers in business, professions, government, education, science, and so forth, suggests that there will be a continuing need to assess how our beliefs can inform and contribute to

this larger society. It would not be entirely accurate to call this missionary work but, in its own way, it is. Who can deny that the example of a Kim Clark leaving a deanship of the Harvard Business School to become president of BYU-Idaho has impressed the general public with his willingness to forego worldly honors to serve his church? Who cannot be impressed by a person such as Kevin Rollins, now active head of the world's largest computer company (Dell), who tells inquiring reporters that he has no magical recipe for advancement in the business world but that his success flows from putting his family and the Church first? And what of Richard Bushman, whose new major biography of Joseph Smith puts the Church's founder in a new national perspective for thousands of non-LDS readers? Or Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, whose Pulitzer Prize winning work has helped shed new light on the role of women in American society? These individuals are LDS role models for the larger society and beacons of Mormon thought and practice.

If this journal can continue to chronicle and discuss the happenings, travails, and issues that beset the LDS community as its members venture forth to interact with the larger mainstream society, *Dialogue's* promise will have been validated and updated. I congratulate all the editors and staff after Gene and me, who so diligently kept the journal vital and added new ideas to keep it fresh. I only hope we can persist for another forty years and continue to make contributions to the continuing dialogue both inside and outside of the LDS community. It's worth the effort.

Notes

1. G. Wesley Johnson, "Editorial Preface," *Dialogue*, 1, no. 1 (Spring 1966): 7.
2. The sections that follow are my personal reminiscences; see also Gene England's impressions of this period in his article commemorating the twentieth anniversary of this journal: "On Building the Kingdom with *Dialogue*," *Dialogue*, 21, no. 2 (Summer, 1988): 128-34.
3. Gene England also had discussed the possibility of creating an LDS type of publication with friends (including Mary Bradford) for several years, beginning in the late 1950s.
4. For a more detailed description, see Devery Anderson's well-researched article, "A History of *Dialogue*, Part One: The Early Years, 1965-71," *Dialogue* 32, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 15-16.

A Forty-Year View: *Dialogue* and the Sober Lessons of History

Frances Lee Menlove

I well remember the spring and summer of 1965 when Gene England, Wesley Johnson, Paul Salisbury, Joseph Jeppson, and I got together to explore the idea of an unofficial Mormon publication. There were lively conversations culminating in a meeting at the Johnson home on July 11, where we voted to incorporate as a non-profit under the laws of Utah. The History Department at Stanford allowed us to use a portion of Wes's office as our base—no rent, no utilities to pay. *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* was the result. A lot has been written about that early history.¹ However, there are a couple of things I see now that I didn't clearly grasp then. First, I, for one, was a thoroughly pre-correlation Mormon. Second, the Church is not immune from the sober lessons of history.

Let me explain. The Correlation Committee was started in 1961 and “encompasses a philosophy—one might even say, a theology—of Church governance, in which LDS doctrines about priesthood and prophetic authority are synthesized with strategies for organizational efficiency drawn from the world of business. This philosophy sets a premium on strong central authority, uniform procedures, and unified discourse. . . . One of correlation's several objectives is to preserve purity of doctrine in Church discourse, which is to say that correlation acts as a mechanism to police and promote orthodoxy.”²

“Uniform procedures” and “unified discourse” were not part of my Church upbringing. I have two stories to illustrate just how uncorrelated my formative years were.

When I was a young teenager in the 33rd Ward in Salt Lake City,

our Sunday School class decided that we wanted to learn about other religions. And so, every two or three weeks, we would load into cars and attend other Sunday services in Salt Lake City. They knew we were coming, and we had been briefed on good manners, so we filed into the Unitarian or Catholic or Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints services and watched and listened. I remember a leader of the Reorganized Church met with us after the service to answer questions. Well, there was one glitch. The girls didn't have head coverings on the Sunday we visited the Cathedral of the Madeleine, so after some hurried whispers, we were led, as a group, to the front row, making it clear that we were visitors. Our Sunday School teacher that memorable year was the same Joseph Jeppson (aka Rustin Kaufmann) mentioned above.

The second story, which I love to tell, is about my grandfather, another pre-correlation Mormon. He was also a bacteriologist and a dedicated empiricist. Like Henry Eyring he liked to say, "In this Church we don't have to believe anything that isn't true." Granddad went to see the bishop one Sunday and explained to him that he knew Sister Brown had tuberculosis, and besides who knows what other diseases were running around the ward? Even without these known ailments, the practice of passing one large sacrament cup down the row with each person taking a sip was unsanitary in the extreme.

"Brother Greaves," the bishop huffed, "do you really think that God would allow his sacred water, which has been blessed by the priesthood, to cause disease, to make people sick?"

"Bishop," my grandfather replied, "do you really think that God would have given us brains if he didn't expect us to use them?"

The bishop suggested he go home and repent.

My grandfather's reply to that suggestion was "Horse feathers!"

My grandfather helped get the practice changed. My memory is that Elder John A. Widtsoe, another scientist, was his ally. The moral of this story was this: "See, even though Church authorities sometimes act like jackasses, the Church has a way of righting itself." Granddad had a little of J. Golden Kimball's salty style.

Part of the orthodoxy of that time, at least around me, was openness and a deep trust in the vastness of the gospel. As for questions, considering that we live in a universe more immense than any human comprehension and more wondrous than any human imagination, asking questions seemed like a natural, even reverent, thing to do. "Wouldn't it be strange,"

goes the old quip, “for a church which claims to have all the answers not to allow questions?”

With ideas like these, it was easy to stay uncorrelated at Stanford during the 1960s. “Uniform procedures” and “unified discourse” had not yet grown roots.

In February of 1965, Paul Tillich, one of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century, gave a two-day seminar at Big Sur in California. I attended and was intrigued by his understanding of faith as “ultimate concern.” Later that year, when it was my turn to teach the adult Sunday School class in the Stanford Ward (we rotated teaching among about ten of us), I spent two or three Sundays on the theology of Paul Tillich. No problems, no hassles. A resident in psychiatry gave a few lessons on demons, epilepsy, and miracles in the New Testament. Again, no problems, no hassles. Gene England taught an Institute class on Mormon splinter groups. This was the first time I had ever heard of the Strangites or the Godbeites. I took a religion class from Robert McAfee Brown, a prominent theologian teaching at Stanford University, and wrote my term paper on United Order experiments in communalism in early Utah.

Today, in our post-correlation world, officially visiting other churches or exploring the theology of a prominent Protestant in a Mormon Sunday School class would be all but unthinkable. But not then. Hugh B. Brown underlined this theme. He was first counselor in the First Presidency when he told a BYU audience: “One of the most important things in the world is freedom of the mind; from this all other freedoms spring. . . . Preserve, then, the freedom of your mind in education and in religion and be unafraid to express your thoughts and to insist upon your right to examine every proposition. We are not so much concerned with whether your thoughts are orthodox or heterodox as we are that you shall have thoughts.”³

In short, I was the product of an open, optimistic, pre-correlation world view. I was taught that the gospel was not fragile, that it didn’t need protection from outside ideas, from science, or from its own history. Furthermore, it was the Church that educated me to think this way. And that made all the difference.

The title, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, reflects this open, optimistic worldview. *Thought* as in “you shall have thoughts” and *Dialogue* as in discourse within Mormonism, between Mormonism and other religions, and between Mormonism and the secular world—in sum, between

Mormonism and all human experience. The first issue explained: “*Dialogue* is not a journal of conservative opinion or a journal of liberal opinion, an evangelical journal or a journal of dissent; it is a forum for [the] exchange of research and opinion across a wide spectrum.”⁴

As I look back on the last forty years of *Dialogue* issues and forty years of Church history, I discern a lesson. The lesson is this: The Church is not immune from the sober lessons of history. This is a lesson that underscores the consequential role of *Dialogue* for the last forty years, and for the next forty years.

I’ll ease into this with some Catholic examples. We all know that the Roman Catholic Church has been buffeted around a bit by its history. In 1610 Galileo published *Sidereus Nuncius* (*The Starry Messenger*), endorsing the Copernican view that the earth moves around the sun and Jupiter is circled by moons. He was assailed with abuse and tried for heresy since these ideas clearly contradict the holy scriptures, and furthermore, it was impious to look through a telescope, and besides the so-called moons are delusions of the devil. In 1999, almost four hundred years later, Pope John Paul II acknowledged that the church had wronged Galileo. In this instance, bending observed truth to the form of revealed truth failed. But it took a bit of time to fess up publicly.

In the nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic Church told women they were not to use anesthesia during childbirth, since that would clearly be against God’s will. “In pain you shall bring forth children” (Gen. 3:16). To use anesthesia is to defy God’s judgment.

Can you hear the history lesson, the sober history lesson? The Bible hasn’t changed. It still describes the earth at the center of the universe, with heaven just above the sky, and it still attests to the inevitability of pain at childbirth. Nevertheless we are all taught about our heliocentric solar system, and it is difficult to find anesthesia on any list of sins. Churches change. Understandings change. New practices and understanding don’t automatically indicate apostasy or heresy, even if they contradict scripture. Interpretations change in light of new experiences and new challenges. “Why did God give us brains if He didn’t expect us to use them?” Why was the Holy Spirit promised to all? Why do we need continuous revelation if answers are set in concrete?

Timeless truths and historical accidents have a way of getting mixed up. Every group participates in the life and history of the culture in which it finds itself. Every church must employ contemporary images, view-

points, and language forms in order to be understood. When these viewpoints and assumptions become fused with the gospel message, the results can be grotesque. Remember that slavery was accepted as a fact of life in both the Christian and Hebrew scriptures.

Now some Mormon examples. Brigham Young said about slavery, "We consider it of Divine institution, and not to be abolished until the curse pronounced on Ham shall have been removed from his descendants."⁵

In 1965 Apostle Ezra Taft Benson announced in general conference that Communists were using the civil rights movement to eventually take over the country. "When are we going to wake up?"⁶ In the spring of 1966, a national committee aligned with the John Birch Society announced its intention of nominating Benson as its presidential candidate with Strom Thurman, a strident segregationist vehemently opposed to the civil rights acts and voting rights acts, as his running mate. In February of 1967 George Wallace, the segregationist governor of Alabama, formally wrote to President McKay asking his "permission and blessings" for a "leave of absence" for Benson to be his vice-presidential running mate in his third-party candidacy. Permission was denied.⁷ The widespread paranoia and political passion of the 1950s and 1960s gradually waned; and when Benson became Church president in 1985, this ardent affair with the far right seemed almost irrelevant.⁸

President Spencer W. Kimball, speaking at October 1960 general conference, endorsed the idea that Indians would become white when they took up Mormonism: "The day of the Lamanites is nigh. For years they have been growing delightful, and they are now becoming white and delightful, as they were promised. In this picture of the twenty Lamanite missionaries, fifteen of the twenty were as light as Anglos. . . . The children in the home placement program in Utah are often lighter than their brothers and sisters in the hogans on the reservation. . . . These young members of the Church are changing to whiteness and to delight-someness."⁹

The beginning of the recovery from this troubling history began with the announcement on June 9, 1978, that the priesthood ordination was now available for worthy black men.¹⁰ Recovery is still an ongoing issue, but it is progressing. There was rejoicing at the announcement and at the underlying message—the message that the Church could change, that

the Church had not succumbed to one of the greatest temptations of all, the temptation of certitude.

We wince and squirm at the stories of Galileo and no anesthesia, at Native Americans becoming more “white and delightful,” and at Ezra Taft Benson as the running mate of George Wallace. Just as the Catholic Church was on the wrong side of history with Galileo, so were the Mormons with respect to racism and civil rights. Sometimes Mormons seem to solve the problem of change by simply denying it, a kind of faith-based ignorance. The subordination of truth to power doesn’t work any better for General Authorities than it does for Catholic popes.

Times change. Understandings change. However, a little historical empathy is in order. Cultural blindness becomes obvious with hindsight, but it is more difficult to recognize in the present, when we’re immersed in our own time and culture. Have no doubt. In forty or a hundred years, our descendants will wince and marvel at the assumptions we now live by. Neither the Church, nor any one of us, is exempt from the sober lessons of history. Even Jesus had to learn this. Remember early in his ministry, he was so convinced that his message was only for the Jews that he told the Canaanite woman whose daughter was tormented by a demon that he was “sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” and furthermore, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs” (Matt. 15:21-28, New RSV). By the end of his ministry, he sent the disciples out to bring the good news to all people.

That is the lesson. Churches change. Understandings change. The blessing, which is the corollary to this lesson, is that the Church at its core understands this. The foundational principle undergirding the need for continuing revelation is that times change and that what is needed changes.

Is the Church on the wrong side of history concerning homosexuals? In 1981 President Kimball wrote: “The unholy transgression of homosexuality is either rapidly growing or tolerance is giving it wider publicity. . . . The Lord condemns and forbids this practice. . . . ‘God made me that way,’ some say, as they rationalize and excuse themselves. . . . ‘I can’t help it,’ they add. This is blasphemy. Is man not made in the image of God, and does he think God to be ‘that way?’”¹¹ And then in softer terms: “After consideration of the evil aspects, the ugliness and prevalence of the evil of homosexuality, the glorious thing to remember is that it is curable and forgivable.”¹²

Episcopalian Bishop John Shelby Spong would say, “Yes,” the Mormon Church is on the wrong side of history concerning homosexuality:

What the heretic was in the Middle Ages, the black in the days of slavery and segregation, and the Jew in Nazi Germany, the homosexual has become in the religious hysteria of our day. . . . Ten years from now this phase of our religious history will surely be over. The contemporary scientific and medical data that suggests [sic] that homosexuality is a perfectly normal but minority aspect of humanity, that it is a given and not a chosen aspect of life, will have challenged these prejudices so deeply as to make them seem not only quaint but ignorant.¹³

I agree with Bishop Spong. The Church is on the wrong side of history on this issue. I also believe that God has not mandated a males-only priesthood. And, if I had to guess what will dismay our descendants, it will be our failure to take seriously the sacred obligation of environmental stewardship and the resultant irreversible environmental destruction.

Preach My Gospel, the new missionary guide, represents all human history from Adam to Joseph Smith as a cycle of apostasies and restorations. This sounds like a cousin to Martin Luther’s famous dictum *Semper Reformanda* (“always reforming”). The Church is always reforming. The Reverend William Sloan Coffin puts it another way: “It is bad religion to deify doctrines and creeds. While indispensable to religious life, doctrines and creeds are only as signposts. Love alone is the hitching post. . . . Moreover, doctrines can divide while compassion can only unite. In other words, [we] have both to recover tradition and to recover *from it!*”¹⁴

Hugh B. Brown on February 26, 1962, reinforced this idea: “This Church is not committed to any formal, inflexible creed, but its members are taught to believe in and live by the revelations of the past and the present and thus prepare themselves for revelations yet to come. Our concepts and even our faith must be held subject to new light.”¹⁵ Dallin H. Oaks, as president of BYU, further stated: “Rigorous standards in any intellectual discipline are not at odds with faith and devotion unless we make it [sic] so by a dogmatic certitude.”¹⁶

Thankfully, the Church has escaped the inerrancy trap that equates our tiny understanding of truth with the truth of God. Certitude is built on the assumption that the truth of God has been captured for all time. This is the place where destructive religious arrogance and the sin of idolatry take root. This is the foundation of the inquisitor. It is the “My truth is the only truth” mentality that fuels witch trials and suicide bombers.

The world is awash in lethal religious certitude. Injustice is masked as God's will. God is shrunk to fit the preconceptions of the moment, and the transitory is made sacred. In our country we even have a tendency to equate God's interests with the interests of the United States. "The greatest threat to civility, and ultimately civilization," commented columnist George Will, "is an excess of certitude."¹⁷

The temptation of certitude, I believe, is as old as the temptation of Jesus by the devil. It is the temptation of the human need for power and control. Understanding this grave human temptation is the insight behind Luther's insisting on *Semper Reformanda*, on Reverend Coffin's reminding us that we are always both recovering our traditions and recovering from them, and Hugh B. Brown's insistence on openness and thoughtfulness. And of course there is Joseph Smith's often quoted statement in defense of freedom of thought and belief: "It looks too much like the Methodists, and not like the Latter-day Saints. Methodists have a creed which a man must believe or be asked out of their church. I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please. It feels so good not to be trameled."¹⁸

The temptation of certitude is real. The need to both recover and be recovering from the faith tradition is real. Or, as my grandfather would say, the Church must continually find ways to "right itself." This we know: The Church has changed its mind many times and will do so again. Jesus showed us the way.

And all of this brings us back to *Dialogue*. In my observation, *Dialogue* has been, over the last forty years, a great gift to the Church. The Church is indebted to *Dialogue*. *Dialogue* has helped the Church avoid the sin of self-idolization, the temptation of certitude. How? I'll let Martin Marty, distinguished professor of Christian history explain it. Interviewed by Peggy Fletcher Stack for *Sunstone*, Professor Marty said:

First no people, agency, institution, nation, or cultural entity can resist idolatry, self-idolization, unless there is pressure and motive to engage in constant self-examination. I can't point to an institution in world history that renews itself unless there is a built-in mechanism for calling things into question.

Second, I don't think that usually occurs because of the pressures from without. In fact, outside pressure tends to create an inbred defensiveness and, if anything, one is less free to break ranks while the group is under attack. So any mechanism for preventing self-idolization has to be from within, from those who share the presuppositions of the larger group. For

example, the Hebrew prophets sometimes look like dissident agitators for the minority party out of power. At their best they take the covenant that the community is not living in the light of the covenant. My hunch is that the kind of dissidents who might serve for [the] revitalization of Mormonism would be those who know the tradition, selectively take it seriously, and then throw it up in the face of the present.¹⁹

In short, because the Church is not immune from the sober lessons of history, *Dialogue* and a variety of other unofficial publications are indispensable to the Church's sacred mission. The Holy Spirit, which we know blows where she will, may well be speaking through the uncorrelated voices that are not bound by "uniform procedures" and "unified discourse," voices that help the Church resist self-idolization, help resist the temptation of certitude and thus foster renewal. Since they are unofficial, they can do for the Church what the Church cannot do for itself—namely, give nuanced voice to a multitude of ideas and issues at the intersection of Mormonism and all of human experience.

Dialogue has now been in existence for 23 percent of the Church's entire history. Forty years of *Dialogue* thriving. Forty years of struggling. Forty years of tiny miracles. The *Dialogue* story is now part of the ongoing Mormon story. I imagine Gene England smiling down.

As *Dialogue* walks into the future, I offer an ancient prayer and a final plea. First the prayer:

From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth,
From the laziness that is content with half-truths,
From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
O God of Truth, deliver us.

And the plea: *Dialogue*, don't lose your nerve!

Notes

1. Devery S. Anderson "A History of Dialogue," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 32 (Summer 1999): 15–66.

2. John Charles Duffy, "The New Missionary Discussions and the Future of Correlation," *Sunstone*, No. 138 (September 2005): 28–29.

3. Hugh B. Brown, "An Eternal Quest—Freedom of the Mind," address to the BYU student body May 13, 1969, <http://www.unicomm.byu.edu> (accessed January 27, 2006).

4. "Editor's Preface," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 1 (Spring 1966): 2.
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Personal Reflections on the Founding of *Dialogue*

Paul G. Salisbury

The idea of starting a Mormon publication had certainly occurred to many before the appearance of *Dialogue*. It first surfaced in my mind in the 1950s. Richard O. Cowan was doing graduate work in history at Stanford where I was an undergraduate, and we often talked about Mormon history and theology and the wealth of material there was for a journal of Mormon history. We were part of a group of LDS students who would drive back to Utah for conference, holidays, or long weekends. As we drove through the night across Nevada, long conversations evolved that remain in my mind as some of the most stimulating of my college days.

During my mission in France, I was fortunate to have Wesley Johnson as a senior companion in Valence. It was near the end of his mission and early in mine, but we found a commonality that developed into a life-long friendship. After our missions, we were both at Stanford for a period. When I had returned to Utah to complete my architectural studies, I often returned to the Bay Area to visit friends, like Wes, who was then teaching at Stanford, and Frances Menlove whose husband was in graduate school there. On those visits Wes and I often talked about the potential of a Mormon journal.

My memory is that I mentioned to Frances that Wes and I had been exploring the idea of a journal of Mormon history. She said Gene England and Joe Jeppson (whom neither Wes nor I really knew) were talking about a similar idea and suggested we should get together. (Wes recalls that Diane Monson played the role of intermediary, so we clearly remember this episode differently.) Gene and Joe were more focused on the theological and social areas a journal might explore while Wes and I had perhaps focused more on history. When we met, we all agreed that

there was an overlap in those fields and that each of us was interested in exploring all aspects of Mormon culture, history, and intellectual life. We all believed that the resources for such a journal lay within the Mormon intellectual community—on various campuses and elsewhere across the United States—a community for which no forum or outlet existed within the Church. Though *BYU Studies* had published many interesting papers, many felt it was not entirely free to explore issues without the official filter.

“Dialogue” was one of the catch words of the ’60s, but we liked the implications of the name. It turned out there was another publication with that name, so the subtitle “A Journal of Mormon Thought” was important, not only to help define and market the publication but to avoid trademark infringement of such a popular term.

At that time I had no experience in publishing but, like Wes, had been fascinated by how journals were put together. An early influence had been *Perspectives USA*, a quarterly of the 1950s that promoted American arts and literature. And we were both familiar with a range of American and French journals.

With a background in architecture, I had had a fair exposure to graphic design and type styles. Wes was fascinated by calligraphy and knew typography well. Though the 1960s were a period of new, clean, contemporary, sans-serif type faces, we agreed that we wanted to use a serif type and do everything possible to give the journal a solid, established appearance. The format, paper color—everything was geared to create the sense that this was a serious endeavor.

The initial tone of the publication was really set, I think, by the announcement mailer I designed. We sent it out to a huge mailing list compiled from sources across the Church. In it, the engraving of the two men “dialoging” under a tree made their debut. That image and several others came from old Deseret Alphabet books.

The selection of art work, photos, cover design, and composition of pages were my responsibility for the first few issues. It didn’t take long for me to realize that the journal deserved more professional design support. Ed Maryon at the University of Utah Art Department was generous with his ideas and assistance and steered me to other artists. We were generously offered the work of artists, photographers, and graphic designers throughout the Church.

In the mid-1960s, hot topics included the Church’s demolition of

historic buildings and its position on blacks and the priesthood. To illustrate articles on those issues, I was fortunate to find excellent work by local photographers, from Reuters News Agency, and the great photographers' cooperative, Magnum.

Mailing took a big effort from a team of volunteers who had to be recruited for each irregularly produced issue. Those issues were hand-stuffed in a paper envelope, sealed, and labeled—all on someone's dining room table or a borrowed conference room. Since the publication function was clearly distinct from the editorial function, the distance between Salt Lake and Stanford was rarely a problem. But in those days before FedEx, fax, and email, there were plenty of challenges.

At the time of *Dialogue's* founding, I was doing my architectural apprenticeship in Utah. Getting the journal out required the empathy of the architects where I worked, as I often had to be at the printer's on short notice to deal with printing crises or to check the initial run of the issue. We first sought printing bids from a variety of sources, including Stanford University Press, but pricing was more competitive in Utah. Our first issues were done by Quality Press in Salt Lake City. Those issues were run with handset type, so all of the art and photos had to be turned into metal. Then Publishers Press/Bookcraft, an LDS publishing house less official than Deseret Book, solicited us. The price was competitive, and the process was lithograph, which allowed greater flexibility for changes and higher quality of photo and art reproduction. Still, it resulted in a less "scholarly" page in my mind: There is a particular quality to a printed page done with hot-metal type that I value. After working with Publishers for Volume 2, we happily returned to Quality Press.

Considering that none of us had created a publication before and that nothing like it existed in Mormon society, it now seems amazing that it moved so quickly and smoothly from our early discussions to the first issue. The response was both gratifying and disappointing. We quickly climbed to 5,000 subscribers, which was not insignificant. But in a church that then numbered around two million, the potential seemed much greater. We were constantly looking for opportunities to reach that market. The *University of Utah Chronicle* was one we hit whenever there was a special article or issue that seemed likely to grab the attention of that faculty/student group. We advertised a number of times in the Utah Symphony program—sometimes taking out full page or back cover ads. We did some advertising in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, but the ads were easily lost and

the potential readership was less concentrated. I spoke to fireside groups along the Wasatch Front, and Wes, Gene, Ed Geary, Richard Bushman, and others spoke to groups across the country. Ultimately, though, it was word of mouth within the Church and academic community that spread the readership.

A real effort was made to advertise in the *Improvement Era*. Most Mormon families subscribed to the *Era*, and it was the one publication Mormons all over the English-speaking world received in the 1960s. In those days it took advertisements for all kinds of products and services and often for books or publications. We were excluded. Hugh B. Brown, then a counselor in David O. McKay's First Presidency, was openly supportive of *Dialogue*; and when I met with him on the idea of advertising in the *Era*, he said he would do what he could. But he warned me that many of "the brethren" were concerned about the publication. When I met with Apostle Richard L. Evans, under whose direction the *Era* fell, it was clear *Dialogue* would not be given access to that broad Church readership.

Warnings about being involved with *Dialogue*, or an independent publication that dealt with Mormon life, emerged immediately. We were naive, but that official stance was a surprise to us. The idea of *Dialogue* seemed such a natural outgrowth of our understanding and testimony of Mormonism. I'll never forget being interrupted at Sunday dinner with my parents by a phone call from Wes on some urgent matter regarding an issue we were trying to get out. When I returned to the dinner table, my father—perhaps partly in annoyance at dinner having been interrupted—said something like, "No good will come of this venture!" Yet as soon as *Dialogue* was being distributed and read, and he saw the issues, he was very proud and always pointed out to people that his son was an editor of *Dialogue*. Since the publication office was my parents' basement and, at times, part of an empty office my father had, I would say they gave it great support.

One of the most satisfying aspects of working with the journal was the letters—and having people come up to me personally—expressing how gratifying it was to know there were others in the Church "who think as I do." And I believe it did sustain many good members of the Church. The support we received from such a range of exceptional people in the Church and the unqualified encouragement from Leonard J. Arrington, Lowell Bennion, Hugh B. Brown, and others of leadership and prominence helped carry us past the censorship and resistance we also encoun-

tered. Everyone who put so much effort in the creation of *Dialogue* did so as a natural expression of their faith. And for many, that experience clearly confirmed that faith. Still, for those like myself with emerging doubts about the gerontocracy and the growing strictures on intellectual and personal freedom, participation in *Dialogue's* creation couldn't make enough of a difference to sustain my commitment to institutional Mormonism.

Did my *Dialogue* experience change my relationship with or views about the Church? Was my father right in his prediction? I think rather that it confirmed and clarified my understanding of the Church. Though I now consider myself an "ethnic" Mormon, my *Dialogue* experience was only one of the last phases of an evolution that I trace back through my college and mission experiences. My association with *Dialogue* was a positive, often exhilarating, and satisfying part of my life and personal growth. I think all of us involved at the beginning were doing something we had dreamed of and which we felt was a service to the LDS community and an expression of our faith. It was certainly a wonderful outlet for the idealism and energy of a young man in his early thirties.

“Lord, To Whom Shall We Go?” The Challenges of Discipleship and Church Membership

Robert A. Rees

The gospel is true, is true.

Everything else is anybody's guess.

Robert Christmas, “Hungry Sunday”¹

Over the course of a lifetime, I have had occasion to give thought to the question of why I continue to be an active, committed member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It seems to have become more important during periods when official actions of the Church clashed with my expectations of how the Church should respond (for example, during the Civil Rights movement—especially around issues of denial of the priesthood to blacks; during the battle over the Equal Rights Amendment; during the Vietnam war; and for the past several decades over the Church’s treatment of homosexuals). The question of staying has also been raised at times when I have experienced deep pain because of the treatment by ecclesiastical leaders toward me and those I love.

Up until this point in my life—and I suspect this will hold true for the remainder of my life—my strategy for managing such issues has been to deal quietly and privately with my personal pain and to try and work for change on important issues from within. I realize that this is not the only possible strategy, but it is the one I have chosen. Aside from this, there are a number of reasons why I stay. I recognize at the outset that they are highly subjective. I make no apology for this fact. The reasons I stay can be put into the following categories (if I can be forgiven the extreme allitera-

tion!): people, principles, promises—and then some reasons that are purely practical and personal.

People

One of the chief reasons I stay is related to people. This includes my family of origin; my siblings; my wife's and their families; my children; my grandchildren; my friends; and a group of people with whom I have a tangential relationship but whose faith is somehow connected to my faith. I also stay because I believe my staying may have an influence on those who will come in future generations.

My family was converted to the restored gospel independently in four separate generations, beginning with my great-great grandparents who were converts to the Church from Wales during the first great missionary gathering in the early days of the Church. They and their three sons immigrated to the Great Basin Kingdom in the 1850s, but the parents and one son returned to Wales shortly thereafter. Another son stayed in Utah where he became a prominent educator; the third son, my great-grandfather, David Rees, left the Church, moved to Missouri, and joined the Reorganized Church.

My grandfather, Zoram Rees, although bearing a Book of Mormon name, never belonged to the Church; but his wife, my grandmother, Emma Jane Rees Maddox, was converted to it by Mormon missionaries traveling through Southwestern Colorado during the 1920s. Two of my aunts were baptized with my grandmother, but my father, then a boy of 12, was not. In his twenties, however, my father was converted to the gospel through what he considered a miraculous priesthood healing. This occurred when I was an infant and after he and my mother had been divorced for some time. When I was ten, my father returned from the Second World War, taught me the gospel, and then baptized me in the Mesa Temple. Thus, there were four independent conversions of my family over five generations. It is therefore partly because of what I consider the Lord's persistence with the Rees family, and out of respect for the sacrifices my forebears made to be part of the Lord's great latter-day work, that I stay.

In spite of these various conversions, there was a period of many years when I was the only member of my family active in the Church. I can remember many Sunday mornings during my teenage years when I arose and rode the bus alone to church—to the Long Beach First Ward and later

to the Long Beach Fifth Ward. I believe that my faithfulness during those and subsequent years may have influenced my father and several siblings in their return to the Church many years later. Before he passed away, my father served a mission for the Church and served in the temple. I continue to stay for my reactivated siblings because I see how much happier their lives are because of their association with the Church. I stay because at times, in my own and my wife's families, there is no one else to perform baptisms, give blessings, speak at funerals, or go to the temple with someone for the first time.

One of the most important reasons for my faithfulness to the gospel and my commitment to the Church is my own children and grandchildren, some of whom are active in the Church and some of whom are not. I could wish that they all had a faith as fervent as my own, that they were all enjoying the blessings of the restored gospel. I want my children and grandchildren, as well as those of future generations, to know that my faithfulness has been the most powerful influence shaping who I am, that whatever claim I have of being a good father and grandfather is directly related to the way the restored gospel has shaped my soul. I hope that, when they think of me, they say, as e. e. cummings said of his father:

because my Father lived his soul
love is the whole and more than all.²

I stay for all of those to whom over the course of a lifetime I have taught the gospel and to whom I have borne my testimony. I still keep in touch with people to whom I had the privilege of teaching the gospel when I was a young missionary. Recently my former companions and I had a reunion with three couples who joined the Church in the first city in which I labored, Kankakee, Illinois. It was a joyful occasion to see how their lives and the lives of their families have been profoundly affected by the gospel. I stay because of all of the young single adults I had the privilege of serving as a bishop. I stay because of the good people of Lithuania whom my wife and I had the blessing of welcoming into the Church in the Baltic States. Witnessing the transformation of their lives through the restored gospel was one of the most meaningful experiences of my life.

I stay because of those I meet throughout my travels and in the various wards in which I have lived who feel estranged, who are different, whose ties to the Church are tenuous, who question and doubt. Because I

stay, I believe that others are encouraged to stay. As I said to Karl Keller many years ago, “If all of those of us who see what is wrong with the Church leave it, where will the Church’s conscience be?”³ I don’t flatter myself that I am the Church’s conscience, but I believe that, along with hundreds of thousands of others, I am part of that conscience.

I also stay because the Church has made possible the deepest most meaningful friendships in my life. I truly understand what it is like to love and be loved as a friend, to have bonds with men and women that I believe will transcend mortality. I stay because they stay.

Principles

I continue my devotion to the gospel and my loyalty to the Church because of principles. Over the course of a lifetime, I have found the principles of the gospel enlightening, liberating, and ennobling. I speak initially of the first principles—of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repentance. But I also speak of those principles that we tend to neglect, of which William Faulkner spoke in his Nobel acceptance speech—“love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice,” what Faulkner called “the eternal verities,” “the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself.”⁴ To Faulkner’s list, I would add courage, humility, and integrity. I believe the Church makes possible a laboratory in which these principles can be acted upon. It isn’t the only place, of course, but it is one of the good places.

I believe, for example, that the Church offers many opportunities for us to sacrifice, to go outside and beyond ourselves in ways that school our souls and enlarge our hearts. Here I speak of such small sacrifices as fasting, paying tithes and offerings, and serving others. Were it not for the Church’s encouragement that I spend one day a month going without food or drink, I doubt that I would hold in my heart the privation of those millions throughout the world who go hungry each night or that I would contribute, however modestly, to relieve their suffering. Were it not for the Church, I seriously doubt that I would contribute a tenth of my income to support the many good things the Church does. Nor would I likely sacrifice other personal desires in order to serve others. In addition to fulfilling many ordinary callings throughout my life, I have given nearly a tenth of my life in full-time service to the Church and that service has deepened and enriched my life immeasurably.

Among the principles the Church has taught me to follow (even

though it has not always been happy with how I have done so) is the moral imperative to work for social justice, to respectfully challenge and question the Church itself when, in my judgment, it falls short of its own stated ideals, and to minister to those whom society (and sometimes even the Church itself) considers "the least of these," those whom Mother Teresa called "Jesus in disguise."

I stay because the Church affords me numerous opportunities to live the Golden Rule, to do unto others as I would have them do unto me. I believe, by the way, that this principle refers to the institution of the Church itself—that we are obligated to do unto it as we would have it do unto us, which is one of the reasons I continue to give it my allegiance in spite of the fact that I feel it is not always completely deserving of that allegiance. I believe that a higher manifestation of this principle as it applies both to individuals and to institutions is, "Do not do unto others as they have done unto you."⁵ This requires greater courage, humility and love.

The principles I mention are best exemplified in the life of Christ. My attempts to follow them for which the Church affords opportunities have, I believe, made me a more determined, a more dedicated, and a more faithful disciple. One of the reasons I stay is because I believe that these principles are best followed within a community where people can work together to give them concrete manifestation in ways that make the world a better place.

I stay because I know that these principles produce goodness, and I want to be a part of that goodness. That goodness and its attendant innocence and purity are reflected in the lives of Latter-day Saints. Not always and not perfectly, but nevertheless palpably. The world is in desperate need of such goodness, and I want to help refine and magnify it—in my own life, in the lives of my fellow saints, and in the Church itself.

Promises

One of the reasons I stay is because of promises and covenants I have made and those that have been made to me by the Lord and by others. When I was a boy of fifteen, I traveled from the small Arizona town in which we lived to Mesa to receive my patriarchal blessing. Alma Davis, the patriarch who laid his hands on my head that day, made what I consider inspired and wonderful promises, promises that have unfolded throughout my life of serious, sustained engagement in the Church. Patriarch Davis spoke of covenants that I made with the Lord in the preexistence and

which He made with me personally as well, including the promise that I would do my best to fulfill the mission given to me and his promise “that he would give [me] His Spirit as a guide and companion.” I have felt the guidance and companionship of that spirit throughout my life.

I speak also of the promises the Lord and I make to one another each Sunday when (to use Bruce Jorgensen’s image)⁶ I take the “shard of bread” and “paper thimble of water” to renew my covenants. I stay because I believe that the weekly renewal of that bond is one of the most important influences in my life. It keeps fresh in my mind and my imagination the reality of Christ’s mercy and his unconditional love for me. It keeps fresh my promise to remember that I have taken upon myself his name—and all that that implies of lifting the burdens and binding the wounds of others.

I speak of the promises my wife and I made across the altar of the temple and of the promise that the bond between us, which has deepened and expanded over the years, can be eternal. I speak also of the promises made by the Prophet Joseph Smith (and affirmed by subsequent prophets) that “the eternal sealings of faithful parents and the divine promise made to them for valiant service in the Cause of Truth, would save not only themselves, but likewise their posterity.” This includes those who are “careless and disobedient,” who wander from or who leave the Church.⁷ In the words of Brigham Young, “I care not where those children go, they are bound up to their parents by an everlasting tie, and no power on earth or hell can separate them from their parents in eternity.”⁸ On one level, this does not make sense to me, but on another, I feel like the speaker in Thomas Hardy’s poem, “The Oxen,” who, although he doubts the truth of the fable he has heard that oxen kneel in devotion to the Christ-child in the manger, nevertheless on Christmas Eve goes to his own stable, “hoping it might be so.”⁹

Personal

Finally, I stay for a number of personal reasons beyond those mentioned above. I stay because I want to be part of the remarkable spiritual and social revolution that began when young Joseph knelt in that grove of trees near Palmyra. For all the limitations of the Church itself, over a lifetime of the study of religion, I find Christian Mormonism the most satisfying and enlightening religious philosophy of all I know. The concept of godhood as constituting a personal, loving Heavenly Father and Mother

and of humans as their perfectible children, the most precious things in the created universe, with infinite, eternal possibilities, is extremely appealing and deeply soul satisfying.

The doctrines of Mormonism are among the most enlightened in human history. Consider, for example, the amazing teachings embedded in Joseph Smith's King Follett Discourse and in Section 84 of the Doctrine and Covenants—that God desires to give to his children everything that he has: all knowledge, all power, all glory, even the ultimate and crowning glory of godhood itself. Is there a grander teaching in the annals of religion than this?

I stay because I love to sing the songs of Zion. Joining my voices with others each Sunday morning is a spiritual, kinesthetic experience. These songs, which Alma calls the songs of redeeming love, vibrate throughout our whole bodies and souls as we give full-hearted and full-throated expression to our feelings of praise and celebration. One of the functions of hymn singing is to unify a congregation in a way that transcends their differences. For those few moments when we join our voices, expressing whatever we may feel of joy or praise or thanksgiving, we are as one (even when we are not in complete harmony!) In this way we "serve the Lord with gladness: com[ing] into his presence with singing" (Psalm 100:2).

I stay because I sincerely believe that the Lord wants his Church to be better than it is, and I have the hope that I may play some small part in making it so. I believe he is not pleased when the Church as an institution and the majority of its members see blacks, homosexuals, intellectuals, or any that the majority considers "other" as unworthy to sit at his table in full fellowship. I don't believe he is pleased when dissent and open dialogue are discouraged, quashed, or, especially, punished. I don't believe he is pleased when women are relegated to second-class citizenship. I don't believe he is pleased when we abandon gospel principles to support partisan political positions or when we elect politicians who are more devoted to their party's platform than to the principles of the gospel or good governance.

I stay because I believe the Lord wants the Church to be more liberal. As Joseph Smith said, "Our Heavenly Father is more liberal in his views and more boundless in his mercies than we are ready to believe."¹⁰ I applaud the Church's emphasis on conservative spiritual and moral values, but I also want it to emphasize more the gospel's inherent liberal social and political values. The extent to which Church leaders and mem-

bers counter the corrosive moral decay in our society is, to my mind, immensely important in creating a world where God's children have a greater opportunity for choice and true happiness. On the other hand, the extent to which Church leaders and members work against important social and political reforms, especially those that have to do with social justice and individual freedom, ultimately works against such opportunities. I believe, for example, that history and the Lord will judge our Mormon community for its zealous support of the present government policies, including its mad plunge into war in Iraq; its seeming callous disregard for the lives of innocent men, women, and children killed or maimed by our weapons; its torture and inhumane treatment of prisoners of war or "enemy combatants" and even innocents caught up in the net of the war on terror; and its disregard of international treaties and even the U.S. Constitution itself. Mormons should, in my view, be leading the outrage against such policies and actions instead of enthusiastically supporting them.

One of the challenges to my staying in the Church is that, as my spiritual life has evolved, I have found myself becoming more and more certain of fewer and fewer things. In *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's idealistic central character holds in his imagination a fantastic image of the love of his life, Daisy Fay (whose last name suggests the fairy-like quality of Gatsby's obsession). His incredible devotion to that ideal is symbolized by the green light that burns at the end of Daisy's dock across the bay from his own house. Fitzgerald summarizes Gatsby's disillusionment when that idyllic image finally comes up against the hard reality of who Daisy really is: "His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one."¹¹ In the face of historical revelations, scientific discoveries and my own experience, the number of enchanted objects that hold my devotion to the Church has also diminished; but at the same time, those that I hold as pearls of great price have increased in value and intensity. William Sloane Coffin puts it perfectly: "[There] are those who prefer certainty to truth, those in church who put the purity of dogma ahead of the integrity of love. And what a distortion of the gospel it is to have limited sympathies and unlimited certainties, when the very reverse, to have limited certainties but unlimited sympathies, is not only more tolerant but far more Christian."¹²

Another reason I stay is because I have been blessed to have had many rich spiritual experiences over the course of a life in the Church. While some may dismiss such experiences as delusions or self-generated affirmations, as someone who has been blessed to have such experiences

("did not our bosoms burn within us as we walked with him on the way?"), with whatever I can manifest of intellectual and emotional honesty, I have to claim these as significant, valid experiences. Such spiritual experiences have helped to make me a believer in the original sense of that word. Latin for "I believe" is *credo* which means, literally, "I place it in my heart." Because I recognize that they are integral to who I am or choose to be, I place such experiences in my heart—or perhaps they are placed there by a gifting God. At any rate, this gospel and this church (as well as many other things) have made such gifts of the heart possible and for that I am immensely grateful.

A General Authority friend told me many years ago, "Bob, I believe you are destined to be a stranger in your own church." The fact is the Church is not a particularly friendly place for those who doubt or question, for those who, no matter how sincerely or respectfully, feel compelled to challenge the Church. When I have felt the impulse to leave or have felt out of joint in my own ward and stake, I remind myself that Christ chose to be energetically engaged in a congregation that was limited in its vision, judgment, taste, and charity—a congregation that ultimately rejected and abandoned him. I don't in any way mean to suggest that my position is similar to his, but I ask myself how I could do less than he did in continuing to be engaged in the pastoral, mutual-ministering dynamic within my faith community.

I confess that from time to time I have fleeting impulses to leave. My sentiments during these periods are akin to those expressed by Robert Frost in his poem "Birches":

It's when I'm weary of considerations,
And life is too much like a pathless wood . . . [that]
I'd like to get away from earth awhile
And then come back to it and begin over.

Frost quickly adds:

May no fate willfully misunderstand me
And half grant what I wish and snatch me away
Not to return. Earth's the right place for love.
I don't know where it's likely to go better.¹³

I believe the Church is the right place, or certainly *one* of the right places, for love; I don't know where it's likely to go better.

The ultimate reason I stay in the Mormon Church is because I have made a commitment to follow Christ and I believe that the Church is one of the places in which his work is to be done. It is not the only place, but it is the one I have chosen—or perhaps that has chosen me. Because I know in the deepest part of my being that he loves me, that he suffered for my sins in Gethsemane and on Calvary, and still suffers when I fall short of my commitment to him, in my small and inadequate way I know I must follow him. Christ calls us from the things of this world, and he calls us to his great work of bringing to pass the redemption of the world. Without our participation, that work cannot have its ultimate flowering. As Rumi says,

Where Jesus lives the great-hearted gather.
We are a door that is never locked.
If you suffer any kind of pain,
Stay near this door. Open it.¹⁴

The saddest episode in the scriptures is that found in the gospel of John where Christ, seeing his disciples begin to abandon him as his mission reaches its climax, asks his chosen twelve, “Wilt thou also go away?” Peter’s response is one that I think of when I consider leaving, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68).

Jogging on the streets of Salt Lake City during a recent visit, I noticed that someone had stenciled on sidewalks throughout the downtown area the words, “Trust Jesus.” I do trust him. I trust him to be fair, I trust him to be constant, and, most of all, I trust him to continue loving me. I stay because I trust him.

A few weeks ago we celebrated Pioneer Day to honor the sacrifices of the early Saints. There is an episode in their crossing this great land that explains why I stay. At Winter Quarters a serious discussion was held about whether to cross the plains with handcarts that had been so hastily constructed and so late in the season. Levi Savage argued in vain that the crossing was ill advised and likely to be disastrous. One of the apostles promised that if the Saints pressed on they would transverse the wilderness without harm or loss of life. Savage knew better. “The tears rolled down his cheeks as he prophesied that if . . . [they] took the journey at that

late season of the year, their bones would strew the way." Nevertheless, he added, "If you elect to go ahead, I will come and assist, though it cost me my life."¹⁵ They did go, and Levi Savage accompanied them and was instrumental in saving the lives of some of his fellow Saints. I don't consider myself heroic like Levi Savage, but his impulse to accompany the Saints on their journey, no matter how long or perilous, no matter how personally challenging, no matter the sacrifice or ultimate cost, is also my impulse. Perhaps more than anything, it explains why I stay.

Notes

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Mormon Artists Group: Adventures in Art Making

Glen Nelson

It is an elaborate experiment really, this Mormon Artists Group that I founded in 1999, seven years ago. In my interviews with the press, I have been saying that the number of LDS writers, painters, photographers, composers, etc., in New York City is about fifty, but that figure (which does not include performing artists) is frequently closer to one hundred. We began creating works together, including limited edition books and prints, five years ago.

Sometimes I am asked by journalists about the state of Mormon arts and what I think it means to be a Mormon artist today. To be honest, I do not have a satisfying answer. But I do know that Mormon Artists Group is having success finding LDS artists who aspire to the highest levels of achievement, and we are also attracting a new audience to their work, both in the United States and abroad.

I was surprised to come in contact with the art of Mormon New Yorkers. It was not the work itself that was unusual. The shock to me was that these were people I already knew, but I had no idea they were artists. I simply knew them as bishops and Relief Society presidents and high councilors and Sunday School teachers who lived near me in Manhattan. We were an underground subculture, and we kept our art mostly to ourselves.

I established Mormon Artists Group in 1999. Our first tasks were to create a series of exhibitions, charity events, and a CD-ROM portfolio of our works. We formed a lending library, a writers' group, and a virtual discussion group. These forums provided for regular communication among us. We proclaimed tentatively and primarily to each other: We exist.

In 2001 when we were readying our first publication under the ban-

ner of Mormon Artists Group Press, the writers whom I had invited to contribute personal essays after 9/11 for the volume titled *Silent Notes Taken* voiced a total lack of confidence that any reader would want to purchase a copy. They doubted, even though the books were beautiful, hand-bound volumes covered in natural linen, with hand-marbled endpapers, an introduction by Richard Lyman Bushman and four large etchings by Stephen Moore. We planned to offer it at \$100 (or \$400 for the book and an extra suite of the etchings in a matching portfolio case). The writers were quick to predict that none would sell. Reluctantly, they sent prospecti to friends and family. The entire edition of fifty sold out in a week, and a commercial publisher brought out a paperback edition six months later. It was a good beginning, and I was quite happy to wave royalty checks under the writers' noses. But if I felt encouraged by our initial success, the glow did not last long.

At roughly the same time our first book appeared, I sat in a rehearsal for an LDS concert performance at Carnegie Hall. One of the members of the 150-voice choir asked the conductor why there were no works by LDS composers on the program. His answer got a big, knowing laugh, "Because there isn't any Mormon music worth singing." I wanted to reply with a volley of LDS composers' names that could rival in quality our programmed Mozart, Fauré, and Barber. I thought I should defend our own composers, but I was too ignorant to do it.

My frustration took me to the library. Armed with the names of composers from our hymnal, I found numerous catalog entries for symphonies, operas, string quartets, ballets, chamber music, art songs, and choral works written by Mormons. Next, I found lists of contemporary LDS composers and searched for their works in our public and university libraries. I discovered over two hundred listings of fine art music that were on library shelves in New York. I could tell from the score descriptions, their titles, and the performance histories of the works that they were ambitious, serious compositions. How was it possible that I didn't know any of this music?

Our second volume became a reference of these findings, *Musical Compositions by LDS Composers in New York City Library Collections*. A few other artists helped me put the volume together. It was a book we published and sent free of charge to anyone we could think of who might care about music. We were lucky and received a small grant that allowed us to produce

it. When we launched a website (www.mormonartistsgroup.com), we made the book available as a free PDF download.

I am aware that the idea of LDS music and other LDS arts may not interest everyone, but I suspect that there is a critical mass of Mormons who will respond to LDS fine artists and be as engaged by them as they are by Britten, or Nabokov, or Warhol. That is our target audience.

I look back on it as an embarrassing act of hubris; but on the heels of my discovery that so many LDS composers existed, I wrote letters to sixteen prominent and emerging LDS composers in the fall of 2002 and invited them to collaborate on a grand venture. In the project I envisioned, each composer would select a visual artwork created by a Mormon artist (living or dead) and then write a piano work responding to it. I was working with Grant Johannesen at the time, writing the memoirs of his life as a concert pianist, and I asked him whether he liked the idea. He enthusiastically agreed, sight unseen, to learn and record the works. We planned to structure the compositions something like Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" rather than merely a collection of separate pieces. Whether the scores would be good and might coalesce as a whole, we could only hope.

Probably because Grant's name was attached to it, Crawford Gates, Robert Cundick, David Sargent, Reid Nibley, Rowan Taylor, Deon Nielsen Price, and other LDS composers from around the country signed on to the project despite their unfamiliarity with me. *Mormoniana*, as it was eventually titled, became increasingly ambitious as it developed. Ultimately, the volume contained an eighty-page score, a fifty-five-minute CD recorded by Grant, an original, signed, and numbered frontispiece print by Valerie Atkisson, sixteen full-color reproductions of the artworks chosen by the composers, and an 8,300-word essay on the subject of Mormon music and art by composer and author Michael Hicks. The volume was hand-bound in brown silk, with a twelve-color original artwork embroidered onto the front cover.

For me, it was an illuminating adventure that further encouraged me to seek a base of support for LDS fine art, and I learned a lot of lessons I had not anticipated. For example, the most famous composers were also the most generous. They were the first to turn in music, the first to send letters of gratitude and encouragement, and the first to turn over their considerable rolodexes to promote the project. I had likewise never imagined that the music I most admired would come from composers who suf-

fered from the most self-doubt. One highly regarded composer wrote to me in a cover letter to his score, “I don’t know if this is any good at all. If you don’t like it, tear it up, and I’ll start over.” Two other composers constantly threatened to withdraw in frustration that they were not up to the task, only to turn in brilliant, challenging music at the eleventh hour.

This project coincided with a dismal year in which my family suffered through the hospitalization of my daughter for a brain tumor. When I realized that the collaborators’ efforts might also be impacted by delays and perhaps even be abandoned, I wrote to them about my situation. The artists responded with a torrent of compassion—and this from people I had only recently met and even then only through correspondence. They confided to me their own physical challenges, which were shocking and extensive.

There is a stereotype about artists. They are said to be sensitive people—a statement laced with a pejorative bite, I suspect. But I can attest to a level of intimacy and kindness from these artists that I certainly didn’t have any right to expect. Even now, every conversation with them begins with an inquiry after the health of our little girl.

Of course, I did not know it at the time, but *Mormoniana* turned out to be the last project for a few of the artists. Two became ill in their advanced age, and they lost the physical strength to compose within a year of completing it. A third, Grant Johannesen, passed away in the spring of 2005. *Mormoniana*, it should be said, is a very complex and technically demanding work for any pianist, let alone someone in his eighties. Grant left a very distinguished legacy of some fifty recordings. He was a pioneer, the first pianist to make long-playing classical music recordings, and he championed great music from all over the world, including music by Mormon composers. Our project was his final recording. *Mormoniana* came to be available in four separate editions that range from a deluxe volume signed by all the collaborators (\$500) to a paperback edition (\$50) to a single CD recording co-produced by Tantara Records (\$15.95).

From time to time, someone will approach me and inquire why so-and-so participated in one of our projects. They ask me, “Are they Mormon enough?” I found that question frustrating and unanswerable until I attended a seminar on African American poetry, and a panelist claimed that one of my favorite Harlem Renaissance poets should not be considered African American because his mother was white. To his mind, the poet wasn’t fully qualified to tell the African American experience. It oc-

curs to me that my job is not to put such limits on Mormon culture. I am more interested in this question: Who owns the Mormon experience?

It is true that some of the artists in our projects are not devout, and we are very careful to make clear we are not affiliated with the Church other than by the fact that we are members. I've never asked artists what they believe. If an artist tells me he or she is an artist, I say, "Glad to meet you, artist." Then I expect them to show me that they are serious about it. Likewise, if they say they are Mormon (whatever that means to them), I do not stop to ask them what they do on Sundays. I care about their belief, naturally, because I believe, but I also value their contribution and experience whatever their level of immersion. I might be wrong in that approach, but it feels right and fair to me. At the very least, I do not think it's my role to judge and exclude.

It seems to me that, as a culture, we have no obligation to pay attention to our artists, but a lot to lose if we don't. There is clearly a tension between quality and faith. Two anecdotes illustrate it. Lansing McLoskey, one of the emerging composers who contributed a work for *Mormoniana*, said to me that everyone in his department at Harvard, where he was getting his Ph.D. in composition, knew he was a Mormon. His music even had elements of LDS theology in it. But he confided, "Even so, I can't get any of my music performed in church, and I'm the ward choir director!" Deon Nielsen Price, an LDS composer from California with a fine national reputation and a solid body of work, told me of a recent conversation with a student after a lecture. The young woman came up to her and, commenting on Deon's faith, asked incredulously, "How can you be both a composer and a Mormon?"

Still, I am not a reformer. I do not think it my job to alter a culture or to prove to somebody or everybody that art is hip or good or worthy; nor is it of interest to me to place values on artworks by Mormons and to categorize them as good, better, best. I leave the role of critic to others. I prefer advocacy. I like patronage. And I like making things with people who are interesting.

People can ask (and they should ask) whether the books and art published by Mormon Artists Group Press are any good. By that, I mean really good: Copland-good, Picasso-good, Milosz-good. That's our benchmark. To aspire to make anything less is like fishing on the ocean to land a minnow.

For the most part, it is a wonderful enterprise. My task is not with-

out dangers, however. I recently attended a lecture by James Levine, the artist director of the Metropolitan Opera. His candor was extraordinary. He discussed the fact that he repeatedly places musicians in positions of risk. I paid attention to this remark because I was in the audience the night a singer fell and died onstage. Dangers are real. Of course, he was referring to artistic risks. He said that his musicians will sometimes succeed but often fail. He noted, however, that artists must be put in such circumstances in order to flourish. It seems to me that the LDS artists whom I know are willing to put themselves and their reputations on the line as true artists must do.

I had a phone call one day in late 2002 from the most successful artist in our community, Lane Twitchell. Originally from Ogden, Utah, he had moved to New York and more or less conquered the art landscape with awards, museum exhibitions, grants, one-man shows at prestigious galleries, articles in national culture magazines, and reviews in the country's most influential art magazines and newspapers. Some might have been surprised at this because his early artwork was obviously about Mormonism, a risky move for an unestablished artist. His background did not discourage interest; rather, it fascinated the art world.

It is quite a strange experience to walk into a New York City museum and see a painting with the Salt Lake Temple in the middle of it, or with references to pioneers, the Deseret Alphabet, and other semi-hermetic symbols. That is how I felt as I encountered Lane's pictures at P.S. 1. It was a strange and also a cool experience. There was a sense of arrival, and I suppose that is what I want from Mormon artists: the aspiration of arrival.

I had asked Lane whether he wanted to collaborate on a project some time, and he called to propose that we produce some original prints together. I mention the process because I found it instructive to discover how collaboration can work, how fine art can find an audience in Mormon culture, and how Mormon art is absorbed into the larger culture of the world.

Lane liked to collaborate by throwing ideas around and soliciting responses. At first I was self-conscious, but Lane was encouraging. After I gave an idea, sometimes he would politely say, "I'll have to think about it," and at other times he would say, "Yes, and let's go even further than that . . ." The imagery of the prints came to be about aspects of New York City and the art market after 9/11. The title of the prints is *Mona Lisas and Mad Hatters*, also after an Elton John song that questions class tensions in New

York society. The prints were created by an unusual process of layering laser-cut paper and giclee prints.

The next step was the matter of selling our prints. Merchandising art is tricky. In this case, we settled on a price for the prints of \$250 each or the set of three for \$650. We wanted them to be affordable. The edition size was fifty. His gallery, located on Fifth Avenue and 57th Street, rolled their eyes at our pricing (“Far below market value,” they whispered), but they consigned a group of prints, and we sent out the prospecti as well. Our customers responded quickly, and the gallery also sold prints immediately. The collectors were aware that the artworks were published by Mormon Artists Group Press, but I don’t think the word *Mormon* had much influence on their purchase decisions one way or the other, and I think I enjoy that. Since then, the prints have been acquired by museums and major collectors around the world, and the majority of the edition is already sold.

We are fortunate to have developed relationships with some LDS collectors and institutions who have said to us, “We’ll buy anything you dream up.” That is a liberating position to be in, obviously. Still, \$250 is a lot of money for most people, and the idea of spending such sums for something that can’t be eaten, worn, or driven is a barrier. In the case of these prints, after a specified number of months, Lane’s gallery was able to reset the price to market value. They have raised the price by 500 percent to date. I like the fact of the increases and also dislike it. I want art that average people can buy and love, so we keep a range of items available at various price levels. I try to think of art as something that is not restrictive, but I realize that art with a capital “A” is an acquired taste that requires effort, time, and cash.

Money is not the primary obstacle, though. Working with artists, I hear the stories of their art acquisitions. The composer and educator Gaylen Hatton told me how he came to own a rich collection of paintings by Monte Anderson. Anderson’s children needed music lessons, and the Hattons loved his paintings. They made an exchange of horn lessons for paintings. If there is anything I want to encourage, it is a mindset of patronage, and I have seen it function beautifully at every price level. Commissioning an artist is tremendously satisfying. Patronizing the artists within one’s own culture should be the most natural and rewarding thing in the world.

Mormon Artists Group’s projects have included works by sev-

enty-three artists so far. Our business policy is that any proceeds are divided equally among the participating artists. Mormon Artists Group gets nothing. Some of our works have been religious in nature and some not. That is how I perceive Mormon art. At its simplest, it is art made by Mormons.

In 2005, however, we created an identifiably Mormon project—a suite of photographs entitled *Manhattan New York Temple Portfolio*. It was interesting for two reasons. First, the street atmosphere surrounding the temple, located across the street from bustling Lincoln Center, is as inherently spiritual as a hockey rink and therefore presents a fascinating visual challenge. Second, the six New York artists who participated are highly successful commercial photographers, with photo credits in the *New York Times*, *Glamour*, *GQ*, *Rolling Stone*, *Oprah Magazine*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Spin*, and on and on, but they are also spiritual people who rarely get to focus, so to speak, on objects of their faith.

The resulting images turn the idea of a temple photograph upside down. Seth Smoot did so literally, by standing directly under the building's corner ledge and shooting straight up to Moroni atop his spire. The photographers had to deal conceptually with traffic and visual noise. Should the rush of yellow taxi cabs be embraced as a whirling symbol around holy ground, as James Ransom determined, or obliterated? I was curious to see how they would present the surrounding skyscrapers. Jon Moe waited for a snowstorm that diffused the other towers while Kah Leong Poon captured a panoramic four city blocks with the temple at its center. Natasha Layne Brien made a nightscape as romantic and glamorous as possible, and Matthew Day brought whimsy and a philosophical edginess to his image in which his daughter holds a frame in the air that masks all of the temple but the statue of Moroni. We offered the photos separately for \$100 each or in a portfolio box covered in silk to match the temple's travertine marble for \$500 (edition of ten).

Another recognizably Mormon project we released recently was a new musical setting of the complete Articles of Faith composed for voice and piano by David Fletcher (\$7.95). Trained as a classical composer and then falling under the Broadway tutelage of Stephen Sondheim and Richard Maltby, D.'s music is naturally beautiful and unlike anyone else's. It is interesting to me to develop projects that allow an artist to take an aspect of our culture and put his or her stamp on it, like these basic tenets of faith turned into a song cycle.

Frequently, our projects have elements of Mormonism in them, but they always retain a strong artistic point of view. In late 2005, we produced an animated short film by Annie Poon—a young artist whose work has been acquired by the Museum of Modern Art. The film, *The Book of Visions*, combines the stories of Joan of Arc, the Sioux chief Black Elk, and Joseph Smith Jr. into a work of great originality and mystery. The twelve-minute film has already been accepted into two prominent U.S. film festivals. Annie also created a limited edition object for Mormon Artists Group with handmade objects related to the characters in the film housed in a crimson silk box (\$14.95, \$400.00).

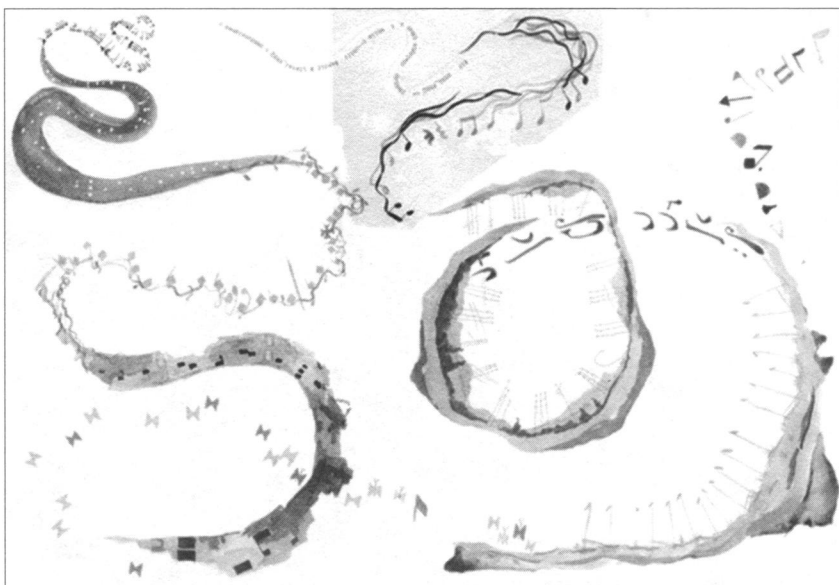
In early 2006, we published a volume of poetry, *Curses for Your Sake* (\$14.95, \$100.00), by Javen Tanner, a poet whose work has appeared in many American poetry journals. His readers are likely unaware that he is LDS. The title of this, his first collection, gives a Christian clue by referring to the book of Genesis but adds little more; however, knowing he is Mormon gives the poetry an extra layer of meaning. That is significant, it seems to me, because the question of audience is tricky for many LDS artists. We think it need not be.

We like to produce books and original artworks—we frequently combine the two—and we alternate between book projects and fine art projects. Kent Christensen created a beautiful etching for us in the spring of 2006 based on his acclaimed series of paintings depicting candy, which teem with art historical and Mormon cultural references.

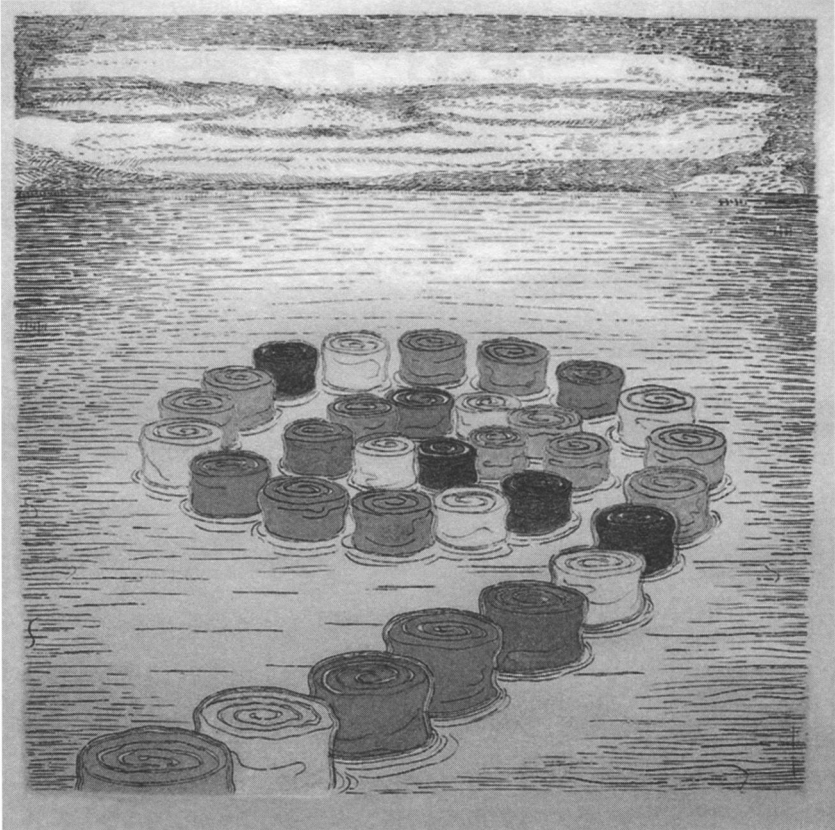
There are many projects in the hopper. Several artists are currently preparing holiday cards for Christmas 2006 that will be signed mini-editions. We are working with the Harold B. Lee Library to amass a comprehensive archive of LDS music to be housed at BYU (we have located some 300 symphonies by Mormon composers, for example). In 2005, we invited a large group of LDS artists and designers from across the country to create for us a new lexicon of visual graphic symbols that depict our belief, history, scriptural stories, and culture. We expect to publish this ambitious volume, called *New Symbols*, in 2007. And that is only the beginning.

Now I find myself in a terrifying and wonderful position. It is frightening because I worry that I am not up to the task. I am working with artists who may end up being historically significant. I expect their best; but if that is so, I should be better too, much better. Our press should aim for greatness toward the level of Kelmscott, Arion, and Golden Cockerel presses. Probably, it isn't possible. I certainly have a long way to go and

much to learn. On my more realistic days, I am sure I will fail at it. But my situation is also wonderful in that I have access to artists who wish to collaborate on projects that I suspect will be valuable additions to contemporary American art and, I hope, for Mormon art.



Valerie Atkisson, *Notation in Time*, 12 x 18 in.,
giclée print, Mormon Artists Group Press,
frontispiece for "Mormoniana," 2004



Kent Christensen, *Salt Water Jetty*, 13 x 13 in.
(image size), nine-color etching, Mormon
Artists Group Press, 2006, State III



Jon Moe, *Manhattan New York Temple*,
11 x 14 in. digital archival print, 4 x 5 in.
black and white photograph, Mormon
Artists Group Press, 2005



Kah Leong Poon, *Christmas in Central Park*,
5 x 7 in., digital photograph, Mormon Artists
Group Press Christmas Card, 2006

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Notation in Time

Valerie Atkisson, an LDS artist whose installations and sculpture have been the increasing focus of exhibitions in New York and in the West, created original artworks for *Mormoniana* (Mormon Artists Group Press). In this project, sixteen Mormon composers each selected a visual artwork by a Mormon artist and wrote a piano composition inspired by it. The finished piano works were joined to form a new, sixteen-movement concerto for the piano. Invited to create an original frontispiece print for the limited edition musical score, Atkisson decided to incorporate musical marks spanning four centuries and to include such diverse sources as illuminated manuscripts, Byzantine chant, Bach and Beethoven manuscripts, early American shape-note singing, and contemporary computer-generated note-making instructions. For more information about the artist, visit www.valerieatkisson.com.

Salt Water Jetty

Kent Christensen, born in Los Angeles in 1957, has worked as an illustrator and painter in New York City since 1988. An exhibition of his recent paintings “High (Calorie) Art” has been shown at the University of Utah and the Alta Club, and the Sundance Screening Room Gallery, Provo, Utah. His earlier work has appeared in *Time*, *BusinessWeek*, *Sports Illustrated*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. He lives in New York City and Sundance, Utah, with his wife, Janet, and two daughters, Anne and Jane. For more information, visit www.kentchristensen.com.

Manhattan New York Temple

Jon Moe, originally from Orem, Utah, lives and works in New York City, where he has a studio and works full time in photography specializing in fashion. He also shoots fine art and travel. His fashion photography clients include Givenchy, Zoran, Cynthia Rowley, Danskin, and Jockey. His

photographs have appeared in magazines such as *Glamour*, *Zink*, and *GQ* and in a number of books, including *The Fashion Book*, *Fashion Today*, a 150-year survey of fashion, and an illustrated survey of modern fashion. For more information, visit www.jonmoe.com.

Christmas in Central Park

Kah Leong Poon, a native of Singapore, initially attended Brigham Young University as a competitive swimmer but earned a BFA degree in photography in 1995. In New York, he completed internships with Joyce Tenneson and Annie Leibovitz. He was hired by Tenneson, with whom he worked for three and a half years. He now heads his own studio in New York City with clients including London Fog, Ernst and Young, Polaroid, Fujifilm, *Psychology Today*, *Zoom*, *Zink*, and the *New York Times*. Kah Leong has received awards from Graphis and Polaroid. His work was selected for a one-man exhibition at Grey Worldwide Advertising Agency. For more information, visit www.kahpoon.com.

For a listing of productions by the Mormon Artists Group Press, visit <http://www.mormonartistsgroup.com/mag/index.html>.

FICTION

The Siege of Troy

Hugo Olaiz

Do not expect, Hera, to know all my thoughts, even though you are my wife. What I find fitting to reveal, no god or man will know before you. But beware of finding out what I dream up away from the gods. —The Iliad

The truth is, I was never convinced he was coming for a wife. There are always girls in the branch who hope that some missionary is going to come back for them, but it never happens. Rebeca told me once that of the three hundred or so missionaries who had served in Trenque Lauquen over the past twenty years, only three had ever come back, and those three came back already married—one even brought his children.

So when Sister Ortega announced during our presidency meeting that Elder Allen was coming to visit and that he was still single, I didn't know what to think. It had been two years since he had finished his mission, and the fact that he still hadn't gotten married after all that time—well, as I say, his coming back didn't necessarily mean he was looking for a wife, but I can see why someone might wonder.

We have our presidency meeting every Wednesday. Rebeca is the Relief Society president, I'm the first counselor, and Sister Ortega is the second. When Rebeca called me to be the first counselor, it came as a shock, me being nineteen and barely starting college, and Sister Ortega, her second counselor, being a grandmother; but Rebeca quoted the scripture that says "let no man despise thy youth" and said that, while Sister Ortega's wisdom and experience would be always there when needed, she needed a young and energetic person as her right hand. We had our presidency meetings in the Biblioteca Municipal, because Rebeca is the librarian. And since no one ever goes there, it's a lot quieter than any of our

homes. We were in the middle of our meeting one Wednesday when Sister Ortega told us about Elder Allen. She even showed us the letter he had sent her. The letter said he would arrive on Tuesday the 17th on the train from Buenos Aires and, if possible, he wanted to stay with Sister Ortega. He had signed the letter "Troy." We always used to call him Elder Allen, but in fact his name was Troy, and I thought when I heard it that Troy was a beautiful name.

It was good we were the first ones to find out. We have a responsibility toward the sisters in the branch, especially the girls my age, who are young and dreamy, and would sell their souls to marry a gringo. Victoria Ayala, most of all, who we all agree is worse than the plagues of Egypt. She studies English at the Instituto Británico, and because she's so stuck up, we call her Queen Victoria.

Rebeca told us she knew perfectly well what was going to happen when the girls in the branch found out. They would start screaming like lunatics, and Church meetings would become utter pandemonium. Rebeca proposed that we keep Troy's upcoming visit quiet, but Sister Ortega said that in her opinion not telling anyone was like curing a headache with a guillotine. Rebeca thought that over for a while and told Sister Ortega that she was right, and even though Queen Victoria was worse than the plagues of Egypt, Rebeca told Sister Ortega to call Her Majesty and give her the news as something confidential, and she added something about the importance of knowing how to appease the hunger of starving beasts during the days of famine.

So that's what we did. And I bet between that day and the 17th, Queen Victoria burned off her eyelids studying more English than ever, so she could impress Elder Allen when he arrived. That Sunday when she greeted me, she looked at me as if she knew some high-priced secret, and I tried to picture what her face would look like on Tuesday when she got to the train station and found out she was not the only one there to welcome Elder Allen.

It happened pretty much like I imagined. On Tuesday, Her Majesty showed up at the station in high heels and what I was pretty sure was a new dress, looking as pleased as a princess who knows that Prince Charming is about to come carry her away. When she saw me standing there, though, she went from Snow White to Snow White's stepmother in two seconds flat. She asked if I was waiting for someone; and when I told her Elder Allen, I could tell she was trying to figure out how to ask me how I

knew he was coming. But then the train arrived, and she was too busy looking out for Elder Allen to talk.

We didn't recognize him at first, because he was wearing jeans and a T-shirt and carrying a backpack like a hitchhiker. That was somewhat disappointing, because I remembered how nice he used to look in his suit. Elder Allen hugged and kissed each of us on the cheek, and he explained that he was no longer Elder Allen, and we had to call him Troy. Even though he wasn't a missionary anymore, I was so used to just shaking his hand that kissing him felt almost like doing something unnatural and forbidden.

Then I told him, right in front of Queen Victoria, that I had already hired a cab to take us to Sister Ortega's. Victoria realized there wasn't anything she could do about that, so she kissed Troy goodbye and invited him for dinner, and then I loved what happened, because Troy replied he was somewhat tired and unfortunately he wasn't going to be able to make it, and Her Majesty made a face I'll never forget. I don't think he was too tired, though, because as we approached the cab he thanked the driver, gave him a good tip, and told him we preferred to walk. So we went by foot. I was walking next to Troy, and the whole town was looking at me as if saying, "A gringo came for you, and it was about time. Marrying and breeding is all those Mormons do."

I was so nervous I didn't know what to say. I asked him to tell me something about his life, and he told me he was a student in Brooklyn or Berkeley—that part I didn't get clearly—and he told me he was majoring in literature. I asked him if the name Troy had any meaning, and he told me that Troy was a famous old city that the Greeks had laid siege to for many years, without success, till they finally built a wooden horse, hid inside, and that's the trick they used to get inside the city. Finally it dawned on me that Troy was the city that in Spanish we call Troya. All the English I knew was what I had learned in grammar school; I was agonizing over the thought that Victoria could speak English fluently, and not only speak it, but also understand it, and write it, and read it, and the more I thought about Queen Victoria the angrier I got. When we finally got to Sister Ortega's, I quickly said goodbye and headed to the library, almost in tears.

Rebeca advised me not to worry. Victoria is smart, she said, but we are clever, and cleverness is often worth more than knowledge. She told me that Troy was an enigma we had to solve, and she went right to the phone to call Sister Ortega. Had Rebeca told Sister Ortega to throw her-

self into the Trenque Lauquen River, I think she would have done it—that’s how obedient she was—but all Rebeca told her was to get into Troy’s room when he was away, and take a peek at his papers, and to tell us on Wednesday what she found.

So on Wednesday we had our presidency meeting, and Sister Ortega gave us a report. She told us she had found several papers, and some of them looked like poems and some others like letters, but they were all in English. And there was also a book that Troy apparently read at night, but it too was in English. Sister Ortega had written down the name of the author, because she was afraid of forgetting it, and at that point she gave us a little piece of paper she had folded in two. Rebeca and I thanked Sister Ortega for all she had done and Rebeca said, “All right, the meeting is over,” which was a nice way to tell Sister Ortega to leave us alone.

When she left, we unfolded the paper, and we read the words “D. H. Lawrence.” That name didn’t mean anything to me; I had never heard it before. But Rebeca looked at me as if saying, “I smell a fish.” She told me that in the old days they used to have a D. H. Lawrence novel in the library, but the Catholic bishop complained so much that they had withdrawn it. I asked Rebeca if by any chance they might have any other work by D. H. Lawrence. Rebeca thought about it for a while, and then she grabbed an anthology of American poetry (which fortunately was translated into Spanish), and we found there a poem that could well be the only thing written by D. H. Lawrence in all of Trenque Lauquen.

The name of the poem was “*Los elefantes tardan mucho en aparearse.*” It was a peculiar title, but not as peculiar as the poem itself, which I read several times with growing impatience, wondering about its meaning and why would anyone choose to write a poem about the mating habits of the elephant. I begged Rebeca to read the poem with me and explain it to me, because this poem was the only clue we had to solve the enigma that was Troy. So Rebeca put on her reading glasses; and as she read the poem with me, she knitted her brow. She said something about what gets lost in the translation, and she added that quite often poetry has absolutely no meaning, or the meaning is too subtle to explain. She said that explaining a poem is like dissecting a frog. In order to understand it, you must first cut its guts wide open, and when it’s perfectly explained, it’s also perfectly dead. So I was left in the dark about the poem, but I made a copy anyway and took it home with me, and I read it many, many times, till I finally learned it by heart, because it was possible that I would have a chance to be

alone with Troy, and it's a well-known fact that when a young couple is alone, the first thing they do is recite poetry and in five minutes they're madly in love.

The opportunity came much earlier than expected. Troy had left a message at my home inviting me to go to Sister Ortega's that very evening, because they were going to bake *empanadas*. When I got there, I almost dropped to the floor. Victoria was there. She was talking to him in English, non-stop, talking and talking, and I had no idea what in the world she was saying. But when Troy saw me, he brightened up like a Christmas tree. He hugged me and kissed me and told Queen Victoria that he was sorry, but he had to go because we had a date. Her Majesty smiled and told us to have fun, but I bet we could have used her blood to boil a chicken.

Troy took my arm, and we headed out. As we were leaving, he thanked me for rescuing him, and that made me laugh out loud, because it dawned on me that, even though he had been listening to her politely, all Troy wanted to do with Victoria was get rid of her. So while Her Majesty stayed at Sister Ortega's to bake *empanadas*—or went home to have a fit, I don't know which—Troy invited me for an ice cream. We walked to the ice cream parlor, and then we walked across the street to Plaza San Martín to eat the ice cream and talk. That was the first chance I had to be alone with him, and I was terribly nervous. But Troy was so calm—he talked to me about many things, his life in the university, and the friends he had, and the things he did.

Troy asked me if I liked to read and if I had read anything good recently. I told him I had recently read something by D. H. Lawrence; and when I said that, he looked at me with his eyes wide open. He asked me what I had read, and I told him that I had read the poem about the elephants and that, in all truth, it was all the D. H. Lawrence I knew. Then I told him how we used to have a novel by D. H. Lawrence in the library and how the Catholic bishop complained and got it withdrawn. Troy thought that story was really funny. He told me that D. H. Lawrence was his favorite author and that he would have given me one of Lawrence's novels as a gift, but unfortunately it was in English.

Then I told him I had learned the poem about the elephants by heart—in Spanish, anyway—and that I could recite it if he wanted, but he didn't seem too excited about that. He asked me if I knew any Spanish poetry but the only poem I could remember was "Romance Sonámbulo" by Federico García Lorca. So I began:

*Verde que te quiero verde,
verde viento, verde ramas.
El barco sobre la mar
y el caballo en la montaña.*

As I started to recite the poem, I realized that it was as much of an enigma as D. H. Lawrence's poem about the elephants. I had learned the words in school, and I knew the poem was famous, but I had never thought about what the words meant, and I realized now how strange they were: *Green, I love you green; green wind, green branches*—what does that mean? And what do the ship and the horse on the mountain have to do with anything? But as I recited it, it was as if someone had cast a spell, Troy was listening to me so attentively.

When I got to the middle of the poem I forgot how it went, but I couldn't have continued anyway, because at that point Troy was overcome by his emotions, and he began to cry. He was crying and sobbing and apologizing over and over. Gringos are like that. They don't like to lose composure; and when they do, they always apologize, and then you don't know whether they're crying for what they were originally crying for, or whether they're crying out of embarrassment for not being able to stop.

I didn't know what to say or think, but when he calmed down I decided it was the right moment for a joke, so I asked him where were the *empanadas*. He started to laugh and discreetly wiped off his tears, and we returned to Sister Ortega's and ate *empanadas*, and then we said goodbye as if absolutely nothing had happened.

The morning after, I went to the library, and I was telling Rebeca what had happened the night before with Queen Victoria, and everything about Troy, and the ice cream, and the tears, when all of a sudden the phone rang, and it was an urgent message from Sister Ortega telling us that Troy had decided to leave that very day on the 11 o'clock train. When she called, it was about a quarter to 11, so I dashed out of the library and ran those seven blocks like the wind and got on the train and started to look for him. And there he was, staring out the window and slumped in his seat. Gringos are like that—they love to droop all over the seat, and if there's another seat for the legs, that's even better.

When Troy saw me, his eyes flashed as if we were accomplices in something very beautiful and very secret. He stood up and invited me to sit across from him, and I was so bewildered and breathless that I didn't

know what to say. I asked him why he was leaving so suddenly, without even saying goodbye, and he replied it was like in the poem by Federico García Lorca. Everything has its place, he said, the ship upon the sea, the horse on the mountain, and his place was at the university in the United States. Then I asked him why it had been more than two years since he had finished his mission and he was still single. Troy thought about that question for a while. And then he started to recite another part of "Poema Sonámbulo," where it says,

*Bajo la luna gitana,
las cosas la están mirando
y ella no puede mirarlas.*

But I'm not sure whether he was talking to me or thinking out loud, because for a second it seemed to me that he was staring out the window, ignoring me. Rebeca's right, I thought: Troy is an enigma. Then we heard the train whistle, so we hugged and I told him I would miss him a lot, and also I told him to write to me. But the train was about to start moving, so I didn't have time to ask him for his address, and since he hasn't written again to me or to anyone else in Trenque Lauquen (not even to Sister Ortega), we're not yet sure whether he lives in Brooklyn or Berkeley.

The branch was a hotbed of gossip for a while, and Victoria was so furious that she ignored me for weeks. But when she realized Troy was gone for good, she came and apologized, and finally we became friends. Rebeca called her to be the Relief Society secretary, so now the presidency is complete. Rebeca is so wise. She tried to comfort us about Troy, and she has such a special way of putting things.

But the truth is, I was never convinced he was coming for a wife. I know gringos are like that. They always promise they are going to come back, but they never do. And when they do come, they leave you so confused that you wonder whether they should have come at all.

Heloise and Abelard

Coby Fletcher

“We’ll get there by ten.”

Nod and look behind, dance a quickstep ahead of the noise of a thousand feet on the wet pavement of Liège. Feels strange to be thrown into a world you’re not part of; I look around me and can’t shake the feeling that we’re all together in the pit of some great stomach and it’s digesting everyone but me.

Paranoia? Maybe. All these people and I’m the only one in the crowd to see the deluge for what it is: a colossus, a monolithic perversion shoving its big, wet finger up and down the streets until the only things left behind are soaked buildings and sidewalks, grayish channels where the glum looks of passersby hover like flies.

What is life without the usual distinctions? The Certainty?

No Certainty, only formerly sharp sidewalks smeared into walls that become slate roofs ascending worshipfully to the dirty clouds where Goliath lives. And no one cares about him but me. I wonder if he’s watching. Watching me.

Can I really be the only one?

So up goes my face in defiance to the Giant, a hopeful white stone slung from among downturned heads and black umbrellas. I smile to see the strained seams of heaven’s blanket finally ripping under the weight of pooling sunlight, imagine it’s because of me the fool’s gold shafts randomly spill through momentary cracks and return at least some color back where it should be.

Won’t last though. I’m not that important. Never any time for relief, no unwinding the pent-up feeling inside because Goliath does his work faster than two missionaries walk. The skies will close up; rain will fall.

Rain, rain, rain—it douses familiar smells as easily as colors and noises, reduces them to an odor of wet stone that saturates everything from buildings to the clothes of people walking past. And I’ve done a lot

of walking, enough to know the foggy drizzle eventually transforms into a heaviness you drag home under your coat, that spills onto the apartment floor when you undress, grips the bottoms of your shoes, and permeates the carpet where it ripens for days.

And so I live for the golden aroma of a bakery, envy bent women working their way gingerly into the arched doorways as eager children duck by with their rolled, white bags of warm croissants or sweetbreads in hand. Goliath's harvest is a cloudy burden that soaks you from toe to head, but a bakery! This is sanctuary, human sunshine. Good things grow out of bakeries, sweet, sugary glazes and odors that put hope back into people and make wasps as docile as house pets.

"After that, we can be back to the apartment in time for lunch and then plan on knocking on doors this afternoon."

I come away from my smiling yellowjackets, grimace, and nod again. Tracting, or *porte à porte* as he calls it, is just another exercise in futility. City houses are three or four stories high and bend over to stare at you with square, black eyes rimmed by tired circles of pots and wilted red flowers. Here you ring a bell and shutters scream pain above you as some half-deaf old lady sticks her head out and shouts sounds that never fall all the way down. You shout back up, knowing it won't matter even if you're close enough to scream gospel into her ear. A shake of the head and another creak as shutters close, and you move on to a different bell and the same old lady.

I don't let it get me down; for me, it's a victory of sorts. In just six months my hypothesis has been proven with a precision worthy of the best scientific journals: In Europe, one of the two X chromosomes in elderly females is the source of an irresistible impulse to migrate to tall, shuttered houses in the cities and hide with cats named *Minou* behind doorbells and planters.

Strangely enough, I'm not dissatisfied with the mission, not jaded yet. There are moments I slap on blood and spirit like cheap cologne, know I'm alive after all. Teaching will do it, even if opportunities here are rarer than a 7-11. People have been Catholic in name going back to Charlemagne, and it's doubly irritating that most of them don't care about either Catholicism or changing. We're recognizable, too, so they avoid us. We look like the CIA, after all.

"You're going to have to get up the courage to talk to strangers, Elder."

My companion possesses both the uncanny ability to read my mind and the irritating habit of speaking in single-sentence utterances.

I shrug and the overcoat's dangling belt strap flaps steadily against my left calf. He's right, but my improving French hasn't yet caught up with my self-consciousness. Instead, I pass time on foot observing sidewalks, studying the smooth concrete or rough paving stones. With time the differences have become catalogued in my head to the point that I now have the utterly worthless distinction of being able to identify the neighborhood we're in simply by looking at the ground.

Today, it's insufferably bland. We're out in the suburbs and all I can see are fast-moving coal feet. At least my companion knows where he's going. He's been here a month longer than I and already possesses a sense of direction I will never acquire—and don't really care about.

Another corner. One among a million others, after all.

But suddenly it isn't. The few individuals in front of us begin to stop, and I fix on the growing crowd. People enter one by one and coalesce into a small, immobile group where they stand silently and watch. Curious, I inch through the little mass to see a line of figures in dark robes exit onto the sidewalk through a rough, wooden door in the building to the right. My companion, oblivious to anything not concerned with duty, stops and pulls out his yellow planning paper.

Mouth too-slightly agape, I watch a dozen nuns pass by as white moths whispering prayers of contemplation hover over their heads and beat the bittersweet praises of reclusion. They look neither right nor left, but their peaceful confidence is blunt and undeniable, a sweet resignation from the world that sneaks up and hammers a chord I didn't even know was there.

Behold the other runners in this grand race for the souls of humanity!

An unforeseen connection grows with that resounding note; and I touch my tie, feel the silk, and wonder at the serenity of a line. The wind, soft against my face, draws along a smell of bread so pure and satisfying, I have the sudden urge to peel off my clothes.

Who is she? I feel her, silently call out to the end of the line, and she turns, alabaster face, dark eyes, and rose-flushed cheeks draped in black. Young. Intense.

How forlorn the beauty that blooms in a flower chosen to fade!

She breaks with the line and gazes as the rest move on. I forget my-

self, stumble without taking a step and fall toward her covenant-sealed lips to beg, plead, that she give me her gift, a lover's attention.

And she does, completes the exegesis of my mind in fleeting notes plucked on invisible strings, for she knows.

She knows. I am a willing text.

My hand rises to wave and becomes dust, fingers disappearing into a terrible longing. She lowers her head, turns, and falls back into the docile breeze.

A hand grabs my arm. "Come on, Elder. There's work to be done."

I look and she's gone. The crowd continues the process of orderly digestion. I am no David yet, and my eyes sting in Goliath's rain.

POETRY

Summer Dam

Judy Curtis

After spring snowmelt from Ephraim Canyon
where Grandpa ran his eighty head in summer,
the creek slowed and eased its crippled way
down over gravel and stones,
through corrals, past remnants of outhouses
and vegetable gardens
into the swampy fields west of town,
dry now in July and blanketed with a gauzy algal husk.

We were not supposed to play in that water
where it flowed under the wood plank bridge
downstream from the grazing cattle
and didn't mean to until summer heat drove us
to squat at the edge—
just to poke at water striders with a stick . . .

But when cool drops splashed our arms
shoes came off, pants rolled up
and we hefted, pushed, and wedged
the rocks to block the flow and make a pool
to satisfy our water lust; then,
leopard-spotted with mud
we hoped would disappear with the wetness,
we headed for the barn to hide and dry.

The phone rang in the old house
without moving the dead afternoon air.
A neighbor from downstream:

Where's my water?

We heard the slam of the screen door,
the stomp of Grandpa's boots,
an explosion of cursings.
Peering out between shrunken gray slats
we saw the horses sinking with each step
into the murky, shallow sea our rocks had made.
Grandpa waded in, raging,
flinging his arms as he kicked the dam loose,
stumbling and falling from the force of freed water
while we gaped in terrified awe
at the prospect of our own power.

Mouths

Nathan Robison

We've left your mother to sleep alone,
no mouth or hand at breast,
free to dream and sleep alone

this early Sunday and walk you
into the mouth of the woods
for a taste of wild plum.

I skin the fruit with my teeth
and take the freshly plucked flesh
from my mouth, unboiled and solid

and place the yellow meat
on your pilgrim's tongue,
lips closing clean as a wound.

You're finally feeding him, your mother would say.
Yesterday she asked, "Are your hands
dry enough to open a bottle of plums?"

No, I confessed, hands to the wrist
in the sink, and you stayed hungry
until my shaving was done.

But not today. Today I'll
walk you, naked as Adam,
through the jaws of the woods
breaking our fast on lost fruit trees.

Orisons

Marie Brian

Raw-tipped branches
freeze and unflutter.
Chafed knuckles wince
to bud wadeable leaves,
homesick mulch.

The wind scalped
so the slough
crumbles.

Clutched in trochal
consumption,
the orant, Grief,
spent her worth seasons
ago and stopped
waiting
to rest, her arms
down.

Fruit

Tyler Chadwick

First

“She’s like an apple
in a water balloon,”
the doctor says. They watch

their fruit unfold across
the screen in light movements.
Submerged beneath her sea

enclosed by silent walls,
slow fluid breaths inspire
her ripening, baptize

the room in innocence.
Within this matrix
of tranquility,

they sense her beckoning
through sound’s translucent waves,
calling from her still place

into time’s raging sea
for a Return. Then Light
ripples from ’round her world

as from the Garden tree
whence God called to Adam
and questioned why His Seed
had grown so ripe with blood.

Last

Within their yellow tree
atop a falling hill,
still shades of spring shadow

the waiting fruit. Chilled rains
stagnate in micro-seas
about their stems, throw drops

of ripened dew across
his face as he climbs
upward, pulls the apples

from their place, and drops them
to her waiting hands below.
Pale bruises hide beneath

the golden skin, some from
their gathering, some from
tussles with rough branches

and hungry birds, and some
born from the inside-out
of parasitic guile.

Holding his breath, he cradles
the last fruit and feels
naked branches stealing
the blood from his cold hand.

Return

The pair, fallen with years,
returns to their garden,
straining for shades of green

within the withered gold.
They step, each arm in arm,
beneath their waiting tree

and rest against the trunk.
His eyes pursue the land
into a blurry field

and hers cover his face
in reminiscent strokes.
She sees the sun depart

his gaze. Dark winds carry
the breath of swollen fruit,
pooled round their feet. He sighs;

she leans against his arm
and waits with him the night
that folds across his frame.

Her tears swell with their fruit,
distilling through Earth's skin
into the flowing blood
of their generations' veins.

Tonkas

Aaron Guile

the real M.A.S.H fiction
forests colonials raped
harsh *Ilbon-nohm-dil*
Hankuk and *Chosun* were bald
all native trees Japan burned

rice paddy foxhole
frozen now gray red soil
waiting for spring rain
disappears under night snow
smells of life it will create

battle-scarred country
plants long rows of small scotch pines
green and gray at night
will grow into great forests
line by line in row by row

Uijongbu Station
shaved bald gray gourd bonging monk
surrounded by meat
breaths *bundaegi* cooked silkworms
beats to blue subways rhythm

Mornings wet or dry
crowded busy and quiet
in one direction
the crowds flow like small tired fish
straggle home at night *meulchi*

uniformed students
scramble through streets baggy eyed
books pens pencils bags
pause just a moment to eat
spiced finger thick rice noodles

a modern nation
stomps to a united thought
apartment forests
below *Uijongbu's* hills fade
I pour my cold spring water

sitting on my rock
on my day off before church
I watch the subway
snake through the thin corridor
a thousand armies marched through

an old man sits down
legs cross pours water on head
dreamy eyes look down
his leather face confesses
long days worked in the paddies

Hankuk now transformed
M.A.S.H California copies
not scrabby desert
once it was plush verdant green
now stark urban concrete gray

Washing Mother

Darlene Young

I return for the washing.
Can't resist your need,
Or else I want to atone
For leaving so eagerly
Without glancing back,
Back when you were whole and lively
And wanting to hold me tight.

You hold loosely now,
Mind moving on,
Body aching to follow.
I see the kind, huge effort you make to even
Hold at all, croaking out "Yes,
I'll miss you too—"
Graceful always, but looking over my shoulder
While you say it.

I wash your frail frame
Sallow and gaunt,
Holding only breath-whisper.
You're nearly gone,

Flitting above me or behind,
Dipping into other moments,
Reaching for shadows and ghosts,
Marking time.

You await without weight holy wholeness.
I watch and wait with you,
Holding my breath.

Soapy water's slippery
But I must take care
Not to hold too tightly,
For your paper-thin skin bruises easily
These days and your wet wrist
Slips silently from my hold.

Christmas Carol
(Post-Christmas: 2005)

Dawn Baker Brimley

*At the ancient native Hawaiian "heiau" (temple
or sacred place) built of stone and still standing
in the forest above Oahu's Sunset Beach*

As though he were sculpted there, so still
is the only Shama thrush of the winter
dripping melody among dropping needles
high in this raining forest of ironwoods

above the dependable sun of Sunset Beach.
Here is this rosy singer who needs no audience,
no orchestra. He conducts his own score,
obligato, a song of evening, various
and rippling, floating on streams of sky.

Secretive, a forest recluse, he will not stay
long, though we are attentive, quiet,
our car windows down, our mouths open
and forming silent "Bravos" to his shy high tenor.

Now, showered with sudden sun, he sails
away, swaying and flicking his long tail,
black and white and into the deepest green
of the heiau, ancient retreat of old
calm spirits, his safety, and his mate.

We the earth-bound take the dirt road
into night, hearing his ascending song,
a feathery ticking and clicking, now sky high
and lost.

The car radio crowds in from Honolulu
with its hard rock dirge of violence
rumbling and groaning, thumping and spewing
the daily death toll in an imploding land
as America's power slouches through Baghdad.

REVIEW

By Any Standard, a Remarkable Book

Richard Lyman Bushman with the assistance of Jed Woodworth, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 740 pp., \$35.00

Reviewed by Marvin S. Hill, retired professor of history, Brigham Young University

By any standard this is a remarkable book. Sixty years ago Knopf published Fawn Brodie's *No Man Knows My History*, a biography of the Mormon prophet by a disaffected Mormon who, according to her own biographer, had already decided before she began her writing that Joseph Smith was "not a true prophet."¹ This study by Bushman is, in contrast, a biography by a believer who said he would write faithful history but still examine "all sides of Joseph Smith, facing up to his mistakes and flaws" (Preface, xix). It is fair, then, to ask: How faith-promoting is this biography and to what degree does Bushman examine all sides of Joseph Smith? That Knopf has permitted Bushman to write such a biography illustrates how much the climate of opinion among historians regarding religion and the Mormons has changed since 1945.

To be fair to Bushman, it should be said that, as a "faithful" Mormon historian who would study Joseph Smith, he must base his work on evidence while striving for truth, and yet preserve as far as possible the most fundamental elements of the faith as understood by the Church. This requirement necessitates that he give preference to the defenders of the faith in their arguments and discount the doubters. He says that this is justifiable because the critics are largely amateurs while those defending are better trained. My impression is that both sides are largely amateurs—that defenders of the faith, despite their university degrees, often write outside their fields of specialization and may not always be qualified to judge of which they speak.

One example of this approach in Bushman is his dependence on Ariel L. Crowley for an argument that the Anthon transcript characters are Egyptian (577). Crowley was no Egyptologist. I know of only one fully qualified Mormon Egyptologist today, and his views were not considered. Bushman is open to severe criticism here. Having an assistant cite opposing views in the footnotes seems disingenuous since Bushman disregards them.

There is much to praise in this work. It is well written and interesting. It is based on enormous, although not exhaustive research, much of it done by others. Fortunately Bushman avoids claiming final answers. He attempts to see Joseph in his own time and place in American history and gives the Prophet his just due as

one of the most significant religious leaders of his day. He begins by discounting Brodie's ridiculous charge that the Smith family was irreligious (21-27). Lucy Mack Smith's history proves the contrary.

The author says there were no serious problems in the Smith family in Joseph's early years (20), yet admits that Joseph Smith Sr. was a drunk and that there were rifts on religious matters in the family. He also admits their poverty (55).

Bushman says that Joseph's family all believed the story of his visions (55) but is well aware that Lucy and three of her children were members of the Presbyterian Church until 1830 (70-71). If Joseph's 1838 account of his first vision is correct where he is told that all the churches are wrong and he should join none of them, why does a "believing" Lucy disregard the Lord's message? Of course, if the 1832 account is more accurate, then the Lord does not instruct Joseph to join no church and Lucy is off the hook. Alvin's death, she said, turned her off on the whole business for a while. It is difficult to get consistency in the foundation stories, but inconsistency does not disprove them. It is also difficult to get a consistent story from the Bible about the birth and resurrection of Jesus, but we should not expect scientific precision here.

Bushman is struck with Joseph's genius, and rightly so. But it bothers me that he argues for the Prophet's divine inspiration by first claiming that Joseph did not amount to much in his youth before receiving it. Bushman resorts to the old argument that his Palmyra neighbors said nothing good about him (35-36). Why believe Joseph's antagonistic neighbors about his youth? It is obvious they did not know him well. Bushman recognizes that Abraham Lincoln came from the dregs of American society about the same time as Joseph but despite his enormous disadvantages became the nation's greatest president. Shakespeare, too, did not have the benefit of an education at Oxford or Cambridge but still remains, in all likelihood, the greatest writer in the English language. Genius is astonishing and always hard to measure. The problem is we do not know enough about what influenced Joseph in his earliest years.

Bushman is wrong, though, to discount what we do know. We now know a lot more about the role of the village seer, a folk function dating back to medieval times. Such seers used divining rods, searched for buried treasure, and discovered ancient sacred writings. As a "money digger," Joseph may have inherited this role. Also, from Lucy's narrative, we know that Alvin apparently contributed to Joseph's early thinking. Better to acknowledge some possible influences on the Prophet than to deny his youthful potential.

Bushman takes a hard look at Joseph Smith's personality and notes how much he disliked being opposed or contradicted (235-50). He indicates that Joseph was frequently involved in quarrels in defending his reputation but hedges in telling how often this would lead to physical confrontations. One of these is relegated to a

footnote where the Prophet boxed the ears of a minister and physically kicked him out of his house when the man called Joseph a fraud (619 note 6).

Bushman acknowledges difficulty dating the First Vision since Joseph and others give conflicting dates (39–40). The time of the great revival which Joseph describes in his 1820 account is a problem which Reverend Wesley Walters used to discount the entire First Vision story, saying the revival came in late 1823 or early 1824. The issue is a tough one, despite Milton Backman's argument that there was a revival in 1819, since Lucy Mack Smith seems to agree with Walters that the revival took place after Alvin's death in 1823.

Bushman avoids contending as some do that there is no essential difference between Joseph's 1832 and 1838 accounts of the First Vision. He sees Joseph adjusting his story to the appropriate audience. He apparently sees some theological development here but does not enlarge on it. He fails to notice that in the 1832 version Joseph says he had decided for himself that all the churches were wrong but alters this statement in 1838 by saying that it never occurred to him until the Lord told him so. Joseph was not above rewriting his history to improve its dramatic effect. Is Bushman looking at "all sides" of Joseph Smith here? Bushman correctly sees that the Prophet's full understanding of the nature of the Godhead did not come until the King Follett discourse.

Bushman begs the question about the Book of Mormon plates (58) when he argues that Joseph's story is documented while some historian's speculations have no supporting documentation; hence, we have to give Joseph's accounts more credence. Surely Bushman does not mean to say that because Joseph's history is written it is undoubtedly true; *whether* it is true is the issue here.

I can't make out what Bushman wants us to believe about the Indians. I think the DNA issue may bother him more than he lets on. He says at one point that the Book of Mormon is about the Indians and that it promises that they will ultimately triumph on this continent (99). But he also says that it is not about the Indians, that the word does not appear in the text (96). He asks why Joseph Smith would be motivated to write a volume on the history of the Indians (95), forgetting the very great interest in Indians among Methodist and other missionary societies. Also, there is a lot said about the possible origin of the Indians in the Palmyra newspapers. Had Bushman researched them more carefully he would know this. Bushman admits that the Book of Mormon was the missionary tool taken by the elders to the Indians on the western frontier in Missouri (122). He is aware of problems with popular views of Book of Mormon archeology and appropriately says nothing about the ruins in Central America (97). He borrows John Sorensen's argument that Book of Mormon geography occupies only a small space in the Americas. But Bushman quotes Joseph as saying that the scripture is a history of the Indians in the western United States (94) which does not sound like a small region.

There are hitches in the analysis. Bushman argues that, since the Book of Mormon is different from Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*, there must be no connection (96–97). He may be right in his conclusion, but the construction of his argument is faulty. If Joseph was influenced by this source, he did not necessarily have to copy every detail. Keen human intelligence does not work that way.

Although Bushman insists that the historicity of the Book of Mormon is fundamental (92), he comes perilously close in a place or two to saying that Joseph wrote the Book of Mormon. For example, he says Joseph told a reporter that he wrote the Golden Bible (396). Bushman comments elsewhere: "In some respects the Book of Mormon can be seen as a revelation of Joseph Smith, that it can be read as a document of profound social protest against the dominant culture of Joseph Smith's time." The book is against "increasing wealth and inequality, against the subjugation of the Indians, against the love of riches" (164). Bushman does not stress how frequently the Book of Mormon warns that acquisitiveness and wealth can lead to disbelief and apostasy. He overlooks what the Lord told Joseph regarding the Book of Mormon: "Behold, thou wast called and chosen to write the Book of Mormon" (D&C 24:1). Does this reveal a side of Joseph Bushman hasn't considered?

At one point, Bushman reveals a strange way of thinking about the Book of Mormon and its story. He argues that it is true, not because of what it says, but for what it does not say—namely ignoring early Republican values and turning the American story upside down. It is absolutely unique in this approach, Bushman maintains. He is right about the anti-Republicanism in the scripture, but he might have reconsidered his argument had he known more about American religion in the eighteen and nineteenth centuries and how existing Protestant churches reacted to the early Republican values.

Actually the churches ignored Jefferson's justification for religious freedom—that no two men can think alike because their opinions are shaped by their experience and all men's experiences differ. The churches all claimed to be the true church (as Joseph once said) and thus demanded that everyone accept their doctrine and authority. My point here is that the old-line churches turned their back on the Enlightenment and were also anti-Republican to a considerable extent. Despite Bushman's argument, the Book of Mormon may not be entirely unique here.

Bushman makes no attempt to bridge the gulf between the Book of Mormon's means of salvation and Joseph's later emphasis on temple ordinances. But he excels in his treatment of Joseph's mature theology, giving it more attention than most biographers. I strongly commend his efforts here and see it as a "must" read for those interested in Joseph's life.

Bushman is aware that Joseph Smith wrote the testimony of the witnesses in the Book of Mormon (79). Thus, in court, such "testimony" would probably be

considered hearsay and inadmissible. But he repeats much of the traditional story regardless. He may or may not be aware that Martin Harris belonged to several different churches during his lifetime and that, after he left Mormonism, he became a missionary for the Shakers in England in the middle 1840s. A potential convert was told by Martin Harris that, as a witness, he did not see the plates with his natural eyes.² This was also reported by S. Burnett who wrote to “Br Johnson” in 1838 that he just “heard Harris say in a meeting that he never saw the plates with his natural eyes, only in a vision.” Harris insisted he “knew” the Book of Mormon was “true,” that he “hefted the plates repeatedly in a box, with only a tablecloth . . . over them but he never saw them only as he saw a city through a mountain.”³ Can Bushman really consider all aspects of Joseph’s story and still preserve the faith? The Book of Mormon witnesses are a difficult subject to deal with in all openness and candor and still do justice to traditional Church understandings.

He affirms in dealing with Zion’s Camp that the Saints had no intention of invading Missouri—despite the fact they did so with an armed force (236–42). He ignores what Justus Morse, a sharpshooter in the camp, said on the subject: “[The] whole company was armed with guns, pistols, and knives, and we expected to deliver said ‘lands’ from the mob who occupied them, and to avenge the Lord on his enemies as provided in the Prophet’s revelations.”⁴ Bushman is right that, in the end, Joseph backed off from using force because he faced superior numbers and a governor who would not call upon the state militia to protect the Saints. Yet Joseph wrote to Emma that his purpose had been to “terrorize” the Missourians (250). How could this be done without invading with a large army?

Bushman seems contradictory in what he says about the Church and democracy. In one place (153) he says the Church is very democratic in its use of lay priesthood. Then he changes his mind and says it is not democratic because, in a democracy, the people are sovereign; but in the Church, the Lord and his spokesman-prophet are sovereign (265). He says Joseph’s “was a religion for and by the people. It was not of the people—electoral democracy was absent—but if democracy means participation in government, no church was more democratic” (559). By this latter definition Hitler’s Germany might be called democratic. Lots of people participated: the SS, the Gestapo, the army, and the navy. My dictionary shows us that Bushman’s second definition is the better one, that “democracy is a political system in which the supreme power is held and exercised by the people.” It is opposed, my dictionary says, to anything authoritarian. Thus, it is hard to accept Bushman’s argument that the early Church was democratic. Nonetheless, I like the point he makes that American federal democracy, in which local government leaders were sovereign, could provide no justice for the Saints in Missouri.

Bushman, on skimpy evidence, dates the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood during the summer of 1830, realizing that there is no contemporary

of Joseph Smith who said it was 1829. But part of the discussion (158) is not clearly written, and I wonder if an assistant did not produce this passage. Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, and others said emphatically that the Melchizedek Priesthood was “revealed” and restored by Peter, James, and John in Kirtland in June of 1831. There is no ambiguity in Brigham’s statement: “In the year 1831 the prophet went to Ohio. . . . They held a General Conference . . . then Joseph received a revelation, and ordained High Priests. . . . When he received the Melchizedek Priesthood he had another revelation. Peter, James and John came to him. . . . When he received this revelation in *Kirtland* the Lord revealed to him that he should begin and ordain High Priests.”⁵

Brigham describes two events here, the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood followed by the ordaining of high priests—both in 1831 in Kirtland. It is as clear as anything Brigham ever said. This issue can be disturbing to some Latter-day Saints, but it does not have to be. If the priesthood was restored in June 1829, as tradition holds, still the most important parts of the Restoration had already occurred: that is, the appearance of the Father and the Son, the visits of Moroni, and the translation of the Book of Mormon. If the Restoration was in the summer of 1830, then it came after the Church was organized. If it was in 1831, then Joseph received a few more revelations but nothing crucial to the integrity of the story. If it came in 1831, then the Lord had his own timetable that does not always square with our logic, but He provided what was needed when it was needed.

Bushman’s rather traditional treatment of the Civil War prophecy is strained (191–92). Great Britain did not intervene in the war. Neither the blacks nor the Indians staged more than local rebellions. Since Joseph thought the millennium would come in forty or fifty years, he was not looking beyond this time in his prophecy.

Bushman plays down Joseph’s part in the military activities in Daviess County and with the Danites, although Albert Rockwood, a loyal Latter-day Saint, tells a different story about Joseph, the Danites, militarism, and millennialism in Mormon thinking at the time.⁶ Strangely, Bushman admits that Joseph may have been guilty of treason in Missouri in attacking state militia who were acting under Samuel Bogart’s direction (364, 371, 374). He says Joseph endorsed Rigdon’s war of extermination speech but fails to see that this language opened the door morally for Governor Boggs’s version of extermination.

Bushman says that the Nauvoo Legion was essentially ceremonial in nature, used for parades and other holiday purposes (372). But he recounts at least three occasions where the legion took more than ceremonial action, especially when it intervened to escort Joseph and his Missouri kidnapers to Nauvoo rather than allow him to be taken back to Missouri to stand trial (372, 471, 470, 500). A new study by Richard E. Bennett, Susan Easton Black, and Donald Q. Cannon dem-

onstrates conclusively how mistaken he is here.⁷ Bushman has trouble with Joseph's belligerence here and elsewhere, especially in Nauvoo near the end of Joseph's life.

The biographer shows good insight in what he says about the endowment ceremony as it emerged in Nauvoo. Joseph may have borrowed signs and symbols from the Masons for his temple ceremonies but certainly gave them an entirely different meaning, a meaning that brings his inspiration into play. Bushman recognizes that a genius may gather ideas from many places but makes of them what he will (448–52). This is Joseph Smith. If the Prophet drew on environmental influences, it does not necessarily mean that he therefore lacked divine inspiration.

Citing one example in Nauvoo, Bushman affirms that Joseph was tolerant of other beliefs (415–16); but his own study casts doubt on that claim. He forgets how Joseph in 1832 said he knew all the churches were wrong and how in 1838 said that he hated the “tumult of opinions” among the churches. In Kirtland, Missouri, and Nauvoo, how tolerant was he of dissent? His destruction of a dissenting newspaper in Nauvoo led ultimately to his death. In 1842 Joseph said, “Conflicting opinions, the clash of doctrines, the diversity of sentiment [exists]. Let the Melchizedek priesthood be introduced and men be subject to their teaching and their sectarian, narrow contracted notions would flee away. . . . The anarchy and confusion that prevails among men would disappear.”⁸ Joseph's distaste for a diversity of opinion could not be put more plainly. He once said: “The opinions of men, so far as I am . . . concerned are . . . as the crackling of thorns under the pot, or the whistling of the wind.”⁹

Bushman gives considerable attention to the Prophet's plural marriages and even acknowledges that he was married to ten women who were already married to and living with other men (437). He mentions the possibility that Joseph might have been “a libertine in the guise of a prophet seducing women for his own pleasure” (326) but goes on to argue that, while an answer can never be given from historical sources, plural marriage was, as Joseph saw it, a way of raising a righteous generation on the eve of the second coming. But why did Joseph desire women who were already married? Was Joseph testing the faith and obedience of some of his male followers as Heber C. Kimball suggested? Or was he in some unexplained way demanding the total subservience of all those involved, including some male non-members? Because polygamy on the whole has been a subject that Church leaders have considered best forgotten, this subject may be hard for Church members to deal with. Bushman treats it with some candor and historical accuracy but risks failing in his faith-promoting objectives.

Bushman says that John C. Bennett's allegations about polygamy were what turned public opinion against Joseph in Nauvoo (465). If he had read the down-state Illinois and Iowa newspapers more carefully, he would have found that this is not true. Non-Mormons were not sure what to make of John C.

Bennett, and most of them probably did not believe him. One of Bushman's quotations, in fact, captures their uncertainty, saying, "if Bennett's charges are true" (145; Bushman is citing the *Burlington Hawkeye*, Nov. 10, 1842). Joseph sent the elders out to deny Bennett's assertions, and they seem to have had some effect. What hurt Joseph most was his intrusion into politics and his bloc voting that was a reach for political power. Bushman says that the gathering made Mormon politics inevitable (222), but the gathering did not necessitate bloc voting. Joseph's political practices are better explained by his belief that "monarchical, aristocratic and republican forms of government . . . have in their turn been raised to dignity and prostrated in the dust. . . . All speak with a voice of thunder, that man is not able to govern himself—to legislate for himself. . . . It has been the design of Jehovah . . . and his purpose now, to . . . take the reigns of government into his own hand. . . . When that is done . . . anarchy and confusion will be destroyed."¹⁰ Joseph said the time for these events is now. Thus, the role he played as political boss in Hancock County, his Kingdom of God with its Council of Fifty, and his running for president of the United States on his own party ticket is consistent with his expressed intentions and with his faith in himself as the Lord's anointed.

But the Prophet's sense of priority is what infuriated the Illinoisans. They believed that, with his revelations and his political ambitions, he placed himself above everyone else and menaced republican government. Bushman's analysis of anti-republicanism in the Book of Mormon in addition to the Prophet's published political views suggests that the people of Illinois had reasons to be concerned. Bushman's failure to deal fully with this aspect of Joseph's dispensation constitutes the major limitation of his biography.

I do not wish to end this review on an overly negative note. Despite the fact that Bushman's "look" at Joseph comes up markedly short at times and he does not always examine controversial issues carefully, his book suggests that thought about the Prophet has matured among some faithful Latter-day Saints. If the Mormon people can accept this work, it may get them closer to the real Joseph than anything any other Church writer has produced. But Bushman has opened a lot of doors here and may have invited the Saints to enter where they have no wish to go. By offering alternate arguments rather than specific refutations of gainsayers, he seems only to provide for a stalemate on many issues. This may not be enough to satisfy many Latter-day Saints. Time will tell.

Notes

1. Newell Bringhurst, *Reconsidering No Man Knows My History* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 1996), 40.
2. *Millennial Star* 12, no. 10 (May 15, 1850): 155.
3. "Joseph Smith's Letter Book," Letter dated April 15, 1838.

4. Affidavit of Justus Morse, March 23, 1887, Pleasanton, Iowa, Community of Christ Library-Archives.
5. Brigham Young, May 7, 1861, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855-86), 9:88-89, emphasis mine.
6. Albert P. Rockwood letters, Beinecke Library, Yale University.
7. Richard E. Bennett, Susan Easton Black, and Donald Q. Cannon, *Joseph Smith and the Nauvoo Legion* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, forthcoming).
8. *Times and Seasons* 4 (December 1, 1842): 24.
9. Andrew Ehat and Lyndon Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1980), 205.
10. "The Government of God," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 18 (June 15, 1842): 856.

NOTES OF INTEREST

Editor's Note: Is the chiasmus in Alma 36 intentional or accidental? *Dialogue* here publishes an exchange between scholars on that question. A father-and-son team present a rebuttal of an earlier article (Earl M. Wunderli, "Critique of Alma 36 as an Extended Chiasm," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 4 [Winter 2005]: 97-110), followed by Wunderli's defense of his position. Both pieces are abbreviated versions of longer statements bearing the same titles, posted on a new section of our website titled "Dialogue Paperless." We remind our readers that *Dialogue* is rapidly supplementing the printed journal with an online presence. "Dialogue Paperless" presents refereed papers of high quality which do not appear in the printed version of the journal. We invite our readers to read the unabbreviated exchange on chiasmus at the following address, where they may, if they wish, post comments on an accompanying weblog. Dialogue Paperless: <http://www.dialoguejournal.com/>.

Response to Earl M. Wunderli's "Critique of Alma 36 as an Extended Chiasm"

Boyd F. Edwards and W. Farrell Edwards

In his "Critique of Alma 36 as an Extended Chiasm," Earl Wunderli argues that the chiastic structure of Alma 36, which was first documented in 1969 by John W. Welch,¹ was not intended by its author. Wunderli also dismisses our recent statistical calculations, which indicate that the chiastic structure of Alma 36 is likely to be intentional.² The purpose of this comment is to respond to Wunderli's critique.

Background

Ancient Hebrew writers are among those who employed chiasmus, a literary form that introduces a number of literary elements in one order and then reemploys them in the reverse order.³ Since 1969, chiasmus in

the Book of Mormon has attracted considerable attention because the book purports to be a translation of a record written anciently by Hebrew descendants. No direct evidence exists that Joseph Smith knew about chiasmus when he translated the Book of Mormon in 1829.⁴

Many people regard examples of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon as deliberate applications of the chiasmic form. This group includes both proponents and critics of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. While proponents regard chiasmus as evidence of this authenticity,⁵ critics suggest that Joseph Smith or some other modern author must have known about chiasmus and incorporated it in writing, rather than in translating, the Book of Mormon.⁶

Others, including Wunderli, hold that the proposed chiasms in the Book of Mormon are not deliberate applications of the chiasmic form and ascribe their chiasmic structure to the ingenuity of the analyst, rather than to the intent of the author.⁷ This group regards chiasmic structure in the Book of Mormon as nothing more than repeated occurrences of words and ideas that fall inadvertently into chiasmic patterns and that are identified only through the scrutiny of the analyst.

Alma 36

Alma 36 has received considerable attention in this context. Many regard this chapter as a deliberate application of the chiasmic form because of the large number of literary elements that fit the chiasmic pattern, the strength of the associations between paired elements, and the importance of the chapter's focal point.⁸ Others, including Wunderli, argue that repetitiveness within the chapter opens the door for analysts to pick and choose from among multiple appearances of key ideas and to adjust the boundaries of chiasmic sections to impose chiasmic structure where none was intended.⁹ Because of these multiple appearances, even those who regard this chapter as a deliberate application of the chiasmic form disagree on some of the details of its structure.¹⁰ No one knows for sure, of course, whether the author of Alma 36 intended it to be chiasmic.

Some imprecision in the chiasmic form does not preclude it from being deliberately chiasmic. An author may deliberately apply the chiasmic form while at the same time taking some liberties with the form, such as repeating key elements outside of their intended chiasmic sections or varying the length of certain sections for dramatic emphasis.

If Alma 36 is *not* the result of some deliberate application of the chi-

astic form, then its apparent chiasmic structure must have come about inadvertently, that is to say, as a result of unintentional pairings of repeated ideas. In other words, as the chapter was written, its author would have employed literary elements in an order that just happened to be chiasmic and this order would have been revealed only later by the analyst.

In an effort to aid analysts in assessing the degree of deliberateness behind specific chiasmic proposals, Welch proposed fifteen indices of chiasmic strength and used them to argue that Alma 36 reflects a high degree of chiasmicity.¹¹ Wunderli applies and extends these fifteen criteria to argue the opposite, maintaining that Alma 36 violates literary standards that he expects deliberate chiasmus to obey.

Wunderli also dismisses our recent statistical calculations on the basis of such violations. However, meaningful statistical results do not require adherence to the literary standards devised by Welch or Wunderli. While we acknowledge the importance of their literary analyses, we emphasize that their approaches are fundamentally different from our statistical approach and further emphasize that most of Welch's fifteen criteria and Wunderli's extensions of these criteria have little bearing on the validity of our statistical results. Exceptions include Welch's quantifiable criteria of length, density, mavericks, and reduplication, which are embodied implicitly in our statistical approach. Wunderli imposes his particular set of literary standards in an attempt to discredit our statistical approach, implying that one can't use statistics to analyze a text unless it obeys his or Welch's literary standards. We disagree.

While valid statistical results do not require adherence to these particular literary standards, they do require careful attention to identifying and strictly accounting for all of the important elements in a passage, both those paired elements that participate in the basic chiasmic structure of the passage, called chiasmic elements, and those that do not. Statistical results are meaningless unless this crucial requirement is met; ignoring it leads to the mistaken conclusion that spurious chiasmic structure such as that found in a computer manual must have been intentional.¹²

We developed six rules to ensure adherence to this requirement and to enable a uniform comparative analysis of various texts.¹³ We used these rules to identify and account for all chiasmic and non-chiasmic elements in each passage studied. We then used elementary statistics to calculate the likelihood that random rearrangements of these elements would be chiasmic. In other words, this is the likelihood that chiasmic structure could have

appeared by chance rather than by design. Welch's and Wunderli's literary standards are largely irrelevant to this process.

We validated our approach by confirming that it yields very small likelihoods for well-known deliberate chiasms such as Leviticus 24:13-23 and that it yields moderate or large likelihoods for spurious chiastic structure such as that found in the computer manual. Although authors do not select words at random as if from a hat when composing passages of text, the actual composition process yields passages having likelihoods that are comparable to those for random word selection when the author has no intention of writing chiastically. This observation further validates our statistical approach.

We analyzed dozens of chiastic structures proposed by others in the standard works and elsewhere. We found that the vast majority of these structures, including all of those in the Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Abraham, could easily have appeared by chance because they have few chiastic elements or many non-chiastic elements, or both. On the other hand, a few chiasms in the Book of Mormon and the Bible stand out as having small likelihoods of having appeared by chance because they possess many chiastic elements and few non-chiastic elements.¹⁴ One of these is Alma 36, whose ten-element chiastic rendering has a likelihood of less than one in 100,000 of having appeared in the Book of Mormon by chance.¹⁵ Our calculations do not absolutely preclude the conclusion that the chiastic structure of Alma 36 appeared inadvertently but indicate less than one chance in 100,000 that it could have.

Wunderli alleges that our analysis of Alma 36 violates our own Rules 1 and 4. These allegations are untrue, as is discussed in our detailed online response.¹⁶

We agree that Alma 36, because of its length and complexity, presents special challenges to the analyst, but we nevertheless judge the statistical evidence as sufficient to justify the conclusion that Alma 36 was the result of the deliberate application of the chiastic form. We find nothing in Wunderli's study that threatens to overturn this conclusion.

Beyond Alma 36

Wunderli's critique focuses exclusively on Alma 36 and ignores other chiasms in the Book of Mormon with small likelihoods of appearing by chance. Some of these satisfy Wunderli's literary standards better than Alma 36 because they are shorter and simpler. Accordingly, the case

for the significance of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon does not rest on Alma 36 alone.

Those desiring to reach an informed judgment regarding the significance of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon will include Mosiah 3:18–19, Mosiah 5:10–12, Alma 36:1–30, and Helaman 9:6–11 in their investigations. These four chiasms have likelihoods that are less than or equal to that of a simple chiasm with five chiastic elements and no non-chiastic elements. The likelihood is less than one in fifty that these four chiasms could have appeared in the Book of Mormon by chance.¹⁷ This result strengthens the case that the appearance of chiasmus in the Book of Mormon was intentional.

Notes

The authors express appreciation to Nadine Edwards and John W. Welch for reading an early draft of this manuscript and for making several valuable suggestions.

1. John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10, no. 1 (1969): 69–84.

2. Boyd F. Edwards and W. Farrell Edwards, "Does Chiasmus Appear in the Book of Mormon by Chance?" *BYU Studies* 43, no. 2 (2004): 103–30; available online at <http://byustudies.byu.edu/chiasmus/>.

3. John W. Welch and Daniel B. McKinlay, eds., *Chiasmus Bibliography* (Provo, Utah: Research Press at Brigham Young University, 1999).

4. John W. Welch, "A Steady Stream of Significant Recognitions," in *Echos and Evidences*, edited by Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2002), 340; John W. Welch, "How Much Was Known about Chiasmus in 1829 When the Book of Mormon Was Translated?" *FARMS Review of Books* 15, no. 1 (2003): 47–80.

5. John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in Alma 36" (Provo, Utah: FARMS Preliminary Report, 1989), 49 pp.; John W. Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, edited by John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991), 114–31 (this chapter is a shortened version of the 1989 report); Jeffrey R. Lindsay, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," <http://jefflindsay.com/chiasmus.shtml> (accessed April 10, 2006); and John W. Welch, "What Does Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon Prove?" in *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*, edited by Noel B. Reynolds (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1997), 199–224.

6. Sandra Tanner, "Chiasmus and the Book of Mormon," <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/chiasmusandthebom.htm> (accessed April 10, 2006); Dan A. Vogel, "The Use and Abuse of Chiasmus in Book of Mormon

Studies," paper presented at the Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, August 2001, audiocassette SL-01374.

7. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, "A Black Hole in the Book of Mormon: Computer Reveals Astounding Evidence on Origin of Book of Mormon," *Salt Lake City Messenger*, no. 72, <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no72.htm> (1989); <http://www.lds-mormon.com/chiasm.shtml> (accessed April 10, 2006); Brent Lee Metcalfe, "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions about Book of Mormon Historicity," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 162–71; reviewed by William J. Hamblin, in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* 6, no. 1 (1994): 434–523.

8. Welch, "Chiasmus in Alma 36"; Welch, "A Masterpiece: Alma 36"; Lindsay, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon."

9. See Vogel, "The Use and Abuse of Chiasmus"; <http://www.lds-mormon.com/chiasm.shtml>; Metcalfe, "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions," 162B71; Hamblin, review of "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions," 434B523.

10. Welch presents such arrangements in "Chiasmus in Alma 36," 2–15.

11. John W. Welch, "Criteria for Identifying and Evaluating the Presence of Chiasmus," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4, no. 2 (1995); reprinted in Welch and McKinlay, *Chiasmus Bibliography*, 157–74; <http://farmsresearch.com/>.

12. Edwards and Edwards, "Does Chiasmus Appear in the Book of Mormon by Chance?" 117.

13. *Ibid.*, 111–14.

14. *Ibid.*, 110–11.

15. *Ibid.*, 123.

16. Boyd F. Edwards and W. Farrell Edwards, "Response to Earl Wunderli's 'Critique of Alma 36 as an Extended Chiasm,'" *Dialogue Online*: <http://www.dialoguejournal.com/content/?p=24#more-24>.

17. Edwards and Edwards, "Does Chiasmus Appear in the Book of Mormon by Chance?" 110–11. The likelihood that these particular four chiasms could have appeared by chance in the Book of Mormon is actually much smaller than 1 in 50 because three of these four have likelihoods that are lower than that of a simple five-element chiasm.

Response to Boyd and Farrell Edwards's Response to My "Critique of Alma 36 as an Extended Chiasm"

Earl M. Wunderli

Extended chiasms were apparently an ancient Hebrew literary form. Since they were little known during Joseph Smith's day, any extended chiasms in the Book of Mormon would be evidence of the book's ancient Hebrew origins. John W. Welch has identified a number of extended chiasms in the Book of Mormon, one of his favorites being Alma 36. Among his many defenders are the father-and-son team of Farrell and Boyd Edwards, both physics professors.

My analyses of Welch's chiasms over the years leave me unimpressed. For example, in my recently published *Dialogue* article,¹ I argued in part that, because of all the repetition in this chapter, Welch has been able to impose a chiasm on the text where none was intended. The Edwardses, however, using primarily not a literary but a statistical analysis, claim it is highly probable that Alma 36 as an extended chiasm was intentional and not inadvertent. While mentioning the Edwardses' work in my critique, I did not address their statistical analysis directly, noting only that their approach is based on the order of words and ideas and that it explicitly disregards the literary merit of the chiasm. Reasoning that chiasmus is a literary device, I critiqued the literary merit of the chiasm they constructed from Alma 36, which differs from Welch's construction. The Edwardses have responded to my critique and I have responded in turn at <http://www.dialoguejournal.com/>. Here I will address only the Edwardses' statistical analysis.

In their response, the Edwardses reassert the results of their statistical analysis, which assesses the likelihood that the elements in the chiasm would fall into a chiastic order by chance, that is, if they were drawn randomly from a hat. They recognize that their method supplements but does not replace literary analysis of a chiasm. Their method is illustrated in their paragraph 8, where they challenge my objection to their including multiple occurrences of key ideas within a chiastic section. They then prove mathematically that such multiple occurrences represent a higher degree of organization than a chiasm without multiple occurrences.

Their mathematical proof is simple. Given two elements, *a* and *b*, for example, each repeated once, there are six ways to order them, only two of which are chiastic, viz., *abba* and *baab*, so that the likelihood of a random ordering of these two elements creating a chiasm is two chances in six, or one-third. Given an extra *a*, there are ten ways to order them, three of which are chiastic, viz., *aabba*, *abbaa*, and *baaab*, so that the likelihood of a random ordering creating a chiasm is three in ten, or 30 percent. Since the likelihood of a random ordering creating a chiasm decreases with the extra *a*, the chance of its being random decreases, and the chance of its being intentional correspondingly increases.

As applied to a paradigmatic, two-element chiasm such as “the *first* (*a*) shall be *last* (*b*) and the *last* (*b*) shall be *first* (*a*),” their method would seem to work. Repeating an *a* might even strengthen a chiastic element, e.g., “the *first*, yea, even the *first* shall be *last* and the *last* shall be *first*” equals *aabba* and might, as the Edwardses argue, represent an even higher degree of organization than the simple *abba* form. There is even an example of such a repeated idea in Alma 36. In verses 20 and 21, Alma rhapsodizes about his joy, referring to it three times. These two verses together might be a sound chiastic element even though *joy* is repeated. There is, however, no chiastic match for these two verses, and the Edwardses ignore them in their chiasm.

Repeated elements in a more typical Alma 36 chiastic section, however, do not seem to represent a higher degree of organization. For example, the Edwardses' section **F'**, the section I objected to and which objection they challenge in their response, contains three occurrences of *born of God*. (**F'** comprises verses 23b–26a—120 words—which they pair chiastically with **F**, consisting of the first twenty-one words of verse 5 with one *born of God*.) Did Alma repeat *born of God* in **F'** to strengthen this chiastic element? It seems doubtful. The first use, in verse 23, is about Alma's be-

ing born of God and does indeed pair well with *born of God* in verse 5 (F) because it, too, is about Alma's being born of God. (Verse 23's *born of God*, however, is not the one Welch uses in his chiasm.)

Then the account continues in verse 24 with Alma's laboring to bring souls to repentance (which Welch uses in his chiasm but which the Edwardses ignore), so that others might taste of Alma's joy (which is a nonchiastic match for the three *joys* in verses 20 and 21 and which both Welch and the Edwardses ignore) and be born of God (which is also not the *born of God* used by Welch) and be filled with the Holy Ghost (which both Welch and the Edwardses ignore). In verse 25, Alma then expresses the joy he has received in the fruit of his labors (a fifth *joy* that both Welch and the Edwardses ignore). Finally, in verse 26, Alma proclaims that, because of the word he has received, many have been born of God. (Welch uses this *born of God*.)

In short, because Alma is born of God, he goes to work so that others might be born of God; and indeed, at the time of his telling his story to Helaman, many had in fact been born of God. This is straightforward narrative that uses *born of God* three times. The Edwardses consider this narrative to be a chiastic section, although it begins with a dependent clause, is nearly six times longer than its chiastic counterpart, and contains extraneous language like Alma's laboring to bring souls to repentance and nonchiastic pairings like Alma's *joy*. They ignore all of these literary weaknesses. The Edwardses' statistical analysis permits this process and would apparently consider the three *born of God*'s to represent an even higher degree of organization than a single born of God. However, from a literary standpoint, their section F' seems hardly to be an element of a chiasm.

The Edwardses' statistical analysis seems valid for truly random orderings of words, but the words an author uses are not put in a jar, shaken, and then withdrawn randomly. They appear in some order, but whether that order is chiastic must be determined by literary analysis, for which Welch's fifteen criteria are helpful. The story of Alma's conversion in verses 6–24 proceeds chiastically, from his rebellion against the church to his epiphany and his embrace of the church. It should be easy to find contrasting elements in such a story, and Welch and the Edwardses do, indeed, find some. What is surprising is that, given this splendid opportunity to create a real chiasm, Alma failed to do so.

With respect to the literary merits of Alma 36 as a chiasm, the Edwardses do not challenge any of my data but only my misapplication of

Welch's proposed criteria. Welch's criteria are useful in determining the presence of chiasmus but are explicitly neither finished nor authoritative and should not be made the issue.

The details—and in critiquing a chiasm, the details can hardly be avoided—are found in Dialogue Online.

Note

1. Earl M. Wunderli, "Critique of Alma 36 as an Extended Chiasm," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 97–112.

CONTRIBUTORS

MARIE BRIAN lives in Woodland Hills, Utah, with her husband, Danny Brian, and their three children. She is currently preparing her young adult novel, "The Roots of Mistwick," for publication.

DAWN BAKER BRIMLEY graduated from Brigham Young University and has done graduate work there, as well as teaching children's literature. She has published poetry in several journals, has won numerous awards for her poetry, and is working on a collection of Christmas poems. She has also published a collection of poetry, *Waking Moments*.

SAMUEL BROWN is an academic physician whose research interests focus on life-threatening infections. He lives with his wife, Kate Holbrook, and two daughters in Salt Lake City. This essay is part of an in-progress, book-length treatment of death and the kindred dead in early Mormonism.

TYLER CHADWICK lives in Ogden, Utah, with his wife, Jessica, and their two daughters, Sidney and Alex. He plans to graduate from Weber State University at the end of 2006 with a B.S. in English.

JUDY CURTIS, a graduate of Brigham Young University and Boston University, recently completed a creative writing program at Phoenix College. Her poems have appeared in *Dialogue*, *Irreantum*, and *Exponent II*. She lives in Phoenix where she writes, gardens, plans trips to see grandchildren, writes a gardening column for the *Master Gardener Journal* and volunteers at the Desert Botanical Garden.

BOYD F. EDWARDS is Russell and Ruth Bolton Professor of Physics at West Virginia University. He obtained a Ph.D. (1985) in applied physics from Stanford University.

W. FARRELL EDWARDS is Professor of Physics at Utah State University. He obtained a Ph.D. (1960) in physics from California Institute of Technology.

COBY FLETCHER is a high school French teacher completing a Ph.D. in rhetoric at the University of Texas at Arlington. Coby and his wife, Isabelle, have four children.

AARON GUILLE studies creative writing and religious studies at Utah Valley State College. He and his wife are the parents of three children attending Provo High School. This poem was awarded first place in poetry and published by *Touchstones: A Magazine of Literature and Art* (9, no. 1 [2005]: 57-58), UVSC's literary journal.

BRIAN C. HALES is an anesthesiologist practicing in Layton, Utah, who began investigating the authority claims of Mormon fundamentalists in 1989 when a close relative joined a polygamist group. He co-authored *The Priesthood of Modern Polygamy: An LDS Perspective* with J. Max Anderson (Salt Lake City: NPI, 1992) and is webmaster of www.mormonfundamentalism.com. This article is taken from his forthcoming book *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism: The Generations after the Manifesto* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2006).

G. WESLEY JOHNSON is professor emeritus of history at Brigham Young University, currently directing the Outmigration Leadership History Project sponsored by the Marriott Graduate School of Management, which seeks to document the reshaping of LDS society in the twentieth century. He served as co-editor of *Dialogue* from 1965 to 1970, as editor from 1970 to 1971, and as editor in chief of the UC Press, Berkeley publication *The Public Historian Quarterly*, from 1978 to 1987. He is a modern European historian who emphasizes not only France and French Africa, but modern urban America as well.

FRANCES LEE MENLOVE was a founder of *Dialogue* and its first manuscript editor. She graduated from Stanford University and holds a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Michigan and a Master's of Divinity from the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. She has four children and six grandchildren and lives on the beautiful Oregon coast.

GLEN NELSON is the director of Mormon Artists Group and a writer. His most recent works are a memoir that he co-authored with Grant Johannesen, *Journey of an American Pianist* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, forthcoming in the fall of 2006), and an opera with composer Murray Boren, *The Book of Gold*, which was premiered November 4, 2005, at Brigham Young University. He can be reached at mgknelson@aol.com, and the Mormon Artists Group web may be viewed at <http://www.mormonartistsgroup.com/mag/index.html>.

HUGO OLAIZ, a third-generation Latter-day Saint from Argentina, is the news editor for *Sunstone* magazine. He has a degree in literature and classics from Universidad Nacional de La Plata and an M.A. in Spanish from Brigham Young University, and he has done graduate work in Hispanic linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley. His work has appeared in *Dialogue* and *Sunstone*. He maintains a website (www.bellota.org) on the history of the LDS Church in La Plata, Argentina.

ROBERT A. REES is a former editor of *Dialogue*. A specialist in American literature, he has taught at various universities and published scholarly works on American literature and on the Mormon experience. He is the editor of *Proving*

Contraries: A Collection of Writings in Honor of Eugene England (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005) and *Re-Reading the Book of Mormon: Personal Perspectives on a New World Scripture* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, forthcoming).

NATHAN ROBISON was born and raised in Provo, Utah. He and his wife, Anna, graduated from Brigham Young University with degrees in English. Their two-year-old son, Christopher, is the subject of this poem. Nathan currently divides his time between distance running and working as a librarian at the Orem Public Library. He will study at Hollins University, Roanoke, Virginia, beginning in the fall of 2006, working toward an MFA in creative writing.

PAUL G. SALISBURY, a native of Springville, Utah, attended schools there and in Salt Lake City. He studied architecture at Stanford University and the University of Utah. For almost a decade, he was Director of Campus Planning and Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at Utah State University. Now in private architectural practice, he lives in San Francisco.

BILL SHEPARD is of Strangite heritage and has a broad interest in Mormon history. He and his wife, Diane, live near the site of James J. Strang's settlement at Voree (Burlington), Wisconsin. Bill is a member of the John Whitmer Historical Association Board, and co-chair of its awards committee. He thanks H. Michael Marquardt for encouragement and for providing references.

EARL M. WUNDERLI has degrees in philosophy and law from the University of Utah. He retired as Associate General Counsel of IBM in Connecticut in 1993 and returned to his native Utah. He has long made an avocation of studying the internal evidence in the Book of Mormon, serves on the Sunstone Board of Directors, has published in *Dialogue*, and has presented several papers at Sunstone Symposia in Salt Lake City and Washington, D.C.

DARLENE YOUNG currently serves as secretary for the Association for Mormon Letters. She lives in South Jordan with her husband, Roger, and four sons.

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ABOUT THE COVER ARTIST

Lane Twitchell

A native of Salt Lake City, Lane Twitchell lives with his family in Brooklyn. He has exhibited widely in galleries and museums and has received numerous awards, grants, residencies, and commissions. His work is in collections around the world, including the Corcoran Museum of Art, Washington, D.C., and the Museum of Modern Art, New York City. A complete listing of Twitchell's exhibitions, bibliography, and a selection of images is available at <http://www.lanetwitchell.com>.

The *Mona Lisas and Mad Hatters* project takes its title from an Elton John song of 1972. Twitchell was attracted to the lyrics about New York City and its sublime and uneasy clash of cultures. He decided upon two emerging techniques to create the print: laser-cut paper and the rich colors of giclée printing. *Mona Lisas and Mad Hatters* is two sheets of paper that are layered, as are the paintings, to compose the finished print. The image was created by hand-folding and cutting paper which was then reproduced by commercial laser-cutting, a mechanization of the artist's handcut technique. The background was created using giclée printing, sometimes referred to as Iris printing. In this case, the process involves pigmented inks laid onto archival-quality paper by a Roland printer. The laser-cut image is then affixed to the background print.

Playing off the vernacular expression "morning, noon, and night," the artist has created three prints, each with identical imagery but different color compositions. *Morning* is composed using pale, smoky colors characteristic of a city sunrise. *Noon* attempts to capture the cool, coastal light and urban soot of New York. And the bright colors in *Night* are intended to evoke the energizing, wildly colorful shades of Times Square after dark. By organizing the prints around these ideas, the artist has created a metaphor of the non-stop city, where pleasure and business commingle around the clock.

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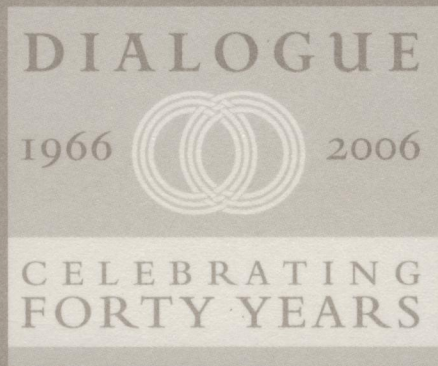
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