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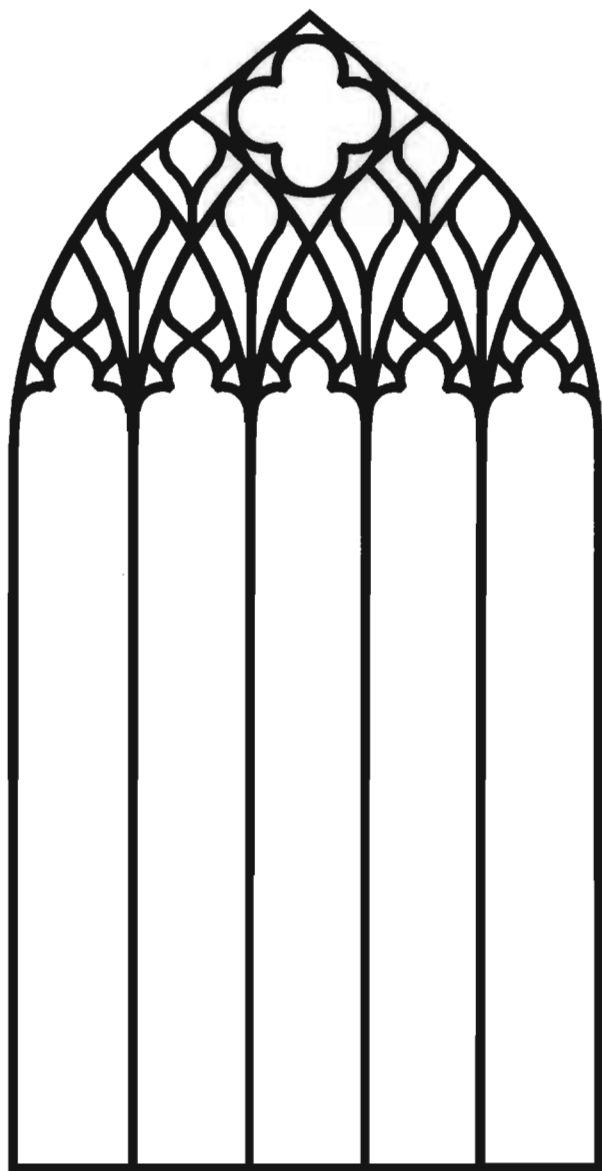
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JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY



SPRING 1994

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COVER: Abstraction of the window tracery, Salt Lake City Tenth Ward. Design by Warren Archer.

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The *Journal of Mormon History* exists to foster scholarly research and publication in the field of Mormon history. Manuscripts dealing with all aspects of Mormon history are welcome, including twentieth-century history, regional and local history, women's history, and ethnic/minorities history. First consideration will be given to those which make a strong contribution to knowledge through new interpretations and/or new information. The Board of Editors will also consider the paper's general interest, accuracy, level of interpretation, and literary quality.

Papers for consideration must be submitted in triplicate, typed and double-spaced throughout, including all quotations. A preferred length is twenty pages, but longer manuscripts may be considered. Authors should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 13th edition (see a recent edition of the *Journal* and be prepared to submit accepted manuscripts in WordPerfect, Multimate, or Wordstar. Send manuscripts to the *Journal of Mormon History*, Box 581068, Salt Lake City, UT 84158-1068.

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LETTERS

The Journal of Mormon History welcomes comments on articles and book reviews, series about Mormon history topics, additional information on subjects covered in the Journal, and ideas that will help us make future issues more interesting, stimulating, and valuable to readers. We will consider letters that are one or two typewritten, double-spaced pages: occasionally, a longer letter may be important enough to print as an exception to this policy. Because of limited space, we must reserve the right to select letters to be published and to edit them. Send letters to the Letters Editor, Journal of Mormon History, Box 581068, Salt Lake City, UT 84158-1068.

New Light on Zina

The 1848-50 diary of Zina D. H. Young edited by Marilyn Higbee ("A Weary Traveler". . ." fall 1993 issue) is a very important window into early Utah history and the practice of plural marriage from a very early participant. Its benefit to many kinds of readers, now that it is in print, will be enormous.

Zina was definitely a "people" person; and Higbee's efforts to identify as many of the individuals as possible among the dozens whom Zina names are commendable. Some additional insights and information may be helpful.

First, Higbee comments (p. 88) that Zina was sealed to Brigham Young while her husband, Henry Jacobs, was serving a mission. Although this may be a tradition in the family, the Nauvoo Temple records list Henry as a witness during the ceremony (Nauvoo Temple Sealing Records, 2 February 1846,

Family History Library, Salt Lake City). Higbee later states that Young "forbade" Zina to correspond with Henry (p. 88). Again, this may be a family tradition; but in the light of documentary evidence to the contrary, I suggest that Zina herself may bear more of the responsibility for terminating the contact. My research on Brigham Young provides no other cases where he intervened in a peremptory way to control his wives' behavior. Nine of Brigham Young's wives divorced him and all either returned to former husbands or married someone else.

The entry of September 24 refers to Mrs. Lorenzo Young. Higbee identifies this person as either Persis Goodall Young, Lorenzo's first wife, or Harriet Page Young. This woman was actually Harriet Page Decker Young. Persis had terminated her union with Lorenzo before he married Harriet in Nau-

voo, and his marriage to Harriet thus does not represent a polygamous union. Harriet's relationship with Zina was undoubtedly important. Two of Harriet's daughters by a first marriage were plural wives of Brigham Young (and hence sister-wives to Zina), and one of Harriet's sons by that marriage, Charlie Decker, married Brigham's daughter Vilate. In short, Zina probably considered them part of her extended family. Harriet and Zina were also near neighbors, living only half a block apart.

The entry of 4 July 1849 mentions a Brother and Sister "Horess [Horace] Whiting." I believe these individuals can be identified as Horace K. Whitney and Helen Mar Kimball Whitney. Helen Mar's parents were Heber C. Kimball and Vilate Murray Kimball; Zina's sister, Presendia, was a plural wife of Heber.

Appendix 4, "Wives of Brigham Young Before 1850" (pp. 124-25), is taken from my article, "Determining and Defining 'Wife': the Brigham Young Households," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20 (Fall 1987): 57-70. My table included birth and marriage dates, as shown, but not death dates. Unfortunately, some of the death dates included in Higbee's third column contain several errors and incomplete dates. The correct dates for the following wives are Lucy Ann Decker, 24 January 1891; Augusta Adams Cobb, 3 February 1886; Clarissa

Decker, 5 January 1889; Clarissa Ross, 10 October 1857; Margaret Alley, 26 November 1852; Naamah Carter, 6 August 1909; and Lucy Bigelow, 3 February 1905.

By Zina's references to "mother," she means Lydia Partridge Huntington, who had married Zina's father after Zina's mother died in Nauvoo. I believe it helps us understand Zina's emotional support system better to know that, even though her birth-mother was dead, she had a step-mother to whom she felt close.

As the quest to identify other individuals named in Zina's record continues, the contemporary diaries of Harriet Page Decker Young (Utah State Historical Society) and of her stepsister, Eliza Partridge Lyman (LDS Church Archives), may prove to be useful sources. The *Journal History of the Church*, available at several Utah archives, would also help to identify the meetings and other community activities which Zina mentions.

Zina's diary is a window on the past. Understanding who she is talking about and the events she mentions help us see through that pane more clearly.

Jeffery O. Johnson
Salt Lake City

Children's Tongues

As a recent "convert" to Mormon history research, I read the Dan Vogel and Scott C. Dunn article on glossolalia in the Fall 1993 issue of the *Journal of Mormon History*

with great interest.

In preparation for a new book my husband, Stanley, and I are writing on the social dimensions of the Mormon Trail, and after reading over two hundred journals so far, I, too, discovered that many early Mormon women spoke in tongues. Of greater interest, however, was my discovery that several children also "spoke in tongues."

Patty Sessions recorded, while on the trail in 1848, that "the Lord is pouring his spirit out on the youth" and her young granddaughter Martha Ann and friends "spoke in tongues." They did have a little help from Patty, however. Joseph Smith Black relates that during a stormy ocean trip to Nauvoo from England in 1840, his eight-year-old brother William "spoke in Tongues which was interpreted by Mother." His mother was Jane Johnston Black, a midwife who helped deliver the nine babies born in a single night during the exile from Nauvoo in September 1846 (not in February).

Edward Tullidge mentions in *Women of Mormonism* that Nancy A. Porter Clark, before the age of eight, "received the gift of tongues, and became a great object of interest among the saints."

I remember hearing women speak in tongues as a young girl in rural North Carolina when I attended a Pentecostal Holiness Church next to my home, but I never remember anyone "interpreting." Such experiences always occurred at times of great emotional intensity, after the "altar call" had been issued. Some of the women would jump up and down, dance, "speak," and then faint and remain unconscious for a while. I also remember one man who practiced glossolalia, but his behavior was more subdued. It left me simultaneously uncomfortable and fascinated. I was never inclined to try to achieve that religious experience myself, but just think what a story I could tell now if I had!

Violet Kimball
Edwardsville, Illinois

IN MEMORIAM
OBERT CLARK TANNER, 1904-1993

Obert Clark Tanner, the teacher, author, industrialist and philanthropist who died in Palm Springs, California, on October 14, 1993, holds a special place in the annals of the Mormon History Association. He and his wife of sixty-two years, Grace Adams Tanner, sponsored the Tanner Lectures on Mormon History, which have, since 1980, been a significant feature of the annual meetings of the Association.

Established in connection with the MHA meeting at Canandaigua, New York, the lectureship brings the insights of prominent non-Mormon specialists in the history of religion to bear on aspects of LDS history. It pays travel expenses and a significant honorarium to the lecturer, plus a subsidy toward publication of the address in the *Journal of Mormon History*. Initially funded on an annual basis, the lectureship now receives continuing support from the Obert C. and Grace A. Tanner Foundation of Salt Lake City.

Obert Tanner was born September 20, 1904, in Farmington, Utah, the youngest of ten children of Annie Clark Tanner and Joseph Marion Tanner. The autobiography of his mother, *A Mormon Mother* (Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund/University of Utah Library, 1969; rev. 1973), is a landmark in Mormon women's personal writings. Educated at the University of Utah, Stanford and Harvard, Obert Tanner was an LDS seminary teacher, teacher of religious studies and acting chaplain at Stanford, and for twenty-seven years a professor of philosophy at the University of Utah. He received seven honorary doctorates and authored or co-authored ten books on ethical and religious subjects. In 1927 he organized the O. C. Tanner Company to manufacture and market commemorative pins and jewelry; by the time of his death it had grown from a shop producing LDS seminary pins in his mother's basement to an enterprise employing two thousand people.

Obert was chairman of Utah's American Revolution Bicentennial Commission and a member of the National Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution. He received the national Medal of Arts and the United Nations Peace Medal, and he was an Honorary Fellow in the British Academy. The Tanners contributed liberally to the Utah Symphony, Ballet West, and the Utah Opera Company. They established the Tanner Lectures on Human Values, annual ethics lectures at nine major universities in the United States and England. They donated more than forty fountains to cities, universities, and hospitals; and Tanner Park in southeast Salt Lake City is dedicated to their three deceased sons. Grace, two daughters, a son, and seven grandchildren are still living.

A lover of goodness, truth and beauty, Obert C. Tanner contributed both ideas and material resources to the promotion of all three. The Mormon History Association gratefully acknowledges what Obert and Grace have contributed to our pursuit of historic truth and understanding.

Richard D. Poll
Provo, Utah

Positivism or Subjectivism? Some Reflections on a Mormon Historical Dilemma

Marvin S. Hill

IN HIS "CRISIS IN MORMON HISTORIOGRAPHY," Martin E. Marty compares the disagreements between advocates of the old and new Mormon history to the controversy in the Roman Catholic Church after Vatican II and to the experience of many liberal Protestants in the nineteenth century, who encountered historical skepticism and had to develop the art of historical interpretation in dealing with an alternative, more secular world view. He sees this crisis happening in Mormonism quite recently and perceives it as inevitable.¹ Perhaps, but Marty exaggerates the extent of a Mormon crisis in one sense, since a vast majority of the Mormon people are quite unaware of any of the historical issues involved. The discussions have been largely quarantined

MARVIN S. HILL, 1992-93 president of the Mormon History Association, is author of *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989) and coauthor with Dallin H. Oaks of *Carthage Conspiracy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

¹ Martin E. Marty, "Two Integrities: An Address to the Crisis in Mormon Historiography," in *Faithful History*, edited by George D. Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 168-88. "Someday," he observed, "the crisis had to come" (p. 175).

and have, at best, occurred among a few thousand people amid several million.²

That being said, it must be acknowledged that within a more limited sphere, among what could be called a part of the Mormon intelligentsia, there appears to be a loss of confidence in history as a tool for studying Mormonism. Church history has been eliminated from the curriculum of the Church seminaries and cancelled as a topic of study in Mormon Sunday Schools. Even during the year in which the Doctrine and Covenants is the course of study, historical information is minimal and, except for the discussion of the Manifesto of 1890 and the revelation on priesthood for all worthy males in 1978, its utilization ends in 1844. Some at Brigham Young University, the Church university, contend that history is entirely subjective and useless for discovering the past, while faculty are warned not to participate in "symposia" at which Mormon history is discussed.³

This turning away from history seems paradoxical since, as Marty argues, Mormonism is a historical faith whose central message concerns the coming of heavenly messengers to Joseph Smith to restore true Christianity following a universal apostasy. These are historical issues and Mormons have addressed them historically. Mormons affirm that the Book of Mormon is a text dealing with Israelites who came to America in ancient times and

² My estimate is partly subjective. I see no evidence of a general concern among Church members or even among students at Brigham Young University. Some indication of the general disregard is manifest by the fact that George Smith's volume cited above sold only four hundred copies in its first six months. Michael Quinn's similar volume, *New Mormon History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), doubled that figure in the same amount of time, while Richard Van Wagoner's, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), sold two or three thousand copies in a six-month period.

³ The faculty at Brigham Young University have been discouraged from attending Sunstone symposia. See the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, "Statement," *Deseret News*, 25 August 1991, A-1; the entire BYU sociology faculty protested to BYU's president that "some BYU social scientists have been questioned by ecclesiastical superiors about their participation" in "scholarly symposiums on Mormonism," including Sunstone. Vern Anderson, "BYU Sociologists Say They Fear Intimidation from LDS Leaders," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 22 February 1992, A10.

believed in Christianity. Some have said that the very truth of the faith depends upon the truth of these historical claims. Certainly there is a crisis here, and it would seem to be important to ask, How did this current situation come to be?

To answer this question, I believe we must go back to Joseph Smith. To be sure, in some ways Joseph Smith was a subjectivist, for when he was challenged by a minister in Palmyra regarding his first vision he remarked that he knew what he had experienced.⁴ Joseph Smith's experience of his first vision was personal, not shared or observed by others. In using the term *subjectivist* here, I am employing its simplest dictionary meaning—that what we know exists essentially in the mind. By positivism, again, in its simplest dictionary sense, I mean that history is taken to be potentially verifiable—that the mind can know the outside world as it is and was.⁵

Despite a degree of subjectivism in Joseph's thought, which I will return to later, there was a strong positivist strain in the Prophet's thinking, that is, a belief that the past is knowable and that we can learn about it by studying artifacts from that past. In part, Joseph's empiricism reflected the influence of the Enlightenment which provided a naturalistic world view.⁶ Cosmologically, the Mormons fused both supernatural and natural elements

⁴ Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 7 vols., 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1951 printing), 1:6-7.

⁵ These definitions are drawn from Webster's *New Twentieth-Century Unabridged Dictionary*. Although historians, social scientists, and philosophers have constructed complex and elaborate definitions of these two terms and their relationship to each other, I am deliberately using simple meanings that are juxtaposed to each other to try and move the discussion from technical definitions to awareness of meanings and implications. Webster's definition indicates that the positivists refuse to consider ultimate origins, but this does not necessarily mean they are atheists, as some would hold. They may be agnostics or simply unwilling to impose their religious values upon their readers.

⁶ Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), xiv, defines the heyday of the Enlightenment in America as 1715-1815 and its central impact as the concept that we can understand both humanity and nature best through our natural faculties. Joseph Smith may not have seen this means as the best, but rather as an important one.

to construct a world view in which God is a material being with a body, who lives in time, in which all spirit is matter, and in which there is strong continuity between this world and the next so that the same "sociality" exists in both, and where all blessings are predicated upon set laws.⁷

A naturalistic world was never alien to the Mormons. In a sense, Mormonism naturalized the supernatural. It was generally held that miracles were not miracles at all but part of the natural order of things that would be fully understood once the laws governing them were known.⁸ Mormons saw supernatural beings coming to earth in natural form, visiting with their prophet as one neighbor might visit another. Mormons were confident that these visitations were historical events that were verified by historical evidence.

It may be that this strong emphasis on the empirical came about in part because, from the very beginning, writers like Obadiah Dogberry and E. D. Howe challenged Mormon historical claims, arguing from a secular viewpoint that Mormonism was born in ignorance and superstition from the imaginations of a village magician who set out to deceive the people.⁹ Joseph Smith countered this skepticism about himself and his religion by providing witnesses to testify to the existence of the Book of Mormon plates and by describing American antiquities in Latin America as evidence of the Book of Mormon's claims.¹⁰ In addition, Joseph

⁷ Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1962), 320-21, 433; also Doctrine and Covenants 130:2, 20-21.

⁸ McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 433 states that "all things are governed by law." He seems to contradict this statement when he emphasizes that miracles are the result of supernatural power (p. 506). But compare James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1924), 220: "Miracles are commonly regarded as occurrences in opposition to the laws of nature. Such a conception is plainly erroneous."

⁹ Obadiah Dogberry, *Palmyra Reflector*, 6 January and 1 February 1831 and E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (1834), as cited in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness of Christ in America* (Independence: Zion's Press, 1951), 134-44, reproducing the affidavits of Joseph Smith's Palmyra neighbors about his money-digging activities.

¹⁰ The testimonies of the Three and Eight Witnesses are published in the introductory material of any recent edition of the Book of Mormon. A typical

Smith wrote his history, or had it written, and affirmed that it was factual.

When Joseph began dictating his history for publication in 1839, he was well aware of contrary interpretations of his work. He says his history was a response “to the many reports which had been put in circulation by evil disposed and designing persons in relation to the rise and progress of the Church of Latter-day Saints, all of which had been designed . . . to militate against its character.” He would offset these negative reports by putting “all inquirers after truth in possession of the facts as they have transpired.” But achieving this goal would be possible only “where I have such facts in my possession.”¹¹ He thus made clear his distrust of his memory alone and his heavy dependence upon historical sources to determine what the facts were. Later, in Nauvoo, where he suffered personal persecution, he expressed his longing for the time “when the facts are proved” and “truth and innocence will prevail at last.”¹² Joseph, in short, did not see his history as a personal opinion but as truth—truth that could be established by historical means. Thus he recorded the Mormon doctrine that truth is a “knowledge of things . . . as they were . . .” (D&C 93:24). There is no hedging on the past: the mind can know the past as it was. While Joseph called upon revelation for some of his understanding of the past, he claimed also to translate ancient records to gain such knowledge. However, he also depended upon historical sources and told the Saints that their clerks must keep careful records and a history “of all things that transpire in Zion” (D&C 85:1-2). When Oliver Cowdery began the first published history of the Church, Joseph provided him with his personal recollections but also with “authentic documents” to get the story straight. Cowdery assured his readers, “It shall be founded upon facts.”¹³ Joseph’s published history was replete

example of popular “hard” evidence of the Book of Mormon is “American Antiquities,” *Times and Seasons* 3 (15 July 1842): 858.

¹¹ In Dean C. Jessee, ed. *The Papers of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1989), 1:267.

¹² In Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds. *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), 373.

¹³ *LDS Messenger and Advocate* 1 (October 1834): 13. Cowdery said that Joseph

with documentary sources upon which the *public* was to depend to learn the truth regarding the Mormon past.¹⁴

Following the lead of their prophet, Mormon defenders from his time until now have employed empirical evidence to support the faith, often claiming that this method provides “proof.” Almost the entire defense of the faith has been based on the assumption that the natural mind can perceive past reality through the examination of historical evidence. Thus Orson Pratt employed empirical assumptions to defend the faith. His starting philosophical assumption was that the “truth is independent of all ideas” or, in other words, exists outside the mind, mortal or divine.¹⁵ Pratt added that if neither the universe nor its Creator existed, yet certain truths “would exist unperceived and unknown.” For Pratt, the universe and God were no abstract idea. He believed in an objective reality which the mind can discern. Accordingly, Pratt found verification for the truth of the Book of Mormon in the testimony of the witnesses. And he made a historical argument to establish the apostasy and a need for the restoration. He did not see his view as one man’s opinion but as truth.

B. H. Roberts, in his *Seventy’s Course in Theology* (fourth year) manifested much the same kind of epistemology as Pratt. He said that intelligences are “conscious of the external universe itself.” These intelligences can “generalize from the particular to the general.”¹⁶ Thus Roberts found validity in the evidences he provided for the truth of the Book of Mormon. In his *New Witnesses for God*, he cited the testimonies of the witnesses and declared that their testimony stands “unimpeached and unimpeachable.” Throughout their lives, they maintained that the plates existed and that they saw the engravings upon them. The revelation to the Three Witnesses, he affirmed, was not a dream

Smith offered to assist him in writing the history by “his labors and authentic documents.” Cowdery further said he wanted to make the “narrative correct.”

¹⁴ The seven-volume *History of the Church* differs somewhat from the first version, published in the *Times and Seasons*.

¹⁵ Orson Pratt, “Absurdities of Immaterialism,” “Divine Authenticity of the Book of Mormon,” and “Universal Apostasy,” in *Orson Pratt’s Works* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1990), 1, 49-57, 97-112.

¹⁶ “The Atonement,” *Seventy’s Course in Theology* (fourth year), 5-6.

or vision. "It was a simple straightforward fact that had taken place before their eyes." He thus dismissed the idea that any subjectivity was involved. Of the Eight Witnesses he said, "Here all was natural, matter of fact, plain—they could pass the plates from hand to hand, look upon the engravings" and conclude that they were ancient. Roberts also cited archeological evidence in central America and said "if this proves to be ancient it would tend to provide evidence for the Book of Mormon."¹⁷ In his approach to historical and archeological evidence, Roberts was an empiricist. His assumptions at this point were simple: The evidence is there. It can be studied and understood, not only by the Latter-day Saints, but by anyone who would give it consideration.

If we take a random sampling of more recent defenders of the faith, we find similar kinds of epistemological assumptions. Thus, John Henry Evans in his *Joseph Smith: An American Prophet* (1946), said: "In this book I have tried to give a scientific treatment of Joseph Smith . . . that is, to present available facts, without smothering these facts in opinion." He claimed that "no one up to this time had approached Joseph Smith in this way."¹⁸

John A. Widstoe, in *Joseph Smith: Seeker after Truth, Prophet of God* (1951), said that in the past the enemies of Joseph Smith have ignored the "facts." Joseph Smith's visions "were not mental abstractions" and the testimony of the witnesses provided "certain proofs of the existence of the plates." After comparing the vocabularies employed in the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants, Widstoe concluded that a single author wrote both and announced: "There is but one conclusion: Joseph Smith wrote the Book of Mormon unaided by mortal man." He observed, "Wherever the life of Joseph Smith is touched, truth comes forth."¹⁹

In many ways, the premier empiricist of twentieth century

¹⁷ B. H. Roberts, *New Witnesses for God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1950), 1:305, 308, 314, 318-19, 443-44.

¹⁸ Evans, *Joseph Smith: An American Prophet* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1946), vii.

¹⁹ Widstoe, *Joseph Smith: Seeker after Truth, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1951), 5, 6, 52, 70-71, 85.

Mormonism in affirming proof for the Book of Mormon has been Hugh Nibley. In a pioneering 1952 study of Near Eastern culture and the Book of Mormon, Nibley found evidence that the Book of Mormon reflects the life-style of the Middle East. He stated that we can test the story by posing these questions: "Does it correctly reflect the cultural horizon and religious and social ideas and practices of the time? Does it have authentic historical and geographical background . . . is its color correct, and are the proper names convincing . . . ?" In an approach which became a model of subsequent Mormon apologetics, Nibley said, "If the book can pass those tests, there is no point in arguing about its age and authorship." "Lehi's world," asserted Nibley, "has been known to scholars only during the last hundred years and more particularly, the last thirty—or since the 1920s." Nibley assumed that students could compare ancient sources and the Book of Mormon and draw valid conclusions from the evidence.²⁰ In this instance, Nibley was an empiricist claiming the validity of his approach, confident that his evidences would convince all inquiring minds, not just those of Latter-day Saints.²¹

It seems almost unnecessary to point out that most defenders of the faith since Nibley have started with the same assumptions—that the past is knowable and that the truth of the Book of Mormon can be established by comparing it with Middle Eastern or Meso-American cultures. In a recent volume edited by Noel B. Reynolds, a professor of philosophy at Brigham Young University, several writers have taken an approach similar to Nibley's. Reynolds himself declared uncategorically that if the Book of Mormon is a fraud "it would be a very simple matter for scientists to demonstrate; for the Book of Mormon describes a people, a culture, a thousand years of history, and lands largely unknown to the nineteenth century world." There are, he said, "any number of straightforward scientific tests which could help determine whether this book is also of ancient origin or whether it was

²⁰ Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952), 2.

²¹ I am aware that Nibley was not so absolutistic in his views as he appears here, but he wrote for an audience that demanded absolutes.

written by nineteenth century Americans.”²² Reynolds thus affirmed absolute confidence in the scientific nature and validity of his arguments.

Truman Madsen, also a professor of philosophy at Brigham Young, in an essay on B. H. Roberts and his attitudes toward the Book of Mormon, queried, “How could any genius or set of geniuses in the nineteenth century concoct a book that is filled with stunning details, *now confirmable*, of the ancient cultures it claims to represent?”²³ Madsen saw certain evidence as confirming the truth of the Book of Mormon.

John Welch, on the law faculty at Brigham Young University, writes in a more tentative way but argues that chiasmas, a form of literary expression employing inverted parallelisms, was a method used not only by the ancient Hebrews but also by Book of Mormon authors. He concluded, “Since the Book of Mormon contains numerous examples of chiasmas, it thus becomes logical to consider the book a product of the ancient world and to judge its literary qualities accordingly.”²⁴ For Welch it is possible to identify certain literary techniques used in Bible times, compare them with those used in the Book of Mormon, and find evidence for the latter. His assumptions here are positivistic, although he does not claim “proof” for his argument.

Wilfred Griggs, a professor of ancient scripture, also at Brigham Young University, followed Nibley’s lead by arguing that, since the Book of Mormon claims to be an ancient work, it must be considered as such until it is shown that the social and cultural elements within it “cannot represent the ancient world claimed for them.”²⁵ Griggs affirmed that we should take the Book of Mormon at face value and leave it to others to disprove, thus shifting the burden of proof to nonbelievers. Underlying such an approach is his assumption that such proof is actually possible.

In 1987 Charles Tate and Monte Nyman affirmed that the text

²² Noel B. Reynolds, ed. *Book of Mormon Authorship* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1982), 2.

²³ Madsen, “B. H. Roberts and the Book of Mormon,” in *ibid*, 12; emphasis mine.

²⁴ John W. Welch, “Chiasmas in the Book of Mormon,” in *ibid*, 51.

²⁵ Wilfred Griggs, “The Book of Mormon as an Ancient Book,” in *ibid*, 77.

of the Book of Mormon “proves” that the Bible is true because “it teaches the same doctrines, cites the Bible, and refers to its historical events.”²⁶

These positivist positions taken by Mormon scholars are a counterpoint to much of twentieth-century science and philosophy. As Peter Novick argues, fresh winds were blowing in the West after World War I, as new conceptions of mathematics, logic, and empirical science rendered “problematic nineteenth century certainties in every realm of thought and culture.” Darwin and others spread the idea of a changing world of biology, and Einstein and Planck revolutionized the way we understand the operations of matter and energy. Even before World War I, Sigmund Freud during his 1909 visit to America had introduced the disturbing and provocative idea of the subconscious, raising fundamental issues about human rationality.²⁷ Progressive historians, influenced by these forces, saw history as largely subjective, and these ideas spread in the historical profession. While not denying that many were influenced by these ideas, Peter Novick says, “It is difficult to make firmly grounded generalizations about the distribution of attitudes within the historical profession on the ‘objectivity question.’ . . . one has no idea how many historians thought seriously about the questions.”²⁸ Thus, he confesses his own lack of knowledge.

Henry F. May makes clear in *The End of American Innocence* that ideas of finality in science, values, and morals were waning in this period in America.²⁹ Even at Brigham Young University in the early 1950s, Russel B. Swensen was telling his historiography class that ideas of scientific history were being broadly challenged and that finality in history was questionable.³⁰ When I arrived at

²⁶ Charles Tate and Monte Nyman, “Proving the Holy Scriptures Are True,” in *To Be Learned Is Good, If . . .* edited by Robert Millet (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 79.

²⁷ Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 134-39.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 253, 264.

²⁹ Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959).

³⁰ I recall my final exam in the class in which I argued that despite “scientific”

the University of Chicago in 1955, the whole program in American history was designed to force students to rethink their existing historical assumptions and develop new interpretations of their own. Sidney E. Mead began every class in his history of American Christianity by affirming that "history is chaos" and that every written history is but an "interim report."

I remember sitting in the office of Daniel Boorstin when he was writing one of his volumes on the American experience and hearing him lament his dilemma. He was writing about a topic that would generate a great deal of controversy, one which would raise numerous objections. He said he might agree with many of these objections. Yet, he said, "I am stuck. It won't do to qualify or question my own argument lest I undermine my point." Novick ignores this necessity to write convincingly even where doubts prevail, instead arguing that the "dream" of scientific history still dominates the thinking of most American historians. But in introducing their influential series on interpretations in American history, John Higham and Bradford Perkins spoke for a large segment of the profession in 1972, saying, "Historical knowledge shares a characteristic common to all appraisal of human affairs. It is partial and selective."³¹

When I discussed this point with several new Mormon historians, only one said he was taught in graduate school to believe in history as a science.³² As for others, Linda King Newell

history, succeeding historians would continue to replace current brilliant interpretations with even more brilliant ones.

³¹ Any of several volumes in the influential series by Higham and Perkins contains this introductory passage; for example, see in Marvin S. Hill and James B. Allen, *Mormonism and American Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), vii.

³² I have had conversations on this point with Klaus Hansen, Robert Flanders, James B. Allen, Thomas G. Alexander, Malcolm Thorp, Ronald W. Walker, Newell Bringham, Stanley Kimball, Mario De Pillis, D. Michael Quinn, and Jan Shippis. De Pillis indicated that at Yale he was taught that history is a science but thought he was "moving away" from this view when he wrote his 1966 article on authority and Mormonism. Jan Shippis said that she was taught at the University of Colorado that there is validity in history but that none of the philosophical issues were discussed. Richard P. Howard makes it clear in his *The Church through the Years, Volume 1: RLDS Beginnings to 1860* (Independence: Herald House, 1992), 25-46, that he is no positivist.

and Valeen Tippetts Avery, in their work on Emma Smith, say they recognize "how difficult it is to maintain a balance in describing historical events many hold to be sacred," while Donna Hill, in her biography of Joseph Smith, acknowledges that she is a descendent of Mormon pioneers and says she has "*tried* to be as objective as possible within her capabilities."³³ Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton in *The Mormon Experience* said they "have tried to take advantage of our empathy with our fellow Mormons while preserving proper scholarly objectivity and availing ourselves of insights from a variety of disciplines."³⁴ Lawrence Foster in his *Religion and Sexuality* commented, "As a non-Mormon, I should note that the interpretations presented in this book are my own."³⁵ While these writers hold objectivity as an ideal, they recognize the force of their own opinions.

Based upon the evidence I have seen, it would appear that the new Mormon historians were the first group of historians studying Mormon history to break with the positivist tradition and write in a more tentative way about the Mormon past. It is clear, I believe, that they sought to avoid trying to prove or disprove Mormonism, given their view of the limitations of the historical method. But they *never* took their subjectivism to an extreme to argue that history has no validity.

A more radical historical subjectivism, however, was introduced on the Mormon right when a member of the Brigham Young University political science department, David Bohn, denounced the new Mormon historians as positivists and denied the finality of their or any historical interpretations. Not recognizing how much of the Mormon defense of the faith has been based upon positivist assumptions that came from within the faith itself, Bohn argued that we have no way to reconstruct the past accurately, based upon bits and pieces of that past that are passed

³³ Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1984), xii; Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith the First Mormon* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1977), xiii.

³⁴ Arrington and Bitton, *The Mormon Experience* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), xiii.

³⁵ Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), vii.

down to the historian by random means. The reconstruction of the past is completely subjective.³⁶ What is astonishing about this assertion is that Bohn himself appears to simultaneously embrace a form of positivism: "Because Mormons believe that God participates in the unfolding of historical events . . . every attempt to undermine the *historical authenticity* of the foundational events of the Mormon past constitutes an assault on Latter-day Saints' self-understanding."³⁷

Bohn fails to explain how there can be any "historical authenticity of the foundational events of the Mormon past," when he claims that we have no ways to reconstruct that past. Thus his radical subjectivism itself constitutes an assault upon Latter-day Saint self-understanding. In reality, those events which Bohn considers foundational are recorded in Joseph Smith's history; by Bohn's logic, that history is subject to the same epistemological limitations as anybody else's history. Joseph had to rely upon his memory for many of the important events, including his first vision, which he did not write down until 1832 with revisions in 1838. In some instances it would appear that Joseph's memory was uncertain, for in his or Oliver Cowdery's account, which he supervised, there is confusion as to his age when his visions began, whether he believed the churches were in apostasy before or after the first vision, whether a revival was involved, how many personages appeared to him, what was said, and what it meant to him afterward. There appear to be uncertainties, too, as to which angel came to him in 1823—an unnamed one, Moroni, or Nephi—and whether he initially thought this visit was anything more than a dream.³⁸ Yet as we have already seen, in instructing Oliver

³⁶ David E. Bohn, "No Higher Ground," *Sunstone* 3 (May-June 1983): 26-32.

³⁷ Bohn, "Unfounded Claims and Impossible Expectations: A Critique of the New Mormon History," in George D. Smith, *Faithful History*, 228; emphasis mine.

³⁸ A careful reading of the 1832 and 1838 accounts makes these contradictions clear. For a convenient source see Milton V. Backman, Jr., *Joseph Smith's First Vision* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1971), 155-57, 160-65. On the problems with Moroni, see Jessee, *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:8, where the angel is unnamed and Joseph reveals that he was initially uncertain whether the vision was a dream. Compare Oliver Cowdery's report of uncertainty regarding the dates of the first vision, and notice here, too, that the messenger who told him of the plates is

Cowdery in 1834, Joseph was very much concerned about telling the story accurately, yet conscious that he needed documents to reinforce his uncertain memory. Being a prophet did not seem to help him here, and he never insisted that because he was a prophet his history was perfect or unalterable.

Bohn and Louis Midgley, Bohn's colleague in Brigham Young University's Political Science Department, provide us with a means for comprehending how Joseph or anyone might have difficulty in telling historical truth. Yet these professors claim finality for a version of Joseph's story which they say is the true one. But how do they know which version of Joseph's story is true? The philosophy they advocate says they cannot know—that nobody can. Thus, they have added to our uncertainties and resolved nothing. They have lifted the lid on Pandora's box and have no way to close it. The terrible dilemma which they now face can best be seen in the contradictory positions taken by Professor Midgley, one of the most vociferous critics of the new Mormon history and historians. Only a few years ago Midgley asserted that "the restoration is true—if and only if—the Book of Mormon is authentic history. . . . These questions can be tested if not settled by the methods of the historian."³⁹ It seems reasonable to suppose that Midgley believed the tests *would* be conclusive; otherwise, there would be little point in conducting them. However, more recently he appears to have undergone a radical epistemological reversal: "I believe," he said, "[Martin] Marty is on the right track when he maintains that historians cannot prove that the Book of Mormon was translated from golden plates."⁴⁰

It is clear that there was a time not long ago when the "proofs" of the Book of Mormon were a foundation stone of

unnamed. Two months later, Cowdery said it was Moroni, while the 1839 manuscript history identifies this messenger as Nephi. *Messenger and Advocate* (February and April 1835): 76-80, 112 and Jessee, *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:277.

³⁹ In Millet, *To Be Learned Is Good, If ...*, 224.

⁴⁰ Louis C. Midgley, "Faith and History," in Millet, *To Be Learned Is Good, If...* 224; see also his "Acids of Modernity and the Crisis in Mormon History," in George D. Smith, *Faithful History*, 220 note 32, and 206.

Midgley's religious faith. Now, he has seemingly lost confidence in these "proofs," perhaps as a result of more exposure to new sources and radical historical relativism. Midgley has catapulted from being an absolutistic historical positivist to being an absolutistic historical subjectivist. Something of what this may have cost him is suggested in a recent allegation that "the mythology of historical objectivism . . . is *fraudulent* and *corrupting* . . . for those who attempt to prove accounts of the Mormon past."⁴¹ This denunciation of the "positivists" would apply to such respectable Latter-day Saint historians as Hugh Nibley, Milton Backman, Wilfred Griggs, and Joseph Smith himself. It would apply as well to the earlier writings of Louis Midgley. Taken as an absolute, Midgley's historical subjectivism would destroy Nibley's argument for the historicity of the Book of Mormon or Book of Abraham. One may ask how much this helps the Latter-day Saint cause. In Midgley's logic, if a church member says the Book of Mormon is historical, is he not "fraudulent and corrupting" in assuming a positivist posture?

Midgley contends that the New Mormon historians have yielded to an apostate secularism and naturalism: "The primary source of the present crisis is the appropriation by a few intellectuals of competing or conflicting idealogies."⁴² Such a view is simplistic and misleading. If we look at the work of Mormon historians whom Midgley does not consider to be "new and apostate," we will find that, due to newly available sources, they too have had to alter the way they interpret Mormon history. They, like Midgley, have made a transition from being positivists to being subjectivists and, in so doing, have introduced secular elements into their interpretations. Two areas which illustrate how sources have been troublesome are the matter of Joseph Smith's first vision and the question of the authenticity of the Book of Abraham.

⁴¹ Louis Midgley, "The Myth of Objectivity: Some Lessons for Latter-Day Saints," *Sunstone* 14 (August 1990), 55. But see his "Acids of Modernity," 214-15 where he tries to salvage his objectivism by appealing to personal testimony, which is subjective.

⁴² Midgley, "Acids of Modernity," 193, 195.

In their analysis of the differences between the 1832 account of the first vision located in the LDS Church Archives and the 1838 published account, Neil Lambert and Richard Cracroft, two members of the English Department at Brigham Young University, would not seem to be corrupted by Midgley's "acids of modernity" yet maintain that the variations were due to Joseph Smith's "changing understanding of the event in the sacred grove." They hold that Joseph had moved from the "writing of his transcendent experience as a young man influenced by the Protestant tradition of spiritual autobiography to writing profoundly of the event as the Leader, Restorer and Prophet of a unique religious movement."⁴³

Perhaps overlooking Joseph's introduction in 1832 where he recounts his sources of authority as a Church leader, these professors nonetheless introduced elements of the subjective into their interpretation of the first vision. They saw the two accounts as products of Joseph's changing perspectives and viewed the 1838 account not as a final inspired statement but as a product of time and place. Included in their interpretation was an element of the secular, for they said that what was written was the work of Joseph Smith. Was it the "acids of modernity" or new sources which necessitated this adjustment?

The same point can be made of Milton Backman's "Joseph Smith's First Vision: Cornerstone of a Latter-day Faith." Backman also uses both subjective and secular approaches by arguing that Joseph, in giving us different versions, responded to different audiences at different times.⁴⁴ The accounts, as Backman sees them, are Joseph's works, because Backman, like Cracroft and Lambert, did not wish to blame the Lord for seeming inconsistencies. As Martin Marty said, the Saints have entered a new age, an age of reinterpretation in which sacred texts take on new meaning.⁴⁵ Backman argues that the differences in the accounts of the

⁴³ Neil E. Lambert and Richard H. Cracroft, "Literary Form and Historical Understanding: Joseph Smith's First Visions," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980), 32-33.

⁴⁴ Milton V. Backman, Jr., "Joseph Smith's First Vision: Cornerstone of the Latter-day Faith," in Millet, *To Be Learned Is Good, If . . .*, 21-41.

vision are minimal and that Joseph understood there were two personages in the godhead prior to 1835. However, Backman has to rely on post-1835 sources to make his case.⁴⁶

In 1968 Jay Todd, editor of the Church's *Ensign* magazine, heralded the discovery by Dr. Aziz A. Atiya, a professor at the University of Utah, of Egyptian manuscripts, one of which Todd said was the document from which Joseph Smith obtained Facsimile 1 in the Book of Abraham. According to Todd, these documents "are remarkably powerful and tangible testimony to the truthfulness of the Prophet's clear and simply told story that he had in his hands some original papyri documents, some of which he used in producing the Book of Abraham and the Pearl of Great Price."⁴⁷ But studies by Klaus Baer, Edward Ashment, and others have raised questions about Joseph Smith's ability to translate ancient Egyptian; Hugh Nibley took the position, at this point, that "nobody ever said he could."⁴⁸ Yet Nibley would later argue

⁴⁵ Marty, "Two Integrities," 173-75, 181, 185.

⁴⁶ Backman, "Joseph Smith's First Vision," 21-41.

⁴⁷ Jay M. Todd, "Egyptian Papyri Rediscovered," *Improvement Era*, January 1968, 16.

⁴⁸ Klaus Baer, "The Breathing Permit of Hor," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3 (Autumn 1968), 111, states: "Joseph Smith thought this papyrus [The Breathing Permit of Hor] contained the Book of Abraham." Baer dates the text dates from Christian times. Hugh Nibley, "A New Look at the Pearl of Great Price," *Improvement Era*, May 1970, 82, concedes that the breathing text was originally adjoined to Facsimile 1 in the Book of Abraham and that symbols from the breathing text are interpreted bit by bit in Joseph Smith's "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar." He says the interpretation turns out to be "the same as the text of the English Book of Abraham." Nibley contends that one must look further than this, however, and argues that the Book of Abraham was translated by divine inspiration prior to the composition of the "Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar." Edward Ashment, "Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham: A Reappraisal," in *Sunstone* 4 (December 1979), 33-48, argues persuasively that Joseph Smith was involved in the composition of the alphabet and grammar although it may or may not have come after the translation of the Book of Abraham. Ashment summarized: The Book of Abraham was no linguistic translation of Egyptian. Nibley in "As Things Stand," *BYU Studies* 9 (Autumn 1968): 69-102 held that Joseph Smith was not bound in his translations by any written text but was "free to take wing at any time." The assertion that "nobody ever said he could" is from Hugh Nibley, "Judging and Pre-judging the Book of Abraham," typescript

that Joseph had the ability to translate ancient texts not in his possession,⁴⁹ thus expressing some uncertainty on the point of Joseph's translating abilities. Nibley cautiously criticized Klaus Baer's rendition of the Book of Breathings, maintained that "everything in Egyptian is being reappraised," and stated that he would "refuse to be responsible for anything I wrote more than three years ago."⁵⁰ Thus, he acknowledged an element of the subjective in his own work. Insisting that the Book of Abraham was an ancient text that must be judged as such by comparing it to other sources from Abraham's day, Nibley had to admit that it is uncertain when Abraham actually lived, thus weakening his own argument.⁵¹ Atiya's discovery of the Egyptian papyri created problems for Mormon positivists who sought historical proof for Joseph Smith's claims. The kinds of tests once held possible by Nibley for proving the Book of Mormon seemed much less persuasive when applied to the Book of Abraham.

Even in Richard Bushman's recent work on Mormon origins there is a subtle but very significant change in approach. In introducing his study, Bushman asked how a historian can explain the origin of the Book of Mormon to non-Mormons when the two groups view it so differently. His response was that he would "relate events as the participants themselves experienced them, using their own words. Insofar as the revelations were a reality to them, I have treated them as real." Thus, in dealing with the acquisition of the Book of Mormon plates and their translation, Bushman said:

All the extant Mormon sources accept as fact Joseph Smith's possession of the plates and his effort to translate. Interspersed with descriptions of journeys, illnesses, business deals, . . . are trips to Cumorah, efforts to conceal the plates, long translation sessions. . . . Some readers

manuscript, 1, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

⁴⁹ H. W. Nibley to E. H. Ashment, "The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham," *Sunstone* 4 (December 1979): 49.

⁵⁰ Hugh Nibley, "What Is the Book of Breathings?" *BYU Studies* 9 (Winter 1971): 187.

⁵¹ Contrast Nibley in "As Things Stand," 71, and Nibley's *Abraham in Egypt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 8.

may wish to separate the easily believable mundane details from the extraordinary supernatural events and to find another explanation for the unusual experiences. The account that follows does not make that separation or attempt an explanation beyond that given in the sources.⁵²

By this means, however, Bushman has moved away from the exclusively objectivist approach and tells his story in terms of what the Latter-day Saints thought they were doing. New sources and new perspectives on history have caused even those who see themselves as preserving the tradition to revise the way they handle the sources and interpret the Mormon past. In effect, those on the right as well as those on the left have undergone change. *No one* who has considered the issues and the evidence carefully has come out of the last thirty years of intensive study of the Mormon past without making substantial adjustments. No one has been able to deal with the evidence without bringing more of human agency into the story. Thus, the subjectivization of Mormon history has also been its secularization, but that has been unavoidable for those on the right as well as those on the left.

But where does this leave the Mormon people, when so much of what they have thought about Joseph Smith and his history has been conditioned by his and their positivistic approach? It seems to me that we can all benefit by taking another look at the Prophet Joseph Smith. He obviously believed that his history was the truth and that documentary evidence supported it. Yet it may be that we have misunderstood him to a degree on this point. An examination of his historical dictation, as we have seen, shows us clearly that he had difficulty getting down all the story he wanted to tell. Oliver Cowdery, writing for him in 1834, made note of this, commenting that it was very difficult to write about eternal things and that such writing "was only a shadow compared to an open vision."⁵³ Joseph experimented with having John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, Frederick G. Williams, George W. Robinson, Thomas Bullock, and Willard Richards write his history

⁵² Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 3.

⁵³ Cowdery, *Messenger and Advocate* 1 (April 1835): 112.

for him.⁵⁴ Although he dictated parts of this history, the project was left to scribes to complete after his death.⁵⁵

While alive, he never seemed satisfied with it. As we have seen, on every major point of his first vision stories, he gave us differing accounts. These varying accounts suggest a fundamental difficulty about the writing of any history, even if divinely inspired. How many of us who have written articles and books have had the experience of writing and rewriting a piece, sometimes substantially altering the interpretation before we are reasonably satisfied, only to have second thoughts about some of its points after we see it in print? Joseph apparently experienced some of this frustration as he tried again and again to relate his story. His prophetic calling did not resolve the difficulty. Candidly he admitted in 1844: "No man knows my history, I cannot tell it: I shall never undertake it."⁵⁶ We might be tempted to say, in light of this admission, that Joseph Smith may not only have been the first Mormon positivist but also the first moderate Mormon subjectivist.

For many of the Mormon people, establishing historical proofs for the Book of Mormon and other scriptures is so central to their faith that it is not likely that they can accept the radical subjectivism of David Bohn or Louis Midgley. But the subjectivist perspective, if used in moderation, can offer insights as to why Joseph rewrote his history so often. The rewriting is evidence of his basic integrity, showing us how much he wished to convey the truth as his inspired understanding grew through time. His concern for greater truth overrode his concern for consistency.

Joseph made an enormous effort to preserve his history and encouraged his followers to do likewise. It was because of these

⁵⁴ Howard C. Searle, "Early Mormon Historiography: Writing the History of the Mormons, 1830-1858" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1979), 70, 73, 77, 82, 89, 90.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 91-101.

⁵⁶ *History of the Church*, 4:317. Thomas Bullock's version of this passage is: "No man knows my history—I cannot do it. I shall never undertake it—if I have not experienced what I have I should not have know it myself." Both versions capture Joseph's uncertainty about writing his history. See Ehat and Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith*, 355.

efforts that we have so much material about him, not all of it flattering from a Victorian standpoint, yet he must have thought it worth preserving. In the end, he believed that the records would vindicate him. His candor and that of his scribes who preserved so much should be something of which we are proud, not fearful. To my way of thinking, Joseph's achievements as historian are remarkable by virtually any measure. If we can benefit from the wisdom he gained about how difficult it is to tell the whole truth about history, it might be that we can become more tolerant of his attempts and even some of our own. We may someday want to thank Joseph for the abundance of his life and all the information he left us regarding it. These historical artifacts in the hermeneutical sense may be all we have left of his past, but what a rich legacy it is!

In conclusion, let me say that I realize that neither positivism nor subjectivism is fully Mormon. As for positivism, Mormons believe in another, supernatural world which provides a source of knowledge. But that knowledge is thought to be compatible with a naturalistic order, the one supporting the other. Positivism has its drawbacks in our culture, since some Mormons tend to think that the evidence is compelling and that the people of the world *must* all agree with them. Historical subjectivism can act as a corrective to this idea. But extreme subjectivism is not generally compatible with Mormonism, for Mormons believe that God is in history, that his hand can be perceived, and that there is purpose in history. The Mormon view of history is teleological—that is, that it is heading toward a divinely intended culmination.

Radical subjectivists believe that history has no meaning other than that which the individual historian gives to it in his or her mental reconstruction of the past. This idea, as well as an excessive stress upon natural causes, can exclude God from history. Thus, post-modernist Keith Jenkins, says, "Today we live with the idea of God's absence."⁵⁷ Of the two philosophies,

⁵⁷ Keith Jenkins, *Rethinking History* (New York: Redwood Press, 1991), 29. Jenkins later quotes Peter Widdowson: "We are left in a world of radically empty signifiers. No meaning . . . no history. . . . The only history that exists is the history of the signifier and that is no history at all." There is nothing of a faith-promoting

positivism is more compatible with the world view of the Mormons, as I have tried to show, while radical subjectivism can be devastating, since its underlying assumptions are not only secular but historically nihilistic, absolutely destructive of any kind of historical claims of the Church. The Mormon position has always been that there was divine intervention in history and that it is verifiable to any who will examine the evidence with an open mind. The radical subjectivists deny this possibility and even question our ability to interpret a text with finality. For this reason, our understanding of the teachings and revelations of Joseph Smith are placed in jeopardy. Thus Jenkins maintains that in interpreting a text "no two readings are the same," not even by a single individual.⁵⁸ It should be clear from this position that radical historical subjectivism is not a philosophy of faith but one of modernist despair. If such critics have doubts about finding truth in history, they must inevitably have doubts about finding truth in any religion based upon historical claims.

There is a consummate irony in the means employed by LDS radical subjectivists. In Joseph Smith's written history in 1838, which recounts his first vision as canonized, he said that he first inquired of the Lord in prayer because of the confusion which he felt at the "tumult of opinions" advocated during a revival.⁵⁹ Now a few who see themselves as champions of Joseph Smith's true history tell us that we can find nothing in any written history except a tumult of opinions. In their zeal to crush the new Mormon historians, the political scientists have advanced a theory which leaves no one with a basis for historical faith.

But if the epistemological assumptions of the radical subjectivists are valid, then their own historical viewpoints can be no more than opinions. That being so, the Mormon people and the new Mormon historians can continue to assume with their prophet, Joseph Smith, that there is truth in history and that the quest for it is worthwhile. In doing so they may be preserving more of the traditional Mormon faith than their critics.

nature for Mormons here.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 215.

⁵⁹ *History of the Church*, 1:4.

For those who want finality in history, neither the old nor the new versions guarantee it. Having to live with several interpretations of Mormon history, may be uncomfortable for some but should not be intolerable. We need to recall once more that Joseph Smith's history was open ended. He cared more for what history might reveal than for what had been revealed. And so he changed his history as he gained new inspiration. To be sure, at times he tidied it up, as people in public life usually do, but what is impressive is how much he left us that was not edited. Joseph's was a history-affirming faith, not a history-denying one. Now we have to find out whether we have as much faith in history as he did.

Mormon and Methodist: Popular Religion in the Crucible of the Free Market

Nathan O. Hatch

ONE OF THE GREAT IRONIES of American religious history is the parallel origins of the Methodist and Mormon movements, the most revered and the most despised of American churches on the eve of the Civil War. Both came to the fore in the crucible of the early republic, a time of revolutionary change in a polity that turned its back on state-sponsored religion and embraced, for good or ill, the realities of a market economy, the individual pursuit of self-interest, and the legitimation of competing factions. Both movements broke decisively with kind of churches that had dominated the American colonies. Both witnessed explosive growth that would have been unthinkable without the collapse of the monopolistic relationship between religion and the state and between religion and the local community—a social disintegration possibly unequaled in American history.¹ Both

NATHAN O. HATCH is vice president of the Graduate School, the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana, and author of *the Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.) This address was presented as the O. C. Tanner and Grace Tanner Lecture, Mormon History Association, 21 May 1993, Lamoni, Iowa.

¹ David Martin, *Tongues of Fire: The Explosion of Protestantism in Latin*

succeeded because they were willing to market religion beyond ecclesiastical space and to cater to the interests of specific market segments—a proliferation that Adam Smith had predicted would result upon government deregulation of religion.²

Both empowered ordinary people by taking their deepest spiritual impulses at face value, by shattering formal distinctions between lay and clergy, by releasing the entrepreneurial instincts of religious upstarts, and by incarnating the gospel message in the vernacular—in preaching, print, and song. When referring to the gospel and its proclamation, both groups relished the word “plain.”

At the same time, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Latter-day Saints, embracing divergent conceptions of Christian reality, developed in strikingly different ways. Between 1776 and 1850, the Methodists in America achieved a virtual miracle of growth, rising from less than 3 percent of all church members in 1776 to more than 34 percent by 1850, making them far and away the largest religious body in the nation. Methodist growth terrified other more established denominations. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Methodists boasted four thousand itinerants, almost eight thousand local preachers, and over a million members. It was nearly one half size larger than any other Protestant body and could muster more than ten times the preaching force of the Congregationalists, who in 1776 had double the number of clergy of any other church. By 1840, one of twenty Americans was a member of a Methodist church. By 1850, almost one in fifteen Americans belonged to a Methodist church—1.5 million Methodists out of 23 million people.³

Methodism in its message and structure embodied a liberal

America (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1990), 21. On social dislocation, see Gordon S. Wood, “Evangelical America and Early Mormonism, *New York History* 61, no. 4 (1980): 365.

² Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (1776; reprint ed., New York: Modern Library, 1933), 746. See Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press), 51-52.

³ Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, “How the Upstart Sects Won America: 1776-1850,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 28 (1989): 27-44.

conception of reality that broke decisively with the pre-Revolutionary pursuit of homogeneous community. As a movement of self-conscious outsiders, Methodism embraced the virtue of pluralism, of competition, and of marketing religion in every sphere of life—far behind the narrow confines of ecclesiastical space.⁴ Methodism also appealed to the petty bourgeoisie, people on the make. As a movement, Methodism became a powerful symbol of social mobility, a beacon of aspiring respectability. Methodists who railed at luxury and refinement at the turn of the century, had wedded the gospel to refined civility by the 1850s, as Richard Bushman has recently documented.⁵ American Methodism resonated with the logic of the market. Successful as a counterculture in England, the Methodists succeeded in America in defining the core of a democratic culture: “Arminian evangelical Protestantism,” points out David Martin, “provided the *differentia specifica* of the American religious and cultural ethos.”⁶

In sharp contrast, the Latter-day Saints as a religious movement sprang from an abiding conviction that America had forfeited its promise as a land of opportunity and spiritual renewal. I find the most striking theme in the Book of Mormon to be the apocalyptic judgment that hangs like an ominous cloud over the rich and successful businessmen of Jacksonian America and those who blessed their ventures, the learned and orthodox clergymen.⁷ In his influential defense of Mormonism, *A Voice of Warning*, Parley P. Pratt likewise castigated “the narrow-minded calculat-

⁴ Methodist itinerant Peter Cartwright recounted how a Presbyterian minister objected to his starting another church within the “bounds of his congregation.” Cartwright, *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1856), 123.

⁵ Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Cities, Houses, People* (New York: Knopf, 1992).

⁶ Martin, *Tongues of Fire*, 21, 43. See also Mark Chaves and David E. Cann, “Regulation, Pluralism, and Religious Market Structure: Explaining Religion’s Vitality,” *Rationality and Society* 4 (1992): 272-90; and R. Stephen Warner, “Work in Progress Toward a New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States,” *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (March 1993): 1044-93.

⁷ For an extensive discussion of this theme, see Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 113-22.

ing, trading, overreaching, penurious sycophant of the nineteenth century, who dreams of nothing here but how to increase his goods, or take advantage of his neighbor." Likewise, he indicted the "modern invention and moneyed plans" of respectable churches who expected to bring about the millennium but were ripening instead "for the fire as fast as possible"—for "behold the sword of vengeance hangs over you."⁸ Marvin Hill's interpretation—that Mormonism sprang from an overt repudiation of pluralism, entrepreneurial ambition, religious competition, and freedom of individual thought—seems entirely convincing.⁹

The goal of this paper is to view the origins and early years of the Mormon experience against the backdrop of the Methodists, movements which seem to grow out of the market revolution but which relate to it in fundamentally different ways. In reviewing recent literature of these movements and, more broadly, of the early republic, I hope to bring into clearer focus some of the central themes that characterize the experience of the Mormons in the movement's first fifteen years and to note certain limitations in historical perspectives on the Mormons, despite the avalanche of studies that have recently appeared.

SUPERNATURAL FAITH, METHODICAL ORGANIZATION

Recent historical studies, colored by the dramatic Christianizing of the American people in the early republic, have placed greater importance on the significance of "upstart sects" like the Mormons and Methodists.¹⁰ These studies underscore the success of groups that uncoupled religion from social authority and high culture and welcomed its incarnation into popular modes of thought and behavior. They also point to how limited and elitist our understandings of the Second Great Awakening have been. Scholars are now beginning to understand the torrents of folk

⁸ Parley P. Pratt, *A Voice of Warning and Instruction to All People* (Manchester, New York: W. Shackleton & Son, 1841), 92, 45.

⁹ Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989).

¹⁰ Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, and Finke and Starke, *The Churching of America*.

religion that washed through popular culture, beyond established ecclesiastical control. Studies of the New England frontier and hill country by social historian Alan Taylor have noted the striking incidence of radical religious seers, visionaries, prophets, mystics, and fortune tellers; and how easily traditions of folk magic and mystical insight become intermingled with Christian beliefs for religious seekers, many of whom were self-consciously unchurched.¹¹

In two striking ways Methodists and Mormons were alike in drawing strength from these folk religious impulses: in relishing the reality of the supernatural in everyday life, and in recruiting and organizing disciplined bands of young followers, hungry for achievement, sacrificial in their zeal, and driven by a sense of providential mission.

In the first two decades of the nineteenth century, Methodist experience is brimming with overt enthusiasm, supernatural impressions, and reliance on prophetic dreams and visions. Methodist journals and autobiographies are replete with this kind of supernaturalism. Freeborn Garrettson took seriously the veracity of supernatural impressions, prophetic dreams, and divine healing. In addition to stories of dreams, shouting, and divine healing, Billy Hibbard's memoir included an account of a woman apparently raised from the dead. Methodism dignified religious ecstasy, unrestrained emotional release, preaching by blacks, by women, by anyone who felt the call. Two African American women who became successful Methodist exhorters, Jarena Lee and Zilpha Elaw, were dramatically converted through direct revelation and found guidance in prophetic dreams.¹²

¹¹ See Taylor's "Seekers and Preacher," chap. 5 in *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors: The Revolutionary Settlement on the Main Frontier, 1760-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 123-53; D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987).

¹² See John Wigger, "Taking Heaven by Storm: Enthusiasm and Early American Methodism, 1770-1820," forthcoming in *Journal of the Early Republic*; and Dee Andrews, *Popular Religion and the Revolution in the Middle Atlantic Ports: The Rise of the Methodists, 1770-1800* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, forthcoming.)

The most celebrated and notorious Methodist itinerant of his day was "Crazy" Lorenzo Dow—after whom three early Mormon leaders were named, Lorenzo Dow Young, Lorenzo Dow Hickey, and Lorenzo Dow Watson. Dow, celebrated as a holy man with unusual powers, embodied the continuing presence of the supernatural in everyday affairs. Nicholas Snethen warned British Methodists in 1805 of his presumed prophetic powers: "He has affected a recognizance of the secrets of men's hearts and lives, and even assumed the awful prerogative of prescience, and this not occasionally, but as it were habitually, pretending to foretell, in a great number of instances, the deaths or calamities of persons, &c."¹³ Even Nathan Bangs, who eventually set his face to rid Methodism of the stigma of enthusiasm, began his itinerant career as a white-hot enthusiast who, at the Hay Bay Camp Meeting in Upper Canada in 1805, was so overtaken by the power of God as he preached and shouted that friends had to support his outstretched arms. Afterwards, he had to be "carried out of the camp into a tent where he lay speechless being overwhelmed for a considerable time with the mighty Power of God." Assessing this kind of evidence, John Wigger argues that the defining characteristic of American Methodism under Francis Asbury was not a theological abstraction like Arminianism, but a quest for the supernatural in everyday life.¹⁴

By the time Joseph Smith announced his prophetic mission, enthusiasm was being pushed to the margins of the Methodist Episcopal Church, but still central was the popular yearning for divine action in day-to-day existence. In fact, the clarion call of Joseph Smith and his followers was to a militant supernaturalism: a demonstrable revelation from heaven, the reality of miracles and apostolic gifts, and a sure and ongoing channel of prophecy. Arguing that modern churches had a form of godliness but with-

¹³ Dow quotes Snethen's letter in *History of the Cosmopolite* (New York: John C. Totten, 1814), 353-55. See also Charles Coleman Sellers, *Lorenzo Dow: The Bearer of the Word* (New York: Minton, Balch, & Company, 1928), 148-51.

¹⁴ Reports of enthusiasm and ecstasy in Nathan Bangs's manuscript journal were deleted in the printed version. See George Rawlyk's extensive discussion of Banks at this camp meeting in his forthcoming book on evangelical conversion in early nineteenth-century Canada. See also Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm*.

out its power, Pratt announced that "the most miraculous displays of the power and majesty of Jehovah" were being revealed in the latter days and that believers could expect "miracles, signs and wonders, revelations, and manifestations of the power of God, even beyond anything that any former generation has witnessed."¹⁵ "I am a God of miracles," the Lord proclaimed in the Book of Mormon, and Latter-day Saints insisted on taking that claim literally.¹⁶ Many like Sidney Rigdon found the prophetic claims of Joseph Smith compelling, others the reported incidents of divine healing, and others the overt enthusiasm that reached a fever pitch in Kirtland, Ohio.¹⁷

Mormons and Methodists shared a common yearning for the miraculous power of the biblical world—in sharp contrast to the starkly rational biblicism of the Alexander Campbell. They also embodied a common organizational style that distanced them from the Disciples and Churches of Christ: a genius for organizing and consolidating the expansion of the faith. Methodists and Mormons were, at their core, youth movements with an extraordinary capacity to mobilize people for a cause, and to build an organization sustained by obedience and discipline rather than ties of parish, family, and patronage. In both movements a battery of young leaders without elite pedigree constructed fresh religious ideologies around which the movement coalesced. Marvin S. Hill has estimated that 92 percent of those converted before 1846 whose birth and conversion dates are given (211 of 229) were under forty at the time of baptism. The median age was between twenty and twenty-five; more than 80 percent (182) were thirty or under.¹⁸ W. R. Ward has noted that Francis Asbury was an entrepreneur in religion, a man who perceived a market to be exploited. The itinerant-based machine he set in motion was less

¹⁵ Pratt, *A Voice of Warning*, 29030.

¹⁶ 2 Nephi 27:23; see also 2 Nephi 28:6, Mormon 9:10-19; *Evening and Morning Star* 2, no. 20 (May 1834): 305-7.

¹⁷ Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, 33.

¹⁸ Hill, "The Rise of Mormonism in the Burned-over District: Another View," *New York History* 61 (1980): 411-30. Hill derives these figures from analysis of Davis Bitton, *Guide to Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1977).

a church in any traditional sense than "a military mission of short term agents" who were not pastorally related to the flock in the traditional European sense.¹⁹ Abel Stevens estimated that nearly half of the first six hundred fifty preachers died before they were thirty years old, almost two hundred of them in the first five years of service.

Mormons and Methodists were driven by a consuming passion to convert the unconverted. They emphasized an urgent missionary purpose as the principal reason for their existence and tailored their preaching to warn people of the wrath to come and to "draw in the net." More importantly, they yoked their drive to proselytize to relentless and systematic efforts to deluge the country with preaching. Unlike the young itinerants of the Great Awakening, whose efforts were largely uncoordinated and short-lived, these movements developed regimented and ongoing schemes for sending out gospel preaching to even the most remote pockets of American civilization. Two Baptist clergymen overlooked partisanship to praise the Methodists in 1816: "Their complete system of mission circuits is by far the ablest domestic missionary effort ever yet adopted. They send their laborers into every corner of the country."²⁰

Equally committed to sending forth a cadre of lay preachers, the Mormons had enlisted a preaching force of 1900 young men by 1845. The earliest men sent forth on missions included hatters, carpenters, cobblers, glaziers, potters, farmers, schoolteachers, and former preachers from other denominations. As outlined in Joseph Smith's 1835 compilation of revelations, the Doctrine and Covenants, Mormon preaching, like the Methodists, resisted the Puritan tradition of painstaking study, advising preachers against using careful forethought, written notes, and detailed plans. The overriding theme was convincing the unconvinced of the new

¹⁹ W. R. Ward, "The Legacy of John Wesley: The Pastoral Office in Britain and America," in *Statesmen, Scholars and Merchants* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 346-48.

²⁰ John F. Schermerhorn and Samuel J. Mills, *A Correct View of That Part of the United States Which Lies West of the Allegany Mountains with Regard to Religion and Morals* (Hartford, Connecticut: P. B. Gleason and Co., Printers, 1814), 41.

restoration. According to an ex-Mormon preacher, the approach was to employ "the most plausible means" available "to get people to unite with them."²¹

What is particularly striking about Methodists and Mormons was their relentless drive to broadcast their message, what the Methodist Discipline called "the continual extension of that circumference on every hand."²² Both movements did this by a threefold strategy of transforming earnest converts into preachers with unprecedented speed, urging them to sustain a relentless pace of engagements, and confronting people with preaching everywhere, at any hour of the day or night. The Methodist commitment to leave no circuit unattended forced their leadership to channel young converts into preaching assignments in record time. Education for eager young Methodist recruits was a hands-on experience. They moved into exhorting and preaching while they served apprenticeships as class leaders, and they moved into circuits as understudies to more experienced preachers. The early Mormons were even less concerned about ministerial training. On several occasions, a man heard a discourse, submitted to baptism and confirmation, received a call to priesthood, and was sent on a mission—all on the same day. Canadian Samuel Hall, for instance, found a Latter-day Saint tract on a Montreal street and traveled to Nauvoo to hear the teachings of Joseph Smith himself. On the day of his arrival, he heard a sermon by Smith, requested baptism, received ordination, and started on a mission—without even pausing to change his wet clothes.²³

Methodists and Mormons also multiplied the number of hearers by making preaching a daily occurrence. They moved house-to-house, if necessary, to gain an audience and purposely sought out people who would not ordinarily be reached. The New

²¹ Barbara McFarlane Higdon, "Role of Preaching in the Early Latter Day Saint Church" (University of Missouri, Ph.D. diss., 1961), 35, 56-57, 72-73; the quotation is Oliver Olney, *The Absurdities of Mormonism Portrayed* (Hancock County, Illinois: n.pub., 1843), 28.

²² Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury, *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America* (Philadelphia: Henry Tuckniss, 1798), 42.

²³ Higdon, "Role of Preaching in the Early Latter Day Saint Church," 59-59.

England circuit-rider Dan Young described this approach:

My practice was to commence on Monday morning as soon as I had taken breakfast, make my first call at the first house, say to them, "I am the preacher sent to this charge; I have called to make you a religious visit; will you please to call your family together; I wish to talk with them, and to pray with and for you. . . ." I left no house unvisited in my way, but took them of all sects and no sect.²⁴

The result was that preaching assumed an almost omnipresent quality, extending from the intimacy of the house to the mass audience of the camp meeting. It was this pervasive presence of Methodism that confounded a Roman Catholic priest attempting to minister in Maryland in 1821: "How can one priest attend so many different places at such great distances from each other? There are Swarms of false teachers all through the Country—at every Crossroad, in every School house, in every private house—you hear nothing but night meetings, Class meetings, love feasts &c &c."²⁵

The early mission efforts of the Mormons were characterized by the same mass proclamation of the word: a relentless pace, the manifest intent to allow no one to escape the sound of the gospel, and the unending quest to convince hearers to join the new fold. Like the Methodists, the Mormon movement was a communications crusade springing from the deepest commitments of young missionaries like Brigham Young: "I wanted to thunder and roar out the Gospel to the nations. It burned in my bones like fire pent up. . . . Nothing would satisfy me but to cry abroad in the world, what the Lord was doing in the latter-days."²⁶

The organizational genius of Methodists and Mormons was to embrace and empower common people in a system that was centrally directed in a fixed, even authoritarian system. In their early years, both movements were volatile and unstable, as a

²⁴ Dan Young, *Autobiography of Dan Young, a New England Preacher of Golden Time*, edited by W. P. Strickland (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1860), 90.

²⁵ James Redmond, Letter to Archbishop Maréchal of Baltimore, 22 May 1821, quoted in John Ronin Murtha, "The Life of the Most Reverend Ambrose Maréchal" (Catholic University of America, Ph.D. diss., 1965), 107.

²⁶ *Journal of Discourses*, 27 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855-86), 1:313.

variety of fledgling and self-ordained leaders vied for influence, tested the limits of the prescribed authority, and in numerous cases, hived off to form their own versions of the gospel.²⁷ Yet Mormons and Methodists, unlike Disciples and Baptists, swore by institutional coherence. In the face of clamoring dissent, sometimes fueled by democratic impulses, sometimes by visionary ones, Methodists and Mormons were willing to exercise discipline, even ruthlessly, to preserve a movement in the name of God.

MORMONISM AND METHODISM: DENOMINATIONAL HISTORY

The Mormons and the Methodists also share certain resemblances in the way that they have been studied. In the traditional canon of American religious history—which is oriented to intellectual history, and to Puritanism, Calvinism, and their heirs—Methodist and Mormon do not quite measure up. Both have born the stigma of their origins in religious enthusiasm and among people without social standing. If intellectual profundity or political influence remain a prime measure of importance, then the Wesleyans and the Latter-day Saints in their early years can be safely avoided. Despite the considerable work done in the last generation and with a few noteworthy exceptions, the story of both traditions remains surprisingly insular, undertaken principally by denominational historians who write from within these religious communities.²⁸ Revering their past, both traditions have brought to life the story of their own faith community with great affection and exacting detail. In recent years, a veritable army of young Mormon historians has ransacked the story of Mormon origins from every imaginable perspective. If this trend continues, early Mormonism may soon rival the Puritans as the most studied of American religious phenomena.

²⁷ See Steven L. Shields, *Divergent Paths of the Restoration* (Bountiful, Utah: Restoration Research, 1975).

²⁸ See Martin E. Marty, "Two Integrities: An Address to the Crisis in Mormon Historiography," *Journal of Mormon History* 10 (1983): 3-19; Davis Bitton and Leonard J. Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988).

Yet this intense cultivation has born limited interpretive fruit. The besetting sin of believers as historians is the fallacy of Whig history, to survey the historical landscape with a preference for that which is similar to, or that which anticipates, the present. Thus, the ecumenist, when coming to history, finds its direction and movement in ecumenical successes, the high-church devotee in the church's organic development, the pacifist in peace movements, the fundamentalist in militant defense of the truth, the social activist in examples of reform. Once we begin with our own commitments, the selection of the facts to fit them is all too easy, the more so since selectivity is usually unconscious. The parts of the story which we underline are very often merely just the ones that seem important because they bear out our own convictions.

In this vein, Methodist and Mormon historians have shared a tendency to sanitize their history, albeit in different ways. For at least a century, Methodist historians have focused on those aspects of their own heritage linked to cultural enrichment, institutional cohesion, and intellectual respectability. They have underemphasized or ignored the crudely enthusiastic side of Methodist life that seems an embarrassment.²⁹ William Warren Sweet has done more than any other single scholar in the twentieth century to promote the serious study of Methodists on the frontier. He was committed, however, to a vision of Methodists as bearers of civilization to the uncouth, unrestrained society of the frontier. Emphasizing the disastrous effects of migration upon civilization and culture, Sweet depicted the Wesleyan impulse as bringing moral order and the first seeds of culture to a rampantly individualistic society. He emphasized how the churches brought order, education, and moral discipline to the frontier. In his hands, even the camp meeting became a well-regulated institution. Sweet had little interest in evidence that hinted at radical shaking within the walls of Zion—that churches served as agents of liberation as well

²⁹ See R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3-21. Richard Carwardine made the same point in *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978), xiv.

as of control.³⁰ Modern church historians, in short, have had difficulty identifying with dimensions of their own ecclesiastical heritage which are diametrically opposed to the modern embrace of intellectual, liturgical, and ecumenical respectability. In doing so, the Methodists have overlooked the very engine that propelled their religious movement into national prominence.

Historians of Mormonism who themselves are Latter-day Saints have also constructed their history in ways that are theologically faithful. In Mormon discourse about their own history, the most powerful magnet arranging the iron filings of the historical evidence is the conviction that Joseph Smith was a divine prophet. Through him and the restoration which he proclaimed, the light of truth pierced the spiritual darkness that had enveloped the Christian world since the age of the apostles. Given this presupposition, it is clear why many Mormons, including a fair number of Church authorities, find historical research both alluring and terribly threatening.³¹

In an effort to be faithful to the historical evidence and to the truth, Mormon historians, like conservative scholars of biblical texts, have often employed the strategy of reconstructing the story from the perspective of how Joseph Smith and his followers viewed the world. This approach typically foregoes the kind of interpretive methodologies used to explain other religious move-

³⁰ William Warren Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840* (New York: Scribner, 1952), 129-60. Sweet begins his major collection of source materials on the Methodists with the assertion: "No single force had more to do with bringing order out of frontier chaos than the Methodist circuit-rider." *Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1840, Vol. 4: The Methodists* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), v. He defined the central theme of *Religion in the Development of American Culture*, as the part played by groups like the Methodists in the transit of civilization westward—hence his chapter title, "Barbarism vs. Revivalism." According to James L. Ash, Jr., "America Religion and the Academy in the Early Twentieth Century: The Chicago Years of William Warren Sweet," *Church History* 50 (1981): 461, Sweet "patronized the multitude of sectarian groups in America as little more than institutional and theological anomalies which attracted the mentally unstable."

³¹ On the dynamic and often embattled state of Mormon historical scholarship, see David Brion Davis, "Secrets of the Mormons," *New York Review of Books*, 15 August 1985, 15-19.

ments or to explain the behavior of those who opposed the Mormons. The net effect is one-dimensional scholarship that isolates much of Mormon history from the currents of contemporary scholarship on the early republic, one of the most dynamic fields in American history over the last decade.³²

Accepting the theological claims of Joseph Smith does color the work of Mormon historians, to be sure. But there is an even more subtle reason that Mormon historians are likely to sanitize their own history: So many of the attitudes and impulses of early Mormonism have little resonance with contemporary Mormon belief and practice. Mormon life today is a bastion of respectability, of staid family values, and of rock-ribbed Republican conservatism. Unlike most Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic Church, in which culture wars divide and polarize their ranks, the Latter-day Saints line up squarely on the side of order and traditional values. As a people, Latter-day Saints are overwhelmingly patriotic and hard-working, the very embodiment of middle-class values, the Protestant work ethic, and the American way of life. No religious group in America today seems more in harmony with the spirit of free-enterprise capitalism.

Mormon religious life is stable and predictable. Few Latter-day Saints today expect divine fire imminently to consume their unbelieving neighbors, expect the miraculous to become a daily occurrence, or await a revelation that would radically alter their lifestyle. Mormonism today seems more attuned to the upscale image of Marriott hotels and to the melodious strains of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

Mormon intellectuals may express more diversity in social and political outlook. Yet they also continue to make peace with the modern world. Latter-day Saints are hungry for intellectual respectability and increasingly aspire to attend the best graduate programs, and publish their research with the finest journals and

³² One unfortunate feature is a tendency among Mormon historians to color the discussion by the very nomenclature employed, for example, references to Joseph Smith as "the Prophet," his followers as "Saints," and his opponents as "Gentiles." One study of Mormonism, B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 8, referred to a notable Mormon defector as the "knave" John C. Bennett.

university presses. In short, Mormons still think of themselves as a distinct people, but that identity has shifted and reflects more an aspiring church establishment than a movement of fiery sectarian origins. The danger, of course, is that a quest for respectability leads to a veneer of refinement over Joseph Smith which thus distorts the real character of primitive Mormonism.

Whatever Mormonism became, and whatever one thinks about the hand of providence guiding its unfolding, the fact remains that early Mormonism remained radical, apocalyptic, absolutist, extreme, combustible, and militant. Taking early Mormon self-descriptions at face value makes it difficult not to conclude that primitive Mormonism was a radical, apocalyptic sect that invoked and anticipated divine wrath upon the core institutions and values of Jacksonian America—its pluralism, enlightened rationality, religious optimism and reform, and its successful entrepreneurs and managers. In *Quest for Refuge*, Marvin Hill has brilliantly captured this fundamental alienation from a society that boasted of its liberty and opportunity. If Mormonism brimmed with an overwhelming sense of certainty, it was because, despairing of conventional answers, they gathered a faithful remnant from among those whose aspirations, materially and spiritually, a market society had dashed to pieces.

Historians of Mormonism, both outside the Church and within, have continued to gentrify the movement. They follow the tradition of treating the Book of Mormon as intellectual history, as if Joseph Smith were sipping tea in a drawing room, engaged in polite theological debate with Nathaniel William Taylor and William Ellery Channing. Recent interpretations of the Book of Mormon have emphasized its rationality in contrast to the religious enthusiasm of American revivalism, its calm millennial hope in contrast to Millerite enthusiasm, its progressive optimism in contrast to Calvinist determinism, and its quest for order in contrast to romanticism.³³ In this vein, R. Laurence Moore has

³³ The first two interpretations are made by Thomas R. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1957), 31, 25; the second two are made by Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1981), 68-83.

suggested that Mormonism was generally in line with other liberalizing theological trends in Victorian America and that Mormon distinctives were but a deliberate and contrived invention in order to gain attention: "Theologically, in fact, Mormonism was in its beginnings a dull affair."³⁴ Similarly, in the Tanner Lecture of 1992, Richard Hughes suggests that Mormon distinctives can be grasped by focusing on intellectual rather than social history. His framework for the Mormon restorationist vision includes Christian humanism of the Renaissance, New England Puritanism, and above all Romanticism. Joseph Smith becomes best understood in the company of Ralph Waldo Emerson.³⁵

In a similar move, Kenneth Winn's noteworthy study, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty*, attempts to frame discussions of Mormon origins in terms of ideological debates about republican ideology. Winn, who wrote his doctoral dissertation at Washington University where the shadow of J. G. A. Pocock lingers, attempts to place Latter-day saints "shoulder to shoulder with Thomas Jefferson," finds that the Mormons sought to create a variation of the society of the New England Puritans and the founding fathers, and concludes, "Yet in reality, the Mormons unconsciously patterned themselves on no people more closely than their New England grandfathers." They breathed new life into the New England heritage of communal republicanism.³⁶

These studies miss the mark, not by analyzing the wrong kind of evidence, but by locating it in the wrong comparative framework, one which reflects our own values rather than the animating spirit of primitive Mormonism. Our studies are simply too elitist; we are scandalized by the reality that most popular religion is vulgar religion. Mormonism was a deeply spiritual movement, as Richard Bushman has continued to remind us, but more than any other religious movement in American history it

³⁴ Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans*, 30.

³⁵ Richard T. Hughes, "Two Restoration Traditions, Mormons and Churches of Christ in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Mormon History* 19 (Spring 1993): 34-51.

³⁶ Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Mormons in America, 1830-1846* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 52, 62.

also reflected what Edith Wharton referred to as "the underside of the social tapestry where the threads are knotted and the loose ends hang."³⁷

The reading of early Mormon texts and the tracing of their troubled and violent experience with their neighbors underscores three themes about primitive Mormonism: its apocalyptic and supernatural literalism, its expansionist rhetoric and appeal to arms, and its absolute control over its members. Whatever Mormonism would become as a distinct society in Utah and, in the twentieth century, as a faith reflecting mainstream American values, its first fifteen years were breathtaking in their radical claims and accomplishments.

In the first place, the Mormons distinguished themselves from other churches by claiming that mundane life was alive with angels, visions, healings, foreign tongues, fulfilled prophecies, and, through Joseph Smith, immediate access to the godhead—on any matter ranging from whom one should marry, how economic life should be structured, where missionaries should travel, what kind of temple should be built, or upon whom divine wrath was soon to fall. In an age when American denominations came to acknowledge the benefits of religious pluralism, the Mormons pronounced that all clergy were blind leaders of the blind and that swift and sudden judgment would fall upon everyone who did not seek refuge in the gospel announced by Joseph Smith.

Mormon revelations and pamphlets make plain that they are not speaking of judgement in some figurative sense: they were announcing literal judgement: destruction, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, tempests, melting elements, and flames of devouring fire. That is the burden of the compelling and widely circulated tract by Parley Pratt, *A Voice of Warning*. He provides a litany of biblical prophecies literally fulfilled, from God saving Noah in an ark, to Israel's deliverance from Egypt, to the walls of Jericho falling down, to the Babylonians destroying Jerusalem. To rational skeptics, Pratt countered: "I reply, it was the power of God made

³⁷ Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984). Edith Wharton quoted in *New York Review of Books* 40 (1993): 20.

manifest by prophecy and its fulfillment; not in a spiritualized sense, not in some obscure, uncertain, or dark, mysterious way, which was difficult to be understood; but in a positive, literal, plain demonstration, which none could gainsay or resist." Pratt pleaded with people far and wide to seek the one and only refuge from the impending conflagration: "But this destruction is to come by fire, as literally as the flood in the days of Noah, and it will consume both priests and people from the earth, and that, too, for having broken the covenant of the Gospel, with its laws and its ordinances; or else we must get a new edition of the Bible, leaving out the 24th of Isaiah."³⁸ Through Joseph Smith's day-to-day revelations, the Mormons were confident that they possessed a divine blueprint for the unfolding affairs of everyday life. According to Pratt, "The predictions of the prophets can be clearly understood as much as the Almanac."³⁹

Living out this sense of divine immediacy meant building a literal kingdom on earth. The successive experiments, at Kirtland, Ohio, Jackson County, Missouri, Far West, Missouri, and Nauvoo, Illinois, all were understood as beachheads for the very kingdom of God, soon literally to be constructed. From these centers, the Saints, dismissed by Gentiles as fanatics and extremists, announced that they would rule America and the entire world. Kings and princes, whom Americans could remember as mere farmhands, carpenters, and cobblers, were moving to take charge of all earthly and heavenly affairs.

As thousands of people flocked to Mormon settlements, evidence mounted that these expansionist claims and prophecies were being fulfilled. Bolstered by defiant rhetoric about the fate of surrounding Gentiles, Mormon community-building came to terrify Mormon neighbors, particularly when it became clear that Mormons did not want to retreat from the world of politics and be left alone. Instead, their dream of a theocratic empire encouraged them to influence and, if possible, dominate local politics—an attainable goal in Missouri and Illinois given their considerable numbers and their willingness to exercise block voting at the

³⁸ Pratt, *A Voice of Warning*, 23, 38.

³⁹ In Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, xxi.

behest of Joseph Smith. Americans perceived the Oneida community and the Shakers as odd and quirky; they pitied Adventists as hopelessly deluded. But the presence of the Mormons struck fear and dread into the bravest American heart.

A main reason was that, when provoked, Mormons were willing to revert to violence and overt military action in the name of God. There is little question that Mormon military endeavors were initiated in self-defense. But the significant point is that, for the only time in American history, religious zealots trained, marched, and on a few occasions waged pitched battle, as a military unit. Apocalyptic conviction, expansionist claims, and guns in their hands—a more explosive combination had not existed since the interregnum when Diggers, Ranter, and Fifth-Monarchists struggled to define what they depicted as the end of history.

By the time Nauvoo mushroomed into one of the largest towns in Illinois in the early 1840s, the Latter-day Saints had a significant reputation as warrior-saints. The paramilitary expedition from Kirtland, Zion's Camp, in 1834, the creation of a secret military fraternity, the Danites, employed to purge dissent, the belligerent Independence Day address by Sidney Rigdon in 1838, and the ensuing skirmishes and raids—all combined to create a military ambiance about Mormonism that deeply troubled dissenting apostles Thomas Marsh and Orson Hyde.⁴⁰

Joseph Smith himself was certainly not exempt from this military spirit. In Missouri he had covenanted with three hundred of his men—like the New Model Army—never to accept peace at the sacrifice of truth. He thundered, "I have drawn my sword from its sheath and I swear by the living God that it never shall return again till I can go and come and be treated by others as they wish to be treated by me." The troops sounded three rounds from a cannon and shouted "Hosanna to God and the lamb!" Before the Battle of Crooked River, an outraged Joseph Smith admonished his troops, "Go and kill every devil of them."⁴¹ Led into battle by

⁴⁰ Stephen C. LeSueur, *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1987), 135.

⁴¹ In *ibid.*, 236, 138.

their white-cloaked captain, Apostle David W. Patten, known as "Captain Fearnought," Mormon troops shouted their watchword, "God and liberty." By 1841, when Joseph Smith became lieutenant-general of the Nauvoo Legion, fourteen hundred strong, it is no wonder that their neighbors worried that "they now come with the Bible in their hand but ere long they will come with a sword also by their side."⁴²

The primitive Mormons were an apocalyptic sect, intent on expansion and willing to unsheathe the sword in retaliation for the persecution of their own. What also infuriated their neighbors and makes it difficult to think of them in any sense as classical republicans, was their denial of the most basic liberty imaginable, freedom of thought. At its inception, Mormonism throbbed with diversity, multiple revelations, and an array of spiritual gifts. After the failure at Kirtland because of internal dissent, Smith determined to adopt more drastic measures to assure the unity of the Saints.⁴³ As external threats to the movement increased, the Saints closed ranks, demanded the strictest loyalty to the commands of Joseph Smith and moved toward greater intellectual isolation. In the most startling revelation of all in 1843, Joseph Smith announced that all earthly commitments were null and void save the ones sealed by himself, all "covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations" (D&C 132:7). No human obligation—even the solemn vow of marriage—had any meaning unless it flowed from sealings that only Joseph Smith had the power to administer for earth and heaven. Smith explained the redemptive power of "celestial marriage" in this way and demanded that his followers submit to it or be damned. As divine prophet, military general, political boss, and even candidate for the presidency of the United States, Smith consolidated power into the hands of a single man and equated compliance to the divine will with loyalty and strict obedience.⁴⁴ This demand for absolute control was accompanied

⁴² John Nevius, quoted in Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, 112.

⁴³ Ibid., 63, 113.

⁴⁴ For a helpful discussion on Joseph Smith's increasing emphasis on unquestioning loyalty, see Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three*

by a flurry of striking revelations—the plurality of gods, the tangibility of the divine, and the human potential of becoming a god. In submitting to their prophet and revelator on these matters, Mormon followers were willing to dismiss the architecture of classic Christian theology.⁴⁵

The Mormons represent a striking symbol of the failings of a free-market economy, of its disorienting instability, its crisis of authority, its failure to integrate meaning, to care for the lonely and forlorn. Methodism, on the other hand, used all the resources of the market, first, to discomfit more respectable denominations, and next to play catch-up in a quest for respectability. Methodists were quintessentially American: they represent the petty bourgeois, rising groups, average people on the make.

To depict primitive Mormonism as a radical, apocalyptic sect, which terrified its neighbors with expansionist intent and absolutist ideology, leaves open the question of divine origins. If, as Joseph Smith claimed, the sweep of Church history constituted nothing but a whited sepulchre, would it not require a radical protest to wake up a slumbering world? If Jacksonian America had become corrupted by the oppressions of the rich, should not the gift return “as in former times, to illiterate fishermen?”⁴⁶ And if freedom of thought and a free market of religion were corrupting the truth, would not a ruthless enforcing of the truth serve as the appropriate antidote? More than once in biblical history the Lord has raised up prophets to himself that wandered as outcasts and pilgrims, proclaimed fire and brimstone, and performed miraculous signs. A real question for Mormon historians on the eve of the twenty-first century is whether they would recognize or welcome the kind of scandalous effort which Joseph Smith and his followers thought necessary to turn the world upside down.

American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 140-43.

⁴⁵ Hill, *Quest for Refuge*, 143.

⁴⁶ Joseph Smith as quoted by Nancy Towle in *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers*, edited by William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen (New York: Knopf, 1958), 61-62.

The Windows of Heaven Revisited: The 1899 Tithing Reformation

E. Jay Bell

INTRODUCTION

On 30 May 1899, President Lorenzo Snow announced to a startled audience gathered in the Salt Lake Tabernacle for the MIA conference that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had “no reserve at all.”¹ He had earlier reported to top officials that the

E. JAY BELL received a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University in English and Information Management. He has published in *Sunstone* and *LanTimes*. An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the Mountain West Center for Regional Studies conference, 4 May 1991. Jay currently works at WordPerfect, Corp., and is continuing his research on Lorenzo Snow. A longer version of this paper with more complete documentation is available on request.

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¹ Lorenzo Snow, “President Snow's Address,” *Improvement Era* 2 (August

Church was about \$2 million in debt.² Although rumors circulated that the Mormons were broke,³ a closer investigation of Church finances confirmed that resources were in fact “dangerously near bankruptcy.”⁴ The ram in this financial thicket would involve a mysterious trip, a revelation, a reformation, and a divine promise of the Church’s deliverance.

Most members of the Church know something of this event,

1899): 793.

² Rudger Clawson, *A Ministry of Meetings: The Apostolic Diaries of Rudger Clawson*, edited by Stan Larson (Salt Lake City: Signature Books 1993), 21 April 1899, 51. No clearly accepted figure of the Church’s indebtedness exists. Snow reported to Franklin D. Richards, Brigham Young, Jr., Anthon H. Lund, Matthias F. Cowley, Abraham O. Woodruff, Rudger Clawson, N. S. Clayton, and George F. Gibbs that the debt was “about” \$2,000,000 (Ibid.). Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press 1986), 100, reports that bad debts totaled \$115,000 by March 1899. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Paul Thomas Smith, “Snow, Lorenzo,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. 1991) 3:1369, report the indebtedness as \$2.3 million. Apostle Francis M. Lyman, in Albert R. Lyman, *Biography of Francis Marian Lyman, 1840-1916* (Delta: Malvin A. Lyman, 1958), 150, recorded the assets as \$2,592,986.56 and the liabilities as \$2,301,914.77. Additionally, at the beginning of Snow’s administration, total Church assets stood at \$3,359,957.00 and liabilities at \$1,522,392.00, as reported in “Statement of ASSETS and LIABILITIES of the TRUSTEE-IN-TRUST for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” September, 1898, in Alan H. Gurber, “Church Manuscripts,” 5:167, Brigham Young University Lee Library. LeRoi Snow, “From Despair to Freedom Through Tithing,” Church Section (later *Church News*), *Deseret News*, 29 March 1941, 5, gave the round sum of about \$2,000,000 while the film put the debt as over \$2,000,000. “*The Windows of Heaven*,” production #58, final shooting script, June 19, 1962, not paginated; MS 659, Fd 4, [2]; Francis Urry Collection, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

Financial amounts in this paper reflect 1899 figures, which have experienced perhaps a 500 percent increase. For example, in 1900, the cost of men’s clothing was: pants, \$1.25; shirt, 50 cents; shoes, \$1.25. Charles Panati, *Panati’s Parade of Fads, Follies, and Mantas* (New York: Harpers Perennial, 1991), 49.

³ “Latest Assault on Utah,” *Lucifer’s Lantern*, June 1899, 99-114.

⁴ Rudger Clawson, “Reorganization of [the] Financial System at [the] President’s Office, Under [the] Administration of Presidents Lorenzo Snow and Joseph F. Smith, (1923), Rudger Clawson Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library. My thanks to Gary James Bergera for calling this document to my attention.

thanks to the Church film, *The Windows of Heaven*, produced over sixty years later. When this film appeared, the Church was again in financial crisis. Launching a massive building program in the early 1950s, by mid-1956, it "suffered a loss of \$1 million of tithing funds invested in municipal government bonds"; yet before the year's end the First Presidency "committed two-thirds of Church income to continued investment" in the same type of bonds. By the end of 1959, the Church had a deficit of \$8 million. This figure is particularly amazing since the Church had a \$7 million surplus at the end of 1958. Instead of retrenching, however, Church leaders continued this same spending pattern until, by "the end of 1962, the Church was deficit spending \$32 million annually." By February 1963, a month before the movie was released, the Church had "a \$5 million shortfall." At one point in that year, Church "financial officers wondered if they would be able to meet the payroll."⁵

The Church finally moved to regain control of its finances with a two-pronged approach. First, Apostle N. Eldon Tanner who became the Church's main financial officer in the early 1960s, ordered a freeze on spending and instituted rigorous corporate accounting procedures which had not been used, up to that point.⁶ The second prong was to increase member contributions. Although the last financial statement the Church made public was issued in April 1959,⁷ no doubt the film about Lorenzo Snow's experiences over sixty years earlier stimulated tithing and was made with that purpose in mind. To the thousands of Church members have viewed it since its release, it has no doubt con-

⁵ See Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America's Saints* (New York: G.P. Putman's & Sons 1984), 101-2; G. Homer Durham, *N. Eldon Tanner: His Life and Service* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1982) 208; D. Michael Quinn, "LDS Church Finances: The 1830s to 1990s," Washington, D.C., Sunstone Symposium, 1992, audio cassette in my possession; D. Michael Quinn, "I-Thou vs. I-It Conversions: The Mormon 'Baseball Baptisms' Era," *Sunstone* 16 (December 1994): 32-33, 38-39.

⁶ Quinn, "LDS Church Finances."

⁷ *Report of the Semi-Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, April 1959 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual), 91-91; hereafter cited as *Conference Report*.

firmed President Snow's prophetic calling, strengthened the connection between tithing and blessings, and created a vivid visual image of this historic period.⁸

According to the film's producer, Wetzel O. Whitaker, in late 1961 the newly called Presiding Bishopric (John H. Vandenberg, Robert L. Simpson, and Victor L. Brown) requested the BYU Motion Picture Study to make a film "on the subject of tithing."⁹ However, a letter reporting research dated 12 May 1960 suggests that the subject had been under formal consideration for over a year.¹⁰ The First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve subjected the script to the "rigors of critical scrutiny"¹¹ before approving it, filming began in 1962, the General Authorities approved the release version, and the film was premiered in St. George on 13 March 1963. The Presiding Bishopric stated that "this film can have a significant effect on members of the Church and will cause them to be spiritually blessed by following the example of those early pioneers who listened to the counsel of their prophet leader," according to the *Church News* account.¹²

This paper explores the context in which Lorenzo Snow received his famous revelation about tithing, examines the validity of the claim, preserved in *The Windows of Heaven* and various

⁸ Jerry L. Glenn, "Lorenzo Snow: Exemplary Christian Gentleman, a Man of Peace," *Church News*, 22 May 1993, 10.

⁹ Wetzel O. Whitaker, "Windows of Heaven," *Pioneering with Film: A History of Church and Brigham Young University Films* (N.p., n.d.), 35-44, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

¹⁰ Harold S. Snow (president of the St. George Temple), Letter, 12 May 1960, contains synopses of recollections of the 1899 conference by attendees William Brooks, Wilford W. McArthur, and Moroni McArthur; photocopy in my possession.

¹¹ Whitaker, "Windows of Heaven," 36.

¹² "Church Officers View New Church Film at Dixie Art Center," *Church News*, 16 March 1963, 13; "Wards to Show Film on Tithing," *ibid.*, 13 April 1963, 6; Presiding Bishopric (John H. Vandenberg, Robert L. Simpson, and Victor L. Brown), Letter to Francis Urry, March 7, 1963, Urry Collection, Box 4, Fd. 5.; Whitaker, "Windows of Heaven," 35, 36. It received a second cycle of showings throughout the Church in 1965. That same year, it was shown for the first time on television. "Schedule Ready for Film Showing," *Church News*, 27 February 1965, 1. In 1979, the movie was shortened and transferred to video tape.

recollections that tithe-paying was linked to the end of St. George's drought, and appraises the immediate and long-term consequences of Snow's revelation.

THE CHURCH'S FINANCIAL PLIGHT

When Lorenzo Snow was ordained president of the Church in September 1898, the Church was seriously in debt. The increasing strictures of the federal government against the Church in response to polygamy had led, in 1887, to the Edmunds-Tucker Act and a direct assault on the Church's political and economic power base. This act dissolved the corporation of the Church and escheated to the federal government its financial assets over \$50,000, excepting only buildings used for religious worship and cemeteries.¹³ The Church had about \$3 million in real and personal property at that point. By mid-1888, the court-appointed receiver, federal marshal Frank H. Dyer,¹⁴ had confiscated holdings totaling \$807,000. Even though trusted members were holding deeds in trust for the *Deseret News*, meetinghouses, tithing buildings, temples, livestock, and other properties, the government had possession of Temple Square, the tithing office, and the historian's office. Federal authorities then leased these properties back to the Church, causing a \$41,000 expenditure between 1888 and 1895.¹⁵ When the Supreme Court upheld the Edmunds-

¹³ *U.S. Statutes at Large*, sec. 13, 635 (1887).

¹⁴ Dyer was appointed U.S. marshal on 28 May 1866. Born in Yazoo County, Mississippi, 5 September 1854, he moved to Utah after some business failures, worked in local mines, married, then established a livery stable in 1882. He next moved to Park City and became a successful freighter. As a U.S. marshal Dyer was zealous in tracking down polygamists, and acquiring Church properties. Dyer was influential in improving living conditions at the territorial penitentiary. Because Dyer's deputies caused the deaths of some polygamists and because of a supposed lack of zeal on his part, he was criticized by both Mormons and non-Mormons. Weary of his duties and the criticism, Dyer resigned in 1889, returned to his business interests, and died suddenly on 26 March 1892. He was replaced by the even more energetic Henry W. Lawrence. Vernal A. Brown, "The United States Marshals in Utah Territory to 1896" (Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1970), 154-65.

¹⁵ Presiding Bishop, Letter to Brigham H. Roberts, 10 May 1918, MS 587, Box 1, Fd. 13, Scott G. Kenney Papers, Archives, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

Tucker Act on 19 May 1890 in a five-to-four decision, relief from judicial avenues seemed closed.

Wilford Woodruff's announcement of the Manifesto in September publicly withdrawing support for plural marriages eased the tensions, as did Utah's statehood in 1896. However, reclaiming Church property was very difficult and continued into Snow's administration. The toll on the Church's fiscal stability was calamitous.

Three additional factors intensified the crisis.¹⁶ First, the Church had overspent itself for some time. Wilford Woodruff, anxious to complete the Salt Lake Temple in his lifetime, had spent \$1 million to complete the \$4 million edifice in 1893. Educational and civic responsibilities also drained the budget. The Church was supporting Young College in Logan, Brigham Young Academy in Provo, and the Latter-day Saint College in Salt Lake. The national depression from 1893 through the latter half of the decade had increased the number of Saints in dire need of welfare.¹⁷ Furthermore, the Church invested heavily in local power, mining, sugar, and salt companies, trying to stimulate regional employment. According to Michael Quinn, the primary cause of

The Presiding Bishop then was Charles W. Nibley.

¹⁶ *"The Windows of Heaven,"* final shooting script, [1], identifies only government confiscations as the source of financial pressure. A similar single-cause view is presented in Francis M. Gibbons, *Lorenzo Snow: Spiritual Giant, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 210-11; Milton R. Hunter, *"Will a Man Rob God?"* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1952), 49-52; and Thomas C. Romney, *The Life of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: Sons of Utah Pioneers Memorial Foundation, 1955), 425.

¹⁷ The "Cleveland depression," as it is sometimes called, hit Utah's farming, mining, and railroad industries especially hard. The state lagged behind the rest of the country in recovery. During this depression, caused by overspending in the 1880s and government attempts to maintain both a gold and silver standard, the GNP fell about 12 percent, and unemployment, which was at 3 percent in 1892, soared to 18.4 percent two years later. Gold flowed out of the country creating dangerously low reserves. By the end of 1893, about 15,242 companies and 542 banks had failed. John Steele Gordon, "The Business of America: The Other Great Depression," *American Heritage* 42 (May/June 1991):16, 18; "The Time Machine," *ibid.*, 44 (April 1993): 43-44; Leonard J. Arrington, "Utah and the Depression of the 1890s," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 29 (January 1961): 3-18.

the Church's indebtedness was "massive losses in the Church's interlocked mining, sugar, real estate, banking, and investment firms."¹⁸ As early as 1893, the Church began borrowing to meet its obligations, first from stake presidents and eventually from such "outside" institutions as Wells Fargo & Co., and National Union Bank.¹⁹

Second, the Church maintained little fiscal supervision. Snow had been alarmed, on assuming the presidency, to discover that no budgetary controls existed. Decisions about using Church funds were made ad hoc on an as-needed basis. He told Apostle Rudger Clawson, upon whose accounting skills he drew:

Wilford Woodruff was not promptly and fully posted in advance as to the time when the Church obligations fell due for payment, and it became a source of great worry and anxiety to him, and doubtless shortened his life. . . . Surprises were often of common occurrence. The Chief Clerk would come into the President's private office and say that he must have \$20,000 at once to meet an obligation due that day; or at another time it may have been \$40,000 or \$50,000, etc. President Woodruff would ask why he had not been notified of this before so that he might have had time to arrange for the payment. He did not appreciate such surprises.²⁰

Though there was no financial impropriety, some members of the Quorum of the Twelve laid the deficit squarely at the feet of President George Q. Cannon who was essentially running the First Presidency because of Woodruff's feeble condition.²¹ This lack of

¹⁸ D. Michael Quinn, "Parting the Corporate Veil: The History, Ethics, and Implications of Church Finances," Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, August 1991, audio cassette in my possession; and his "LDS Church Finances."

¹⁹ Clawson, "Statement of ASSETS and LIABILITIES," 5:167.

²⁰ Clawson, "Reorganization of [the] Financial System," 1-2.

²¹ In 1887, some apostles accused George Q. Cannon of using Church funds to rescue his son, John Q., from financial trouble. A few months later these charges were dropped. Thomas G. Alexander, "The Odyssey of a Latter-day Prophet: Wilford Woodruff and the Manifesto of 1890," *Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 180-81. "Prest. Cannon knows," Lorenzo Snow stated early the following year, "that I do not approve of his methods of running [the Church] into debt. Nearly all of his schemes where the Church has run into debt there has been a failure, and I have felt that the Lord did not approve." Heber J. Grant, *Diary*, 5 January 1898; photocopy of typescript excerpts in my possession. Unfortunately,

control strained financial resources.

Third, the Church's chief source of revenue, tithing, was dropping. Tithes declined from a yearly average of \$500,000 in the 1880s to about \$350,000 in 1890. In 1890, only 17.2 percent of total stake membership paid tithing. During the 1893 depression, tithing dropped off so steeply that the Church had to borrow \$105,000 to protect its business interests. By 1898, tithe-paying had increased to about 18.4 percent, an increase of \$90,000 over 1897. During this year, 18.4 percent of stake membership paid a full tithing.²²

Tithing funds were used for a broad range of purposes, including stipends for General Authorities. In 1899, for example, Apostles Franklin D. Richards, Francis M. Lyman, and John Henry Smith received \$3,000 annually, while Seventy J. Golden Kimball

the potentially valuable First Presidency papers and journals of Elders Francis M. Lyman, J. Golden Kimball, and Heber J. Grant are not currently available to researchers.

Brigham Young, Jr., felt that, although President Woodruff was not to blame, he would have to answer for the lavish way his counselor spent the Church's money. The upset apostle believed that "the Twelve should now enter fully into the councils of the First Presidency." *Journal*, 18 July 1898, 204. Echoing earlier allegations, General Authorities criticized Cannon's reluctance to consult with the Twelve on any financial matter. Cannon's outrage led the First Presidency to chastise Lorenzo Snow, Franklin D. Richards, Francis M. Lyman (substituting for an absent Brigham Young, Jr.), Heber J. Grant, and Matthias F. Cowley concerning the attitude in the quorum. The First Presidency was angry that the Twelve were treating them as an "executive committee" of a "board of directors" and trying to take control of the financial affairs of the Church. These Brethren were explicitly told that: (1) "The First Presidency was an independent quorum and was responsible for the finances of the Church." (2) The First Presidency invited the Twelve to meet with them as an "act of courtesy." (3) The Twelve "should not discuss [or dictate concerning] the affairs of the church in which the Presidency was concerned" when the First Presidency was not present." After this "very plain and lucid statement" the apostles were told to inform their missing members. George Q. Cannon, *Journal Extracts*, 20 July 1898-12 August 1898, Box 1, Fd. 13, Kenney Papers.

²² Quinn, "LDS Church Finances." Tithing figures for 1897 are not currently available to researchers. Seventy Seymour B. Young, *Journal*, 10 December 1898, 55, LDS Church Archives, reported that the Saints of Juarez, Mexico had paid "over \$40.00 to a family," and added, "If the 50[,]000 of the church would do as well two years would take the church out of debt."

received about \$1,000. Thomas G. Alexander reports that "the Trustee-in-Trust gave personal loans to General Authorities and others," which amounted to \$115,000 by 4 March 1899. One General Authority admitted that most of the sum would never be repaid "in this life." Travel expenses, special expenses, and living allowances to widows of General Authorities (including polygamous widows) were further drains. Bishops and stake tithing clerks received as a stipend 10 percent of the total tithing they collected, and members of stake presidencies received \$300 to \$500 a year for transportation. Stake tithing clerks also sometimes received salaries that, in one 1904 example, was \$250 annually.²³ These and other expenses caused a dangerous drain on Church finances.

Nineteenth-century understandings of tithing had undergone considerable evolution by Snow's administration. Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery introduced tithing as 10 percent in 1834 as part of several 1831-38 revelations on the subject. By December 1837, Presiding Bishop Edward Partridge set tithing at 2 percent of one's net worth after deducting debt; but on 8 July 1838, Joseph Smith received a revelation stipulating three types of tithing: (1) "I require all their surplus property" as a "beginning of the tithing of my people," (2) "all those who gather unto . . . Zion shall be tithed," and 3) "one tenth of all their interest annually."²⁴ In November 1841, the Quorum of the Twelve

²³ Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 100; Beecher and Smith, "Snow, Lorenzo," 3:1370; Quinn, "Parting the Corporate Veil"; J. Golden Kimball, Journal, 4 October 1898, 49, J. Golden Kimball Collection, MS 622 Box 2 Fd. 10, University of Utah Marriott Library Special Collections Kimball received about \$100 a month in cash, "meat orders," and Tithing Office orders.

²⁴ Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981) 42:30-34; 64:23; 72:3; 97:10-12 (hereafter LDS D&C); Book of Doctrine and Covenants (Independence: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1978) 42:8b-10a; 64:5a; 72:1c, 3e; 94:3a-b (hereafter RLDS D&C). The 1838 revelation is LDS D&C 119/RLDS D&C 106. For the 1834 figure, see Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, B. H. Roberts ed., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1948) 2:175; "History of Joseph Smith," *Millennial Star* 15 (26 March 1853): 202-4; "Origin of Tithing," *Saints Herald* 37 (27 December 1890): 833; for Partridge's figure see Quinn, "LDS Church Finances." Scholars disagree whether

changed the first stipulation from "all their surplus property" to "one-tenth," but few had the financial resources to support this system of triple tithing. The actual figures between 1847 to 1870, according to Quinn, were all less than 1 percent at each point.²⁵ Brigham Young admitted in October 1875 general conference, "that neither himself nor anyone else . . . had ever paid their tithing as it was revealed."²⁶ On 1 January 1881, President John Taylor eliminated the immigration tithe; and by the beginning of Lorenzo Snow's administration, the Church required converts to pay one-tenth of their property upon baptism and an annual tenth of income thereafter.²⁷

giving "all their surplus" was applicable only under the Law of Consecration. See Hyrum Andrus *Doctrines of the Kingdom* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Inc., 1973), 255-58; Quinn, "LDS Church Finances"; and Quinn, "Historical Overview," *Stand in Holy Places* (Independence: Presiding Bishopric of The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1992), 67-69.

²⁵ Quinn, "LDS Church Finances." In 1848 Orson Pratt exempted poor British Saints from giving "one tenth," observing, "it would be better for someone to give to them." N. B. Lundwall, comp., *Masterful Discourses of Orson Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1962), 395-96. The only current exemptions for tithe paying in the LDS Church are for full-time missionaries and those who are totally supported from welfare funds. *General Handbook of Instructions* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1989), 9-1.

²⁶ "Brigham Young," *Deseret Evening News*, 9 October 1875, [2], reprinted in *Deseret News [Weekly]*, 13 October 1875, 585.

²⁷ See Quinn, "Parting the Corporate Veil," and "LDS Church Finances"; Robert F. Bohn, "A Modern Look at Tithable Income," *Sunstone* 9 (January/February 1984): 18-19; Paul C. Richards, *The Law of Tithing in Theory and Practice During the Nineteenth Century*, photocopy in my possession; "Baptism for the Dead," *Times and Seasons* 3 (15 December 1841): 626; "Tithing," *ibid*, 5 (15 October 1844): 685; "Tithing," *Millennial Star* 9 (1 January 1847): 12; James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-75), 1:235, 247.

By 1899, the RLDS Church's concept of tithing had evolved to its current teaching: "New converts prepare a 'first tithing statement' . . . to determine their initial net worth" and offer a tenth of that amount, which can be "spread out . . . over their lifetimes." Thereafter, members prepare an annual statement of their "gross income from all sources." After subtracting "basic needs," the remainder is "increase, or tithable income," of which a tenth constitutes "a full tithe." Bohn, "A Modern Look," 18; see also Quinn, "LDS Church Finances."

The current *General Handbook of Instructions*, 1989, 9-1 discusses

Snow was deeply concerned about this burden of debt. Apostle Francis M. Lyman recorded that he had told Snow his feeling that Snow's special mission was "to get the Church out of debt." Snow had answered that "his prayer and labor would be to see the Church free from debt."²⁸ Franklin D. Richards, president of the Quorum of the Twelve, prayed fervently on New Year's Day, 1899, that the Lord would show Snow "the way out of all embarrassment that beset him in his Presidency."²⁹

This embarrassment was real. When James W. Paxman, president of Juab Stake, asked Snow for assistance, late in 1898, with a debt of \$450 owed by the Juab Stake board of education, Snow admitted that the Church "would have to borrow" the sum.³⁰ Determined not to borrow more money from non-Mormons, Snow decided in late November 1898 to issue Church bonds.³¹ With the approval of his counselors and the Quorum of the Twelve, bonds in denominations of \$100, \$500, and \$1,000, each hand-signed by Snow, went on sale on 1 January 1899. By 21 December 1899, \$50,000 worth had been purchased, successfully relieving the emergency.

Simultaneously, tithing contributions increased. By late 1898, estimates of tithing stood just under \$1 million. Snow and Bishop William B. Preston publicly announced that the sum was the greatest "of all years but one."³² Still the Church had not

procedures for handling tithing funds and defines it as "one-tenth" of one's income, but gives no instructions on how it should be computed by individual church members. See also Howard D. Swainston, "Tithing," *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1481; John A. Widtsoe, *Gospel Interpretations: More Evidence and Reconciliations* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1947), 83, 86.

²⁸ In Albert R. Lyman, *Biography of Francis Marlan Lyman*, 149.

²⁹ Franklin D. Richards, Journal Inserts, 1 January 1899, LDS Church Archives. These are notes that Richards kept with but did not transcribe into his journal.

³⁰ In LeRoi C. Snow, "From Despair to Freedom Through Tithing," 5, 8.

³¹ John Henry Smith, *Church, State, and Politics: The Diaries of John Henry Smith*, edited by Jean Bickmore White (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 22 November 1898, 413.

³² Anthon H. Lund, Journal, 8 April 1899, 145-43, LDS Church Archives. The numeration is in reverse order because Lund wrote these pages upside-down and backwards.

generated enough revenue to become solvent.

Snow abhorred debt, admitting he had borrowed only once in his life—the sum of \$60 to help him on his first mission.³³ His experience in running the Brigham City United Order undoubtedly convinced him of the importance of proper financial controls, for the day the Twelve assumed the presidency of the Church after Wilford Woodruff's death in September 1898, he asked George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith, the counselors, to complete a "statement of the financial condition of the Church" and, on 5 January 1899, approved Apostle John Henry Smith's recommendation to establish a financial committee.³⁴

The committee, consisting of Franklin D. Richards, Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith, Rudger Clawson, and Heber J. Grant, working with the Church treasurer John Jack, tried to straighten out the Church's books. The initial report issued a few months later was alarming:

The report showed the active assets to be worth \$1,830,519.78, and the silent assets to be worth (to the Church but not marketable) \$906,066.78. Following these figures the direct liabilities of the Church . . . amounted to \$1,797,891.38, and the contingent liabilities of the Church were \$1,568,954.29. The direct liabilities were deducted from the active assets leaving a balance of \$82,628.40 active assets in excess of the direct liabilities.

Added to the \$82,628.40 was tithing on hand in the products of the soil amounting to \$305,709.00, making the total net assets of the Church February 18, 1899, of \$388,337.40.³⁵

Selling the tithing in kind on hand would yield no more than an

³³ "Cache Stake Priesthood and Conference Minutes 1899-1903," 29 October 1899, 39, LDS Church Archives; "Cache's Stake Conference," *Deseret Evening News*, 31 October 1899, 8.

³⁴ Marriner Wood Merrill, Journal, 9 September 1898, 105, LDS Church Archives; John Henry Smith, *Church, State, and Politics*, January 5, 1899, 416; Heber J. Grant, Diary, 5 January 1899.

³⁵ In Rudger Clawson, "Memoirs of the Life of Rudger Clawson Written by Himself," 1936, 382; Rudger Clawson Papers; see also Clawson, "Reorganization of [the] Financial System," 5. "Products of the soil" refers to tithing in kind, which the Church accepted until 1908. Stephen D. Ricks, "Tithing in Ancient and Modern Israel," *Harken, O Ye People: Discourses on the Doctrine and Covenants* (Sandy, Utah: Randall Books, 1984), 213.

estimated \$152,854.50, "making the surplus or net worth of the Church, \$235,482.90."³⁶ With the interest rate on the loans ranging from 5 to 10 percent, the estimated 10 percent income of the Church was not enough to keep up with the outgo; and "the report clearly pointed to the fact," summarized Clawson, "that the Church, if not bankrupt, was surely upon the verge of bankruptcy."³⁷ Brigham Young, Jr., lamented, "God help us for we are now in the money power of our enemies." Some indication of the financial confusion is his statement: "It is a mystery to me where the millions have gone to say nothing of the 6 to 700[,000] dollars income we have every year which for years has vanished like the rest."³⁸

After three years, the financial records were still so confused that the committee recommended giving up on the old set of books and opening a new set. Unfortunately, the old records erroneously showed the Church as deeper in debt than it was while the new books showed it as financially better off than it was.³⁹

But as matters stood during the spring of 1899, the Church's desperate financial straits, Snow's repugnance for borrowing, especially from outside institutions, and the unmet potential for tithing all came together in a revelatory answer to the promised financial deliverance.

SERMON IN ST. GEORGE

The saga of the trip, the revelation, and the reformation began, according to Lorenzo Snow's youngest son, LeRoy,⁴⁰ one day in early May 1899 when he entered his father's room and saw

³⁶ Clawson, "Reorganization of [the] Financial System," 5.

³⁷ Clawson, "Memoirs," 382.

³⁸ Brigham Young, Jr., Journal, 1 October and 21 December 1898, 274-75.

³⁹ See Clawson, "Reorganization of [the] Financial System," 5 and "Memoirs," 382.

⁴⁰ He also spelled his name "LeRoi." I follow the spelling of "LeRoy" except in references and, to avoid confusing him with his father, usually refer to him by first name in the text. LeRoy had returned from a mission in Germany about a month before the trip. "Temple and Tabernacle," *Washington County News* 1 April 1899, [2].

the eighty-five-year-old Church president "sitting upright in his bed. His face was almost white and his eyes shone as I had never seen them before. All he said was: 'I am going to St. George.' These were his first words at the breakfast table and again on entering his office."⁴¹

The official announcement came during the 4 May 1899 meeting of the Twelve and First Presidency. Here, Snow invited other General Authorities to accompany him to St. George, then stop at Utah towns on the way back. Snow first announced the departure date as "about June 1" but, sometime late on the 8 May or early the following day, finalized the departure timetable to 15 May.⁴² Despite his feeling of urgency, Snow did not know why he felt inspired to go.⁴³

The party departed in the early evening from the Salt Lake City, riding in the first Pullman car to travel over a stretch of railroad opened the month before as far as Modena.⁴⁴ Contrary to the

⁴¹ LeRoi Snow, "From Despair to Freedom," 5.

⁴² Clawson, *A Ministry of Meetings*, 4 May 1899, 55. Franklin D. Richards recorded in his diary on 8 May that Snow asked him to be ready to go with him to the southern part of the state "the latter part of May or early in June." And "Trip to the South," *Deseret Evening News*, May 9, 1899, 2, announced the exact date as 15 May. (This item was not printed in the semi-weekly edition.) It was the first tour of this kind since the days of Brigham Young. "President Snow's Famous Trip and His Race with President Smith," *Salt Lake Herald*, 11 October 1901, 3. According to "The Windows of Heaven," dialog script, 2 February 1970, 13-14, Francis Urry Collection, the decision to hold meetings on the way back was made at the St. George conference. This detail does not appear in the surviving earlier scripts.

⁴³ Clawson, *A Ministry of Meetings*, 15 May 1899, 61, and Matthias F. Cowley, "Sketch of the Life of President Lorenzo Snow," *Southern Star*, 19 May 1900, 195. An updated version of this article appeared in Matthias F. Cowley, *Prophets and Patriarchs* (Chattanooga: Ben E. Rich, 1902), 86-98.

⁴⁴ Modena, also known as Desert Springs, had been a railhead since April as part of a Utah Pacific Railroad project between Salt Lake City and Los Angeles. Financing problems postponed the project until the early 1900s. See Moroni McArthur, family oral interviews 1959; the tape is in the family's possession, a transcript is in mine. McArthur was about twenty-one when he witnessed the Snow meeting in St. George. For information on the railroad, see "Utah News," *Washington County News* 12 July 1899, [2] and 12 August 1899, [2]; Edward Leo Lyman, "From the City of Angels to the City of Saints: The Struggle to Build a

film's inference, based on LeRoy's memory, the majority of the General Authorities did not go on the trip. The party consisted of Snow, Sarah Minnie Jensen Snow, the youngest of his four living wives, and their son LeRoy, who was the *Deseret News* correspondent. Also in the party were the second counselor in the First Presidency, Joseph F. Smith, and his wife, Alice Kimball Smith, Apostle Franklin D. Richards, his wife, Jane Snyder Richards, Francis M. Lyman and one of his wives, Abraham O. Woodruff and one of his wives, First Council of the Seventy Seymour B. Young, who was also acting as the medical officer, Presiding Bishop William B. Preston, teamster Bruce Kingsbury, William B. Dougall, Horace Whitney representing the *Salt Lake Herald*, an unnamed reporter from the *Salt Lake Tribune*, and Arthur Winder, a Church reporter.⁴⁵ Two buckboards and teams accompanied the party from Salt Lake, with local Church leaders arranging the rest of the transportation.⁴⁶

At Modena, they disembarked in buckboards and whitetops, and, escorted by a delegation of St. George dignitaries, made the fifty-five to seventy mile⁴⁷ trip before nightfall, pausing on the

Railroad from Los Angeles to Salt Lake City," *California History*, 70 (Spring 1991): 85-88.

Kennecott Corporation supplied the train used in filming *The Windows of Heaven*, through the influence of Elder Harold B. Lee. The passenger car was not a Pullman. The interior scenes were shot in the car barn at Ely, Nevada, while extras rocked it with timbers. The transfer from train to buggies was also filmed at Ely, not Modena. Whitaker, "Windows of Heaven," 37.

⁴⁵ Seymour B. Young, Journal, 15-16 May 1899, 41-43; LeRoy Snow, "The Lord's Way Out of Bondage," *Improvement Era* 40 (July 1938): 402, and LeRoy, "Special Manifestation of the Word of the Lord to Lorenzo Snow, Fifth President of the Church," Church Section of the *Deseret News*, 20 January 1934, 1, 4, 8. It is not known whether William B. Dougall was the father or son. President George Q. Cannon was in Washington, D.C.; Apostles John Henry Smith and Matthias F. Cowley were in the Southern and Midwest respectively; Heber J. Grant was on his way to the East; and "others are absent on missionary work." "Temple and Tabernacle," [3]; part of this article came from "Conference at St. George," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, 18 May 1899, 7. This is one of the few times in Church history where most of the General Authorities were absent from Salt Lake City.

⁴⁶ "Trip to the South," 2.

⁴⁷ Different distances between Modena and St. George are reported by Richards, Diary, 15 May 1899; Seymour B. Young, Journal, 21 (16 May 1899): 42; "Record

outskirts of town to enter according to ecclesiastical seniority. The stake president, Daniel McArthur, hosted the Snows. According to LeRoy, and reflected in the motion picture, President Snow was "so weak that mother and I were very much worried."⁴⁸ Moroni McArthur, the stake president's son, recalls his father asking why Snow had come to St. George. Snow admitted that he didn't know, "only the Spirit told us to come."⁴⁹ Apparently Snow slept restlessly that night, anxious and uncertain about the reason for his visit.⁵⁰

All the way from Modena to St. George, Snow's party had seen dead and dying cattle. Despite an exceptionally wet year in 1897—9.89 inches—southern Utah and Nevada were entering into one of the worst drought cycles since Mormon settlement began. St. George's rainfall had been consistently below average month by month for a year. Not until 1902 would it rain as much as it had in 1897.⁵¹ Lack of reservoirs compounded the drought. Conservation of water was essential.⁵² Throughout the winter of 1899, the weekly *Washington County News* lamented the drought—by now

for Modena Route," *Salt Lake Herald*, 17 May 1899, 1; Francis Urry, "Guidance from Our Prophets," *The Instructor* 68 (September 1963): 231.

⁴⁸ LeRoy Snow, "From Despair to Freedom," 6.

⁴⁹ McArthur, family oral interviews, 1959.

⁵⁰ LeRoy Snow, "From Despair to Freedom," 6. Also reported in Dorothy O. Rea, "Windows of Heaven," *Church News*, 6 October 1962, 10, which reports the reminiscence of Camilla Woodbury Judd, age twelve at Snow's visit. The Church film includes an anxious conversation between Lorenzo and Minnie Snow, which apparently came from LeRoy's 1938 account. "The Windows of Heaven," final shooting script, 12; LeRoy C. Snow, "The Lord's Way Out of Bondage," 402.

⁵¹ The annual inches of rainfall in St. George over this decade were: 1893, 6.72; 1895, 6.5; 1897, 9.89; 1898, 4.96; 1899, 5.15; 1900, 5.44; 1901, 6.96; 1902, 8.97. Statistics from *U.S. Department of Agriculture Weather Bureau Report of the Chief of the Weather Bureau 1893*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government, 1894, 1896-1903) 188, 226; 1895-96, 170, 209; 1897-98, 199, 238; 1898-99, 187, 227; 1899-1900, 195, 237; 1900-1901 1:194, 235; 1901-02, 182, 222; 1902-03, 182, 223. Volunteers took moisture measurements. Because of incomplete reporting, the 1897 yearly statistics were not totaled, so the annual totals above are calculated from existing monthly figures.

⁵² For example, the *Washington County News* 5 August 1899, [4], pleads for a good reservoir system.

absolute for twelve months—in practically every issue. Many people sold out and moved.⁵³

By the time Snow's party arrived in May, a few days of snow in Pine Valley had provided the only significant moisture for months, March frosts had blighted the fruit, and the alfalfa and corn were drying up. Santa Clara Creek was the lowest in years, and the Pine Valley correspondent lamented, "Nearly everything in the nature of feed has been eaten up [by the cattle]. There is barely enough straw left in the town to replenish bed ticks [mattresses] for the summer."⁵⁴

Thus, the historical fact of the drought, which played such an important role in the film, is quite firmly established. However, from that point on, an interesting mixture of fact and fiction characterizes the faith-promoting focus of the film.

For example, according to the historic record, despite his restless night, Lorenzo Snow was "greatly refreshed" and went to the tabernacle in good spirits to convene the first session of the two-day conference on 17 May at 10:00 A.M.⁵⁵ In the film,

⁵³ By March 1900, St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., December 1897-6 June 1902, LDS Church Archives, reported 10 March 1900, 191-92, that "3 or 4" people had moved from Gunlock, "some" from Hebron and Pine Valley, and "some 50 persons" from Toquerville in the last "2 or 3 years." For weather conditions, see *Washington County News*, "Our Correspondents," 28 January 1899, [1]; "Our Correspondents," 25 February 1899, [1]; "Local Correspondents," 11 February 1899, [1].

⁵⁴ "Correspondents," column in *Washington County News*, 11 March, 1899, [1], 22 April 1899, [1], 29 April 1899, [1] and 6 May 1899, [1]; "Local and General," *Washington County News*, 11 March 1899, [4]; "Tour of President Snow," *Salt Lake Herald*, 21 May 1899, 1 (story filed 18 May); "Crop Condition in the State," *Deseret Evening News*, 11 April 1899, 8.

⁵⁵ LeRoi Snow, "From Despair to Deliverance," 5. Reports are not absolutely consistent in the sequence of meetings and speakers. This account follows the order in the St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 17-18 May 1898, 123-138. For additional accounts, see "President Snow in Sunny St. George" *Deseret Evening News* 17 May 1899: 2; "Crowds Hear Pres. Snow," *Salt Lake Herald*, 18 May 1899, 1; "Conference at St. George," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 18 May 1899, 7; "Special Conference," *Washington County News*, 1 (May 20, 1899):[1], and Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronology of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830-present), 17 May 1899, 9, LDS Church Archives; Richards, Journal, 17-18 May 1899; Seymour B. Young, Journal

Snow is "weak and shaky," obviously in physical and emotional distress during a one-day conference.⁵⁶ On the contrary, according to Will Brooks and John Schmutz, who witnessed Snow's historic address, Snow was "alert, springly, [sic] keen, vital. . . . NOBODY walked up the aisle beside him or offered the least assistance as he went up the steps. He would have scorned that."⁵⁷

According to the film, McArthur gave the first discourse, expressed concern about the drought, and yielded the podium to Snow.⁵⁸ According to the historical record, nobody commented

17-18 May 1899, 21:43-48.

⁵⁶ *"The Windows of Heaven,"* final shooting script 12-15. Francis L. Urry, playing the part of Lorenzo Snow felt that the research showed that the Prophet was "quite ill" and his son and wife were quite concerned. Contemporary records give no indication of an illness before the trip. Showing good health the day before boarding the south-bound train, President Snow dedicated the Coalville Tabernacle. (See "During the present week Coalville has been a Modern Meca [sic.], *The Coalville Times*, 6 (19 May 1899): 1; "Summit Stake Tabernacle," *Deseret Evening News*, 15 May 1899, 2, reprinted in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 16 May 1899, 1; "A Dedication at Coalville," *The Salt Lake Herald*, 28 (15 May 1899):1; Journal History, 1-17 May 1899; Urry, "Windows of Heaven," 7 January 1975, (Urry collection Fd 5) 3.)

⁵⁷ Juanita Brooks, *Uncle Will Tells His Story* (Salt Lake City: Taggart & Company Inc. 1970), 64; also see Luen A. Woodbury, "John H. Schmutz: 101 and Still Counting," *This People*, (Winter 1980): 39. According to Whitaker, "Windows of Heaven," 40, when the film crew arrived in St. George in August 1962, the Saints were praying for rain while the crew prayed for fair weather. On the morning scheduled for filming Snow's entrance into the tabernacle, it rained but cleared up by the time filming began.

⁵⁸ When Francis Urry, who played Lorenzo Snow in the film, stood at the pulpit of the St. George Tabernacle, he felt an "utter dependency upon divine help to portray the role" of President Snow speaking. Mistakenly, Urry felt he was giving the actual speech that the president had given. His desire was to feel the same spirit present on the day the discourse was given so that the audience would feel it. "I was very concerned about attempting to portray the prophet receiving a revelation," Urry later wrote. Before filming this scene on 25 August 1962, patriarch George E. Miles offered a prayer. Urry attributed the scene's success to "the blessings of heaven." Twenty-two people who attended the original 1899 conference also attended the 1962 filming. Francis Urry, "Windows of Heaven," 7 January 1975, 1-4, Fd. 5, Urry Collection; Francis Urry, untitled narrative, 3-5, Fd. 7, *ibid.*)

on the weather at all,⁵⁹ and Snow was the first speaker, beginning his forty-seven-minute address with the frank admission, "We could scarcely express the reason why we came."⁶⁰ Significantly, according to newspaper accounts, "his remarks were mainly eulogistic of the people of this section of the country of their tithes and offerings, giving them the name of being the best tithe-payers and most faithful stake in the Church." He encouraged them to stay, "but except they have been prayerfully called, those staying will be better off." He then touched on a number of themes, returning to tithing as well: the Saints would soon return to Jackson County; they would again practice the United Order, as a means of first "establishing Zion within our hearts"; earlier attempts had failed because the Saints valued "more of the dollar than serving the Lord"; "full" tithe paying would prevent enemies from driving out Zion's inhabitants; the poor generally paid more tithing than the rich; and that "[t]his is the word of the Lord to all the people of the Church."⁶¹ He closed by blessing the people in what Franklin Richards called "loving terms."⁶² In light of the film's focus, Snow's praise of their tithing practices is significant. A recent stake conference had revealed that about 76 percent of the eligible tithe-payers of St. George Ward were paying a full 10 percent of their income to the Church in 1898.⁶³

⁵⁹ The exception was Francis M. Lyman's general observation that, since the Mormons' arrival in the West, "climate has been changed—water courses have increased. We expect the early and later rains." St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 17 May 1899, 123. Furthermore, according to William Nelson, "Diary of William Nelson," 18 & 19 [May 1899], 386, Special Collections, Lee Library, there was snow in the mountains on the second day of Snow's visit and rain on the third day.

⁶⁰ Richards, Journal Inserts, 17 May 1899; St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 17 May 1899, 125.

⁶¹ St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 17 May 1899, 125-126; "Crowds Hear Pres. Snow," *Salt Lake Herald* 18 May 1899, 1; "Conference at St. George," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 18 May 1899, 7; "Special Conference," *Washington County News*, 20 May 1899, [1]; "Temple and Tabernacle," *Washington County News*, 27 May 1899, [3].

⁶² Richards, "Discourse," *Deseret Evening News*, 1 July 1899, 8; reprinted in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 7 July 1899, 3.

⁶³ See St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 12-13 June 1898, 50-51.

During this discourse some felt a "great dramatic moment" occurred when Snow paused, looked at the back wall as if he were seeing or reading something, and then went on about the importance of tithing. Some recalled that "complete stillness filled the room." Others commented that "kind of a halo light come around his head," or that he "appeared to become perfectly white and was surrounded by a beautiful, bright white light." Still others in attendance observed nothing unusual. Will Brooks, present at the conference in his youth and reflecting in the 1960s on the film *The Windows of Heaven*, pronounced: "Nor was there the great dramatic moment of the picture. He made a good talk, a strong talk. He did pause for a while at one point, but the audience saw nothing that could be interpreted as a revelation."⁶⁴ The newspapers, meeting minutes, and the few surviving journals are silent on the revelation or the events surrounding it. According to the film, LeRoy Snow was much struck by his father's moment of revelation. Historically, however, LeRoy made no mention of it in his minutes or newspaper stories and did not discuss it in print for thirty-five years. Certainly there are precedents for people

Edward H. Snow, a high councilor, reported the St. George Ward had 1,600+ members consisting of 300 families and 67 widows; 278 persons were paying tithing. The figure of 76 percent assumes one tithe-payer per family.

⁶⁴ Brooks, *Uncle Will Tells His Story*, 64. For other recollections of eyewitness accounts, see Deola S. Bell, Letter to Jay Bell, 12 August 1985, recalling her mother's (Ella Seegmiller) recollection of the conference; Genevieve Hardy Black, interviewed 17 February 1986, notes in my possession, describing Moroni McArthur's account of Snow's visit in the St. George East Stake conference, 4 February 1962 (unfortunately, there is no public record of speeches at the 1962 conference); Mata C. Gerrard (1941), in Church Manuscripts 5:185-186; Andrew Karl Larson, *"I Was Called to Dixie": The Virgin River Basin, Unique Experiences in Mormon Pioneering* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1961); Emma Coddum McArthur, interview notes, 17 February 1986; Moroni McArthur, family oral interview, 1959; Rea, "Windows of Heaven," 10-11; John Henry Schultz, "Interview with John Henry Schmutz," Oral History Project by Pearl Ghormley, 1 August 1973, LDS Church Archives; LeRoy Snow, "Special Manifestation," 1, 4, 8 and "The Lord's Way Out of Bondage," 440 and "From Despair to Freedom Through Tithing," 5-6, 8; Luen A. Woodbury, "John H. Schmutz," 39; Herald Snow, letter 1960. There is no way of telling how much LeRoy Snow's articles in the "Church Section" and *Improvement Era*, influenced the post 1930s recollections of those who attended the original conference.

being differentially perceptive about a spiritual experience. However, President Snow emphasized repeatedly from this time forth that he had received a revelation on tithing while in St. George.⁶⁵ On the return journey to Salt Lake City, Snow stated in Holden that the divine communication came in the "first meeting" in St. George. In Nephi he reflected that it came in a nondramatic way "that comes to us just as clearly and just as fully" as other types of revelation.⁶⁶ Though reflections about the manifestation have caused confusion between the date of the conference and the content of this discourse and another to adult stake members on 18 May, they agree that a revelation occurred.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Lorenzo Snow, Letter to Mary Ann Heyde, Sanpete Stake, 15 September 1899; original in possession of Brent Ashworth; photocopy in my possession; used by permission.

⁶⁶ "In Juab & Millard Stake," *Deseret Evening News*, 29 May 1899, 5, reprinted in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 2 June 1899, 11. See Andrew Jenson, "Manuscript History of Millard Stake," 25 May 1899, LDS Church Archives; *Journal History*, 26 May 1899, 3.

⁶⁷ Milton R. Hunter, "Will a Man Rob God?" 55, 57, for example, gives the correct date of the revelation and prophecy but mistakes Snow's discourse on 18 May for that given on 17 May. St. George historian Andrew Karl Larson, "I Was Called to Dixie," 46-53, also confused the day of the revelation, asserting that Arthur F. Miles, correspondent for the *Salt Lake Herald*, telegraphed a story to his paper about Snow's revelation immediately after the meeting. Horace Whitney, accompanying the party, possibly filed a story on the topic, but the *Herald* did not run a story about a revelation. A search of the Larson papers at Dixie College failed to locate the origin of this story.

Misdating the conference has occurred because of a typographical error in Lorenzo Snow, "Discourse," *Deseret Evening News*, 3, June 1899: 10; the "1" was omitted from the date of Snow's 18 May talk. This misprint was not corrected in the *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 6 June 1899: 6 or the "Discourse by President Lorenzo Snow," *Millennial Star*, 24 and 31 August 1899: 229-230, 234-235 republished the talk. Consequently, the mistaken date of 8 May has been widely held as the date for the conference. See Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 3:311-14; *Deseret News Church Almanac*, 1975:A68, 1976:A61, 1977:50, 1978:59, 1979:55, 1980:52, 1981:55, 1982:52, 1983:49, 1985:87, 1987:87, 1989-1990:289, 1991-1992:289, 1993-1994:351; Jan Shipp, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1985), 168; Glenn, "Lorenzo Snow," 10; *My Kingdom Shall Roll Forth: Readings in LDS Church History*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1979), 70. Bryant S. Hinckley, "Lorenzo Snow, A Strong and Gentle Leader of

Abraham O. Woodruff, Franklin D. Richards, and LeRoy Snow also spoke briefly during this first session; none mentioned tithing. In the afternoon session, Bishop Preston read the revelation on tithing in Doctrine and Covenants 119 (RLDS D&C 106) but only admonished parents to teach it to their children.⁶⁸ Evidently Snow did not tell his traveling companions of the revelation until that evening or the next morning, since thereafter, the emphasis of the conference focused on the necessity of paying tithing as a commandment.

LINKING TITHING AND RAINFALL

The film shows Snow instructing the congregation that if they:

“... observe this law fully and honestly from now on, you may go ahead and plow your lands, plant your seed, and I promise you in the name of the Lord that in due time clouds will gather, the latter rains from heaven will descend, your lands will be watered, and the rivers and ditches will be filled, and you will yet reap a harvest this very season!”⁶⁹

Men,” *The Faith of Our Pioneer Fathers* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft Inc., 1956), 51, misdates the revelation at 17 June.

⁶⁸ Richards, Journal Inserts, 17 May 1899; St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 17 May 1899, 129-30; George Bleak, “Annals of the Southern Utah Mission,” 17 May 1899, LDS Church Archives; “Special Conference,” *Washington County News*, 20 May 1899, [1].

⁶⁹ “*The Windows of Heaven*,” final shooting script (1962), 14, “The Windows of Heaven,” dialogue script (1970), 13. The film relies extensively on LeRoy Snow’s three recollections of his father’s promise: “Special Manifestation,” 4; “The Lord’s Way Out of Bondage,” 440; and “From Despair to Freedom,” 6. Accounts of the association with rain and tithing show considerable variation. Moroni McArthur’s memory (family oral history, 1959) is that Snow promised, “If they would pay their tithes and their offerings, the Church would have sufficient to get out of debt and they always would receive the early and the latter rains, and they wouldn’t suffer, and they’d always have a harvest after that.” LeRoy Snow, “The Lord’s Way Out of Bondage,” 440, said Snow told the St. George members to “plough and plant their land, and promis[ed] in the name of the Lord that clouds would gather and rains come and drench their lands, fill their ditches, and their harvest would be bounteous, if they paid a full tithing.” In both his earliest and final narrative, he paraphrases this account of his father’s promise. LeRoy Snow “From Despair to Freedom,” 6 and “Special Manifestation,” 4.

This promise, or prophecy, is incorrect. Obituaries, journals, media articles, speeches, official minutes that are available to researchers, auxiliary lesson manuals, and histories from 1899 to 1933 simply do not corroborate a promise of rain for tithing.⁷⁰

Contemporary sources paint quite a different picture. President Snow indeed made specific promises related to tithing; however, they were more reaching and apocalyptic, not related to that season's weather. In St. George, Snow promised on condition of repentance the Lord's forgiveness for past tithing neglect. He also stated that paying a full tithing "is an essential preparation for Zion that our enemies may not be suffered again to drive [out] its inhabitants."⁷¹ In June Snow again preached these promises in a Millard Stake conference and to a Salt Lake Stake priesthood meeting. He reemphasized them in the first Salt Lake Temple Solemn Assembly on July 2, 1899 by promising forgiveness for past tithing neglect, an outpouring of blessings and prosperity, sanctification, the preparation for Zion, and protection of the LDS Church from its enemies. On the other hand, if the members failed to pay their tithing "we will be scattered, just as the people of Jackson County were."⁷² In the context of recent renewed na-

⁷⁰ About a month later, the St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 11-12 June 1899, 141, 150, records a single possible allusion to such a promise. Stake President Daniel McArthur on 11 June "repeated the words of President Snow that except we pay our tithing this land will not be a land of Zion to us. Obedience to this law will sanctify us." The next day McArthur's counselor Erastus B. Snow "spoke concerning our duty to go ahead with the planting of seeds tho' there may seem to be a lack of water and if any do not do this he believed they would be sorry therefore before the end of the year." Though Erastus Snow may have been referring to Lorenzo Snow's promise a few weeks earlier, he may just as well have been referring to a heavy storm in the mountains on 2 June that had temporarily broken the drought. See also "Correspondents," *Washington County News*, 17 June 1899, [1]; "Local Chronology," *Ibid.*, 17 June 1899: [4].

⁷¹ "St. George Stake Historical Record, Book H," 17 May 1899, 126.

⁷² "From Proceedings of Solemn Assembly," 5:180-82; Clawson, *A Ministry of Meetings*, 2 July 1899, 71; Clawson, "Solemn Assembly," Rudger Clawson Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library; James Godson Bleak, "Salt Lake Temple Solemn Assembly Minutes, July 2, 1899, James Bleak present," James Godson Bleak papers, LDS Church Archives. 1-2, carbon copy. This last document is on the back of the stationary of Horton H. Harder, Salt Lake City, Utah.

tional persecution, this promise no doubt resonated with particular significance.⁷³ Limited publication of all or portions of promises continued throughout Lorenzo Snow's life, and after his death through the early 1950's.⁷⁴ From the mid-1940s, LDS literature has progressively moved away from the original promises of the Lord through President Snow toward LeRoy's memory of rain for tithing until today those original promises are no longer mentioned except in reprints of old publications.⁷⁵

⁷³ The election of B. H. Roberts, a member of the First Council of the Seventy and a polygamist, to the House of Representatives in November 1898, prompted enough public outcry that he was denied his seat. The threat of an anti-polygamy amendment to the U.S. Constitution and possible disfranchisement of Mormon voters plagued the Church until about 1903 when the hearings on Reed Smoot's election as senator resulted in the "second manifesto," definitively disassociating the Church from the practice of plural marriage. See Thomas G. Alexander *Mormonism in Transition*, 9-36; John Henry Smith, *Church, State, and Politics*, 443-448, 504-5.

⁷⁴ Examples of histories and biographies include Cowley, "Sketch of the Life of President Lorenzo Snow," 195; Orson F. Whitney, "President Lorenzo Snow," *Lives of Our Leaders: Character Sketches of Living Presidents and Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press 1901) 23; "President Lorenzo Snow, Brief Sketch of the Life of the Present Head of the Mormon Church," *The Kings and Queens of the Range*, (Salt Lake City: np., [ca. 1900 or 1901], [8]; Edward H. Anderson, *A Brief History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, (Independence: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co. 1902, 1920), 147; Franklin L. West, *Life of Franklin D. Richards*, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1924) 247; John Henry Evans, *Leaders in Zion: Sketches of Presidents John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Mutual Improvement Association, 1936), 133; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Church History and Modern Revelation* (Salt Lake City: Council of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1953) lesson 105, sec. 6. Preston Nibley was the first historian to quote LeRoy's recollections, but his account includes only the traditional promises, not the promise of rain for tithing. Nibley, "Lorenzo Snow," *The Presidents of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941), 204-5. Such orthodox histories during this time period as B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church* (1912 and 1930): 6:358-60, and Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1922, 1935, and 1979), 504, make fleeting mention of events at the St. George conference, are silent on any unusual event, and do not mention any kind of promise by President Snow.

⁷⁵ For example, see James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976) 450, (1992) 455; Church

President Snow and at least one other General Authority admitted that they didn't know the cause of the drought or how long it would last. In July, Snow told a Salt Lake audience, "I do not pretend to say why this [drought in St. George] was so."⁷⁶ Francis M. Lyman, present during Snow's St. George conference, returned to the still-stricken region in March 1900. Before he left on this assignment, President Snow had requested Lyman to counsel the members of the St. George Stake "to pray fervently to the Lord for the necessary moisture, and he [Snow] believed that the Lord would hear their prayers inasmuch as they strictly adhered to the law of tithing" but Lyman, while expressing Snow's sympathy about the drought did not link drought relief to the payment of tithing. "When untimely frosts and drouth shall cease we know not."⁷⁷ In fact, the drought cycle did not reverse until 1902.

Education System, *Church History in the Fullness of Times*, (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1989) 455; Leon R. Hartshorn, comp., *Classic Stories from the Lives of Our Prophets* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book 1979) 149-55; Richard O. Cowan, *The Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 15-17; Gibbons, *Lorenzo Snow*, 220; Bryant S. Hinckley, "Lorenzo Snow," 51-52; Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Sunshine of Good Will," *What of the Mormons?* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1947) 213-214; Gordon B. Hinckley, *Truth Restored* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1979), 138-40; Dean Hughes, *The Mormon Church: A Basic History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1986), 188; Hunter, "Will a Man Rob God?", 56-57; Madsen, "Lorenzo Snow," 86; Rea, "Windows of Heaven," 9-10; *Presidents of the Church*, Student Manual for Religion 345 (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979) 133-34; Romney, *The Life of Lorenzo Snow*, 431; Russell R. Rich, *Ensign to the Nations: A History of the Church from 1846 to 1972* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1972), 455; "Lorenzo Snow," *Church History Student Supplement*, Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1966) 48. *What of the Mormons?* was the first publication to use LeRoy Snow's account of the drought in St. George and the promise of rain for tithing. At that time, its author, Gordon B. Hinckley, was executive secretary of the Church Radio, Publicity, and Mission Literature Committee.

⁷⁶ "From Proceedings of Solemn Assembly."

⁷⁷ Journal History, 8 March 1900, 1; St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 11 March 1900, 198. Extent records of the conference do not record whether Lyman delivered Snow's message.

Thirty-five years after the conference, the promise that the drought would break if St. George Mormons paid tithing first appeared in three accounts that LeRoy Snow published in 1934, 1938, and 1941.⁷⁸ By the time the earliest account appeared, President Snow had been dead for almost thirty years. In these accounts, LeRoy states that his father requested daily weather reports from Dixie, but no available contemporary record substantiates such a request.⁷⁹

Thus, although no contemporary documents show Snow promising rain if the Saints paid tithing, they do show Snow promising the entire Church that, for paying a full tithing, the Lord would:

- forgive Church members for their past neglect of tithing,⁸⁰
- cause the Saints to prosper,
- cause the land to be sanctified,
- and prevent the Church's enemies from succeeding.

Contemporary records clearly indicate that President Snow did not give any special promise applying only to Church members in the St. George Stake. While reflecting on these promises during his evening supper on 17 May, Snow sighed, "I'm afraid I have said something that the Lord will not back me up."⁸¹

The conference lasted for another day. The evening session on 17 May was for young women, addressed by Sisters Snow, Richards, Smith, and Woodruff, followed on the morning of 18

⁷⁸ LeRoy Snow's three articles: "Special Manifestation," 1, 4, 8; "The Lord's Way Out of Bondage," 401-402, 439-442; and "From Despair to Freedom Through Tithing," 5-6, 8.

⁷⁹ LeRoy Snow, "The Lord's Way Out of Bondage," 440. In Harold Snow, Letter, 1960, Moroni McArthur also says that this request was made. The film shows Snow receiving and reading telegrams throughout the summer. Closeups show that one is dated 14 August 1889 while the second is dated 14 August 1899. Neither day is correct. The first major storm occurred 2 June 1899 and a larger one followed on 2 August 1899.

⁸⁰ Some members misunderstood this promise and thought it included forgiveness for all sins. Lyman clarified the misunderstanding and emphasized that it meant forgiveness only for past tithing improprieties. *Conference Report*, October 1899, 34, 36.

⁸¹ McArthur, family oral interviews, 1959; Harold Snow, Letter, 1960, repeats Moroni McArthur's account to him.

May by a meeting for the children. Snow indefatigably shook hands with all 835 Sunday School children, officers, and teachers, so they could say they had shaken hands with one who had shaken hands with Joseph Smith. At the following session for adults, Lyman, speaking for almost an hour, gave a history of tithing.⁸²

It seems probable that Snow had discussed his revelation with Church leaders before the afternoon session, since it was devoted to tithing. To a congregation of twelve hundred, William Dougall, Francis Lyman, and Franklin Richards discussed the law and blessings of paying a full tithe, followed by Snow.⁸³ Speaking confidently, Snow quoted Doctrine and Covenants 110,⁸⁴ announced his sense of a "most sacred obligation" to instruct the people, bore fervent testimony of Jesus Christ and Joseph and Hyrum Smith, referred to plural marriage,⁸⁵ affirmed that the Saints would experience great trials in the future, and then announced:

⁸² "President Snow and the Little Folks," *Deseret Evening News*, 18 May 1899, 2, reprinted in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 19 May 1899, 7; St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 18 May 1899, 131-32; Richards, Journal Inserts, 18 May 1899, 66; Seymour B. Young, Journal, 18 May 1899, 21:43-44.

⁸³ Lorenzo Snow, "Discourse," *Deseret Evening News*, 3 June 1899, 10; reprinted in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 6 June 1899, 6.

⁸⁴ Not in RLDS D&C, but in *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Independence: Herald House, 1977 printing), 2:47.

⁸⁵ Although outside the scope of this paper, Snow's comments on plural marriage in St. George are significant. He affirmed that it was a "true, pure and sacred principle," the practice of which was discontinued for "Lord has commanded it," and asserted flatly that during his presidency "not a single marriage of the kind has ever been performed in that [the Salt Lake] temple, nor in any other temple." Other plural marriages were in fact being performed, but probably without Snow's knowledge, and not in temples. Snow, "Discourse," *Deseret Evening News*, 3 June 1899, 10. "President Snow and Plural Marriage," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 20 May 1899, 4; "What is the Truth?" *ibid.*, 5 June 1899, 4, responded skeptically. Joseph F. Smith also spoke about plural marriage in St. George, and Francis Lyman made it a major subject of his discourses in Beaver and Kanosh. "No Plural Marriages," *Salt Lake Herald*, 19 May 1899, 1; St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 18 May 1899, 137-38; "Church Party on to Kanosh," *Deseret Evening News*, 23 May 1899, 1; reprinted in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News* 26 May 1899, 2; "End of Tour Is in Sight," *Salt Lake Herald*, 25 May 1899, 2.

The word of the Lord to you is not anything new; it is simply this: THE TIME HAS NOW COME FOR EVERY LATTER-DAY SAINT, WHO CALCULATES TO BE PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE AND TO HOLD HIS FEET STRONG UPON A PROPER FOUNDATION, TO GO AND DO THE WILL OF THE LORD AND TO PAY HIS TITHING IN FULL. That is the word of the Lord to you, and it will be the word of the Lord to every settlement throughout the land of Zion.⁸⁶

Snow admitted the Church's financial difficulties and announced his intention to stress tithing. If parents would teach their children to pay tithing, he promised, "then we will have a people prepared to go to Jackson county." He declared that the Christ was coming soon but that the Church congregation would "not hear the voice of God until we pay [a] full tithing and return to Jackson Co."⁸⁷

Snow linked Zion's redemption with temple ordinances and instructed local leaders to make full tithing a condition of entering the temple "to receive the highest blessings."⁸⁸ Being a full tithe-payer became a condition of temple worship during the twentieth century.

⁸⁶ In the film, Snow states: "The time has now come for every Latter-day Saint who calls himself a Saint to pay his tithing in full from this day forward. That is the word of the Lord to every settlement throughout Zion." *The Windows of Heaven*, final shooting script (1962), 13-14.

⁸⁷ St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 18 May 1899, 136. Both the *Deseret Evening News* and the *Deseret Semi-Weekly News* reported this comment as, "But we will not hear His voice until we build up Jackson county." Lorenzo Snow, "Discourse," in both papers. George Bleak, "Annals of the Southern Utah Mission," 11, states, "We will not hear the Lord's voice until Jackson County is built up by the Saints." An unsigned note written in pencil on the back of a 1904 weather report, LDS Church Archives, records Snow as saying, "The S.[aints] will not hear his voice, He will not appear among them until this [i.e., pay tithing] has been accomplished."

⁸⁸ Lorenzo Snow, "Discourse," 10. He also refers to these ordinances as "second blessings." For studies on the second anointing, see David John Burger, "'The Fullness of the Priesthood': The Second Anointing in Latter-day Saint Theology and Practices," *Dialogue* 16 (Spring 1983): 10-44, and "The Development of the Mormon Endowment Ceremony," *Dialogue* 20 (Winter 1987): 33-76; see also "Temple and Tabernacle," *Washington County News*, 15 July 1899, [3], for Snow's linkage of tithing and temple worthiness. His address also touched on the status of worthy single members in the next life.

After the second session, Snow and some of his party went to the temple. The film suggests that at a meeting "this evening" the group discussed the tithing revelation, but no known contemporary record documents such a meeting.⁸⁹

PREACHING THE REVELATION

On Friday, 19 May, Snow's group drove north to the hamlets of Washington, Leeds, and Toquerville. Although records about their return journey are not uniformly specific, they went on to hold conferences in Kanarraville, Cedar City, Parowan, Beaver, Kanosh, Meadow, Fillmore, Holden, Scipio, and Nephi, preaching either tithing or such related topics as the Church's financial condition in every known stop where conference summaries are available.⁹⁰

Reporters noticed the emphasis on tithing and at one point mentioned that Lyman "called for a reformation."⁹¹ This is the first time the term *reformation* is recorded. In Beaver, Lyman bore the

⁸⁹ Seymour B. Young, Journal, 18 May 1899, 44-45; "The Windows of Heaven," dialog script (1970), 13, 14. This statement is not in the surviving 1960 scripts.

⁹⁰ "Are Now Coming Towards Home," *Deseret Evening News*, 22 May 1899, 1; "Honors for President Snow," *Salt Lake Herald*, 23 May 1899, 1; "Given Warm Welcome," *Salt Lake Herald*, 21 May 1899, 1; "The Journey in the South," *Deseret Evening News*, 19 May 1899, 2; Seymour B. Young, Journal, 19-22 May 1899, 49-52; "Church Party at Beaver," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 May 1899, 1; reprinted in *Salt Lake Semi-Weekly Tribune*, 23 May 1899, 1; "Good Prospects Down at Beaver," *Deseret Evening News*, 25 May 1899, 5; Beaver Stake, Historical Record Book, 1892-1908, 22 May 1899, 147ff (LeRoy Snow, who filed the *Deseret Evening News* account, copied it in the stake clerk's minute book after the clerk's account of the conference); "End of Tour Is in Sight" [Kanosh], *Salt Lake Herald*, 25 May 1899, 2; "Enroute to Fillmore," *Deseret Evening News*, 25 May 1899, 6; "President Snow's Trip," *Salt Lake Herald*, 27 May 1899, 1; "Fillmore Gives Warm Welcome," *Deseret Evening News*, 25 May 1899, 6; "Party Now at Little Chicago" [a nickname for Nephi], *Deseret Evening News*, 26 August 1899, 2; William B. Preston, "The Law of Tithing," *Deseret Evening News*, 5 August 1899, 16; Journal History, 25 May 1899, 3; Minutes of Conferences and Sacrament Meetings [of Juab Stake], January 1890 to October 1909, 26 May 1899, 122, LDS Church Archives; "Will Arrive Home Tomorrow," *Deseret Evening News*, 26 May 1899, 2. See also reprinted accounts in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News* and the Journal History of appropriate dates.

⁹¹ "Honors for President Snow," *Salt Lake Herald*, 23 May 1899, 1

first recorded testimony that "the word of the Lord had come to this Prophet of the Lord . . . commanding him to bring this matter [tithing] before the people." In the same meeting, Snow gave two reasons for his emphasis on tithing: first, "we cannot go to Zion unless we observe this law [of tithing]," and second, the Church was in financial bondage and the only "relief is for the Saints to observe this law. . . . In the past, men who have never paid tithing have received recommends to the House of the Lord, but they should not in the future."⁹² In Meadow, Snow announced, apparently for the first time, that he intended to preach tithing in all the stakes of Zion, adding, "If the people whom we have visited will observe this law, my life will be preserved and I shall see you all again but if you do not I shall not see you again."⁹³ No information about Meadow's tithing is currently available, but Snow did not return to the hamlet before his death. In Holden, he told the Saints that he left Salt Lake City without understanding why he was going to St. George. "But . . . in the first meeting in St. George," he understood that "there is one important command that was given to the Latter-day Saints that has not been observed; it is the law of tithing."⁹⁴

At Nephi on 26 May, Snow spoke privately to his party, asking their forgiveness for anything that "has been said or done by myself that has not been altogether pleasing to you." He may have had reference to some light-hearted behavior during the trip, including a horserace against Joseph F. Smith's buggy and team. He testified that he had received a revelation in St. George: "This manifestation that the Lord has given to me, and that you have received and born testimony to, can never be forgotten. I know it just as well as I know anything that I ever did know." He then discussed two ways of receiving revelation:

One way is to receive it powerfully by the Holy Ghost falling upon us. Then there is another way that comes to us just as clearly and just as fully, as the way in which the Lord bestows upon us this revelation,

⁹² "Good Prospects Down at Beaver," *Deseret Evening News*, 25 May 1899, 5.

⁹³ "Enroute to Fillmore," *Deseret Evening News*, 25 May 1899, 6. He made a similar statement in Holden and, again, did not visit that hamlet before his death.

⁹⁴ "In Juab & Millard Stake," *Deseret Evening News*, 29 May 1899, 5.

when the Spirit of the Lord rests upon us and fills us from the crown of our head to the soles of our feet. Now, this which I have received was not with the power of God resting upon me from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, as it was when He gave me a knowledge of this Gospel. . . . This revelation that was given to me in regard to this matter of tithing . . . , was given to me just as fully and I know it just as clearly as any manifestation the Lord ever gave me.

Snow reemphasized that he intended to preach tithing to all the stakes of Zion and laid his listeners under the same charge:

The Lord requires it of us now to go to and perform those sacred duties that he requires of us in the beginning. He has not urged it upon us in the past as He has some revelations, perhaps, but He requires it now of us. This visit of ours, there is something marvelous about it, from the day we commenced to talk upon this matter in St. George and throughout all the settlements. This will be a matter of record that will go down to generations to come; it will be eternal and everlasting. Everyone of you that has been a member of this company will have this matter renewed to you, and you will see it clearly, and you will see one of the greatest revolutions that has ever been made since this Church was organized, in this matter.⁹⁵

LeRoy Snow, thirty-five years later, remembered that his father placed the group under covenant to be special witnesses to the St. George revelation on tithing. Greatly moved, Francis M. Lyman recorded in his journal: "I was almost overcome and could hardly control my feelings, and was ashamed of my childishness."⁹⁶

In Nephi, the party took the train to Salt Lake City, arriving 27 May. Their journey had lasted seventeen days, during which they had visited sixteen communities and held twenty-four meetings, where Snow delivered twenty-six addresses.

⁹⁵ "Remarks made by PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW, at Nephi, May 26th, 1899, to the members of the company who accompanied him on his trip to St. George [sic] and through the settlements visited from May 15th to May 27th, 1899," Lorenzo Snow Collection, LDS Church Archives. This account is unsigned, but Gurber, *Church Manuscripts*, 5:174-76, identifies the identical document in his collection as written by John R. Winder. See also LeRoi Snow, "From Despair to Freedom," 6. Thomas Romney drew on LeRoy Snow's files for his account of this experience in *The Life of Lorenzo Snow*, 436-37.

⁹⁶ As quoted in LeRoi C. Snow, "Special Manifestation," 8.

THE TITHING REFORMATION BEGINS

Although reporters from the *Deseret Evening News* and the *Salt Lake Tribune* interviewed Snow the same day he returned home, neither published account mentions tithing or a revelation in St. George. But possibly hinting at recent events, Snow mused: "I am highly satisfied. . . . It is the most enjoyable trip we have ever made. . . . I contemplate traveling through all the Stakes in Zion, in the near future."

Although the film shows Snow as greatly concerned with the drought in southern Utah, available records show that he was the only member of the party to mention it and, although he called it "the severest one that has ever visited the country," he optimistically added: "They have faith that they will soon have moisture."⁹⁷

Whatever his reticence to reporters, Snow wasted no time, as the film depicts, in spreading his tithing message to the whole Church. Within the next month and a half, he preached tithing at a Mutual Improvement Association (MIA) conference in Salt Lake City, a conference at Millard Stake to dedicate the meetinghouse in Deseret on 3-5 June, a Salt Lake Stake priesthood meeting on 12 June,⁹⁸ and in a solemn assembly of priesthood holders.

At the MIA conference, held 28-30 May, Snow warned the young men and women that if they did not observe the law of tithing, "the land shall not be sanctified . . . , [nor] be a land of Zion unto them." B. H. Roberts proposed a resolution at the conference's end: "That we accept the doctrine of tithing . . . as the

⁹⁷ "Pres. Snow Is Home Again," *Deseret Evening News*, 27 May 1899, 1; reprinted in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 30 May 1899, 6; "Church Party Returns," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 27 May 1899, 5; reprinted in *Salt Lake Semi-Weekly Tribune*, 30 May 1899, 10. He commented twice more on the drought that summer, once to a Salt Lake Stake priesthood meeting in June and again to a solemn assembly in July, in neither case minimizing its seriousness. Lorenzo Snow, "Remarks," *Deseret Evening News*, 24 June 1899, 3; reprinted in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 27 June 1899, 6, and *Journal History*, 12 June 1899, 51; "From Proceedings of Solemn Assembly," 5:180-182; LeRoy Snow, "The Lord's Way Out of Bondage," 440, and "Special Manifestation," 8.

⁹⁸ See *Deseret Evening News*: "Deseret Conference," 5 June 1899, 2; "Pres. Snow's Trip South," 7 June 1899, 5, "Back From Deseret Today," 6 June 1899, 2; "Remarks," 24 June 1899, 3.

present word and will of the Lord unto us, and we do accept it with all our heart; we will ourselves observe it, and we will do all in our power to get the Latter-day Saints to do likewise.' All present unanimously adopted the resolution by rising to their feet and shouting 'Aye.'"⁹⁹

The solemn assembly in the Salt Lake Temple on 2 July was the first of its kind to be held in the building and included General Authorities, stake presidents, auxiliary presidencies, and bishops. Representatives from every stake between Mexico and Canada attended, thanks to discounted railroad tickets and, in some cases, Church financial assistance. Between six and seven hundred people crowded into the terrestrial and celestial rooms for the nine-hour meeting.¹⁰⁰ Snow recounted his St. George experience in greater detail than ever before: "The Lord has shown me most clearly and distinctly that this is what I should say to you to-day. The Lord testified to me while we were in St. George, before the conference there, that this is what we should talk to the people [about]." After discussing the drought and the congressional attempt "to disfranchise us," Snow reassured Church members

⁹⁹ Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, 3:317; Snow, "Our Fourth General Conference," *Young Woman's Journal* 10 (July 1899): 296; and "President Lorenzo Snow's Message on Tithing," *Young Woman's Journal* 35 (September 1924): 184-85. Although printed twenty-five years apart, these articles report the same discourse. The two accounts differ slightly; I have been unable to locate the original minutes.

¹⁰⁰ William Salmon, untitled and undated document in Gurber, "Church Manuscripts," 5:173; "From Proceedings of Solemn Assembly, S[alt] L[ake] Temple, July 2, 1899," in *ibid.*, 5:180-182; James Godson Bleak, "Salt Lake Temple Solemn Assembly Minutes, July 2, 1899, James Bleak present," James Godson Bleak papers, LDS Church Archives, 1-2, carbon copy. This document is on the back of the stationery of Horton H. Harder, Salt Lake City, Utah. Anthony W. Ivans, "Journal of Anthony Woodard Ivans," Utah State Historical Society, 2 July 1899, 2:62; "People Must Pay Tithing," *Salt Lake Herald*, 3 July 1899, 1; Deseret Ward Millard Stake Historical Record, 7 July 1899, 146, LDS Church Archives; "Tithing Must be Paid," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 3 July 1899, 1. Journal History, 2 July 1899, 2, gives the following information: "A full report of the proceedings, taken by Church reporter Arthur Winder, will be found in an appendix in the Journal of the President's Office, kept by Secretary George F. Gibbs; and a duplicate copy of this document is found among the records of the temple." Unfortunately these records are not available at this time for research.

that they were "a good people" but bluntly warned, "Because [the Lord] loves us He has forgiven us our forgetfulness of this holy law in the past. . . . I say it in the name of the Lord. He will not forgive this people any longer! Should we continue in this dilatory way of paying tithing, we will be scattered, just as the people of Jackson County were." He asserted that if all members had paid a full tithe in 1898 the Church would have had an additional million dollars in income; full tithes from 1886 to 1898 would have swelled the Church treasury with an additional \$10 million. He offered the following resolution:

We who [stand] before the people as members of the Presidency of Stakes, as High Counselors, as Bishops and Bps. counselors, as teachers in Wards, as officers of the [Mutual] Improvement Assocns, and of Sund[ay] Schools and of Primary Assocns, as home missionaries hereby covenant to pay our tithing and use our influence to get others to do likewise.

The motion was "seconded and carried unanimously."¹⁰¹

The following Sunday saw tithing discussed in numerous Church meetings from Canada to Mexico as returning leaders reported on the assembly of the week before. Some speakers discussed specifics of the assembly, while others mentioned very little because of its sacred setting.¹⁰² But Snow and the General Authorities promptly followed up with visits to major stakes in Utah and Idaho. Some areas had already taken action. Tithing reform was a repeated topic of discourses in Thatcher, Arizona, by the end of June.¹⁰³

During Snow's previous sixty years of Church service, he had given only two or three recorded talks on tithing; but he spoke to the topic forty-four documented times during the re-

¹⁰¹ "From Proceedings of Solemn Assembly," 5:180-82; St. George Historical Record, Book H., 12 August 1899, 155. See also James Godson Bleak, "Salt Lake Temple Solemn Assembly Minutes," 1-2.

¹⁰² See for example, Deseret Ward Millard Stake Historical Record, 9 July 1899, 146, and other stake records for July 1899. The 2 July proceedings were not discussed in the St. George Stake until a special priesthood meeting on 12 August. St. George Stake Historical Record, Book H., 12 August 1899, 153-56.

¹⁰³ Francis Wilford Moody, Journal, [no day] June 1899, 116-17, Special Collections, Lee Library.

maining two and a half years of his life. Snow concentrated his visits to about twelve stakes in Utah and Idaho during the latter half of 1899 and two during 1900. There were forty stakes in the Church at that time, but the call of a tithing reformation went Church-wide.¹⁰⁴

Back in St. George, the drought continued. Despite a heavy downpour in the mountains on 2 June, there was no rain in the town itself. The drought was prematurely declared over, for by the end of July, early crops were pronounced good but water was "failing fast."¹⁰⁵ Stake minutes show that the only sermons on tithing given in the area that summer were by Daniel McArthur, Franklin D. Holt, William Andrus, and Erastus B. Snow. None of them promised rain if the Saints paid tithing, yet tithing donations jumped from about 75 percent in 1898 to 94 percent in 1899.¹⁰⁶ Still, visiting the stake in March 1900, Francis M. Lyman commented that St. George "has not done so much more in tithing

¹⁰⁴ Synopses of discourses on tithing by General Authorities were distributed outside the Wasatch Front through the *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, the *Salt Lake Herald [Semi-Weekly]*, *Salt Lake Semi-Weekly*, and community papers. A few mission periodicals kept up on important discourses by Church leaders. Overseas the *Millennial Star* carried minutes of general conference and important discourses. *Der Stern* published only general conference minutes. President Snow's 7 October 1900 general conference discourse was published in mission periodicals: "Dis Orlöfung Zions," *Der Stern* 33 (1 and 15 January 1901): 1-3, 17-19; "The Redemption of Zion," *Millennial Star* 62 (29 November 1900): 753-55 (it misdates the talk as 7 November); "The Redemption of Zion," *Truth Restored* 2 (October 1900): 5-7.

¹⁰⁵ See "Our Correspondents," "Local and General," "Local Chronology," and "Utah News" columns in *Washington County News*, 1899: under the following dates and pages: 3 June [4]; 17 June [4]; 15 July [2, 4]; 22 July [1, 2]; 29 July [4].

¹⁰⁶ Stake records report increases in dollar amounts and decreases in numbers of non-tithe-payers for Overton, Pine Valley, Price, Santa Clara, Gunlock, and Washington. The figure of 97 percent is derived from the 1898 count of 300 families in St. George plus 67 widows, giving 367 as the total potential tithe payers. There are no statistics available for the total population of the stake in 1899, but if the 1898 population is used, with a known 1,250 tithe payers, a total of 94 percent is derived. These individuals paid \$12,368.30 in cash and \$18,467.39 in kind for a total of \$30,835.69 and a per-tithe-payer amount of \$424.25 in tithing contributions for 1899. St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 12 June 1898, 51; 12 August 1899, 155; 10-11 March 1900, 191-93, 198.

matters as other Stakes last year.”¹⁰⁷

According to LeRoy Snow’s memory thirty-five years later and the film depiction sixty-two years later, however, his father specifically linked tithe-paying with the end of the drought. In the film, Snow reviews a report of St. George tithing and exclaims: “Wonderful, wonderful, the good people of Dixie are not only paying one-tenth of their income, but they must be giving all they have to the Lord’s work!” Yet discouraged with the lack of rainfall, Snow left his office one summer day and went to his bedroom in the adjacent Beehive House where LeRoy overheard him prayerfully pleading with the Lord to “keep thy promise and vindicate the words of thy servant through whom thou didst speak.” LeRoy remembered his father as “depressed” and distracted, unable to “keep his mind on his work,” until finally, on 2 August, a telegram arrived at the First Presidency’s office. LeRoy signed for it, opened it, and promptly called out, “Father, they have had rain in St. George.” This part of the film is historically accurate. The seventeen-month drought had been broken by a rainfall of 1.89 inches, and the ground was so parched that there was no run-off. “Snow took the telegram,” according to his son, “read it very slowly, and after a few moments, got up from his desk, and traversed to his connecting residence” where LeRoy again overheard his father pray: “Father, what can I do to show my appreciation for the blessing which thou hast given to the good people in St. George? Thou hast fulfilled thy promise to them and vindicated the words spoken through thy servant. Do show me some special thing that I can do to prove my love for thee.” Snow returned to the office, his face “filled with happiness.”¹⁰⁸

Though not depicted in the film, this welcome rainstorm

¹⁰⁷ St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 11 March 1900, 198.

¹⁰⁸ The film, *Windows of Heaven*, follows faithfully this account by LeRoy Snow in “Special Manifestation,” and “The Lord’s Way Out of Bondage,” Figures on the rainfall were as of noon, 2 August, with no report of whether the rain had stopped or was continuing. “Drought Broken at St. George,” *Deseret Evening News*, 2 August 1899, 1, reprinted in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 4 August 1899, 5. The on-camera telegram is misdated 14 August, and the crew created rain effects from a pump and fire hoses, using cement mixers to pour rushing water into a ditch. Whitaker, “Windows of Heaven,” 39.

caused extensive damage. Part of the Modena road washed out to a depth of twelve feet, and roads near Middleton, Leeds, and elsewhere suffered many bad cuts. Although the rain made a fourth crop of alfalfa and a crop of stubble corn possible, wheat production dropped by estimates of 14 to 60 percent, depending on the locale. Neither in Church nor newspaper records is the rain connected with paid tithing.¹⁰⁹ In fact, among the stake meetings held that summer were two shortly after each major storm in June and August. Though speakers expressed concern about the drought, no one mentioned rain as a promised blessing for paid tithing.¹¹⁰ Ten days after the August cloudburst, a special priesthood meeting was held on 12 August, reporting the 2 July Solemn Assembly held in the Salt Lake Temple. Several speakers stressed the importance of paying tithing. Erastus B. Snow, counselor in the stake presidency, stressed that those who do not pay tithing "will not be sanctified . . . , for this land shall not be a Zion to us . . . [and] will not be called nor permitted to take part in the building up of the City and Temple in Jackson Co. Mo."¹¹¹

CONCLUSION

What can be said, in summary, about the strong image prevalent in the minds of many members that a renewed emphasis on tithing began in a historical event: Lorenzo Snow's prophetic promise to the struggling Saints in St. George that the windows of heaven would open metaphorically in blessing and literally in breaking the drought if they would pay their tithing? The evidence is conclusive that Lorenzo Snow indeed received a revelation about the importance of renewed emphasis on tithing and made inspired promises churchwide about the continued existence of the Church if the Saints of his day would obey this principle.

¹⁰⁹ "Own State—St. George," *Deseret Evening News*, 24 August 1899, 7, reprinted in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 25 August 1899, 7; "The Drought Broken," *Washington County News*, 5 August 1899, [1]; "Correspondents," *ibid.*, 19 August 1899, [1]; St. George Stake, Historical Record, Book H., 12 August 1899, 154.

¹¹⁰ St. George Historical Record, Book H, 10-11 June 1899, 141-47 and 12 August 1899, 154-56.

¹¹¹ St. George Historical Record, Book H., 12 August 1899, 156.

However, despite numerous opportunities to remind the people that it would rain if they paid their tithing and despite great motivation to do so until drought cycle broke in 1902, neither the ecclesiastical leaders in St. George Stake nor General Authorities made such reminders. Available contemporary evidence, including LeRoy Snow's own accounts, provide no evidence of such a promise, yet it was LeRoy's triple accounts, published some thirty-five years after witnessing the event, which created the link between rain and tithing. Perhaps his memory was faulty and he did not consult his own records; or perhaps a fuller account lies in records not yet available to researchers.

In any case, the prophetic call to tithe more diligently caused Church revenues to increase markedly and immediately. Between June and the October general conference, 1899, tithing increased \$72,000 over the previous year.¹¹² The number of members who paid at least some tithing jumped from 18.4 percent of the total stake membership in 1898 to 25.6 percent in 1899; by 1900, tithing had tripled the 1898 figures and grew another 3.3 percent in 1901.¹¹³ The increase in tithing peaked in 1910 at around 59.3 percent; by 1925 it had dropped to 25.3 percent.¹¹⁴ Lack of federal persecution, and standardizing a single tithing as one-tenth of one's annual income no doubt made tithe-paying seem more possible as well.

Despite Snow's dream of seeing the Church out of debt, he died on 10 October 1901, before the Church was solvent. The first

¹¹² The by-month figures for 1889 and 1899 are: June, \$23,000/\$28,700; July, \$17,900/\$50,900; August, 14,800/\$37,200; and September \$11,400/\$46,700. \$18,000 had been paid in the entire month of October in 1898, but tithing during the first five days of October 1899 alone surpassed that figure with \$22,000. "Farmington—Conference Continued, *Deseret Evening News*, 20 September 1899, 7, reprinted in *Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, 22 September 1899, 8; and *Journal History*, 18 September 1899, 10; "Saints in Conference," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 18 September 1899, 7, reprinted in *Salt Lake Semi-Weekly Tribune*, 12 September 1899, 11; "President Lorenzo Snow," *Conference Reports*, October 1899, 23-29; "Talked on Tithing," *Salt Lake Herald*, 18 September 1899, 1. Where differences in numbers and calculations occurred, I used the most recent account with mathematical corrections.

¹¹³ Quinn, "LDS Church Finances."

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

issue of bonds during Lorenzo Snow's presidency was paid off by 1903. By January 1907, the other two \$500,000 issue of bonds were also paid off. At April conference, 1907, President Joseph F. Smith announced: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints owes not a dollar that it cannot pay at once. At last we are in a position that we can pay as we go. We do not have to borrow any more, and will not have to if the Latter-day Saints continue to live their religion and observe this law of tithing. It is the law of revenue to the Church."¹¹⁵

Snow had established a three-part policy of fiscal management: emphasize tithing, avoid deficit spending, and follow accepted accounting procedures. The Church departed from its policy against deficit spending twice, once during the Great Depression of the 1920s and 1930, and again during the building boom under Henry D. Moyle, first counselor to David O. McKay, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Both departures proved financially devastating to the Church.¹¹⁶

Fittingly, it was during the second crisis when the Church was struggling to regain its economic balance that it authorized the filming of *The Windows of Heaven*, recreating for another generation of Saints Lorenzo Snow's revelation for the temporal salvation of the Church some sixty years earlier.

¹¹⁵ *Deseret News Church Almanac*, 1991-92, 290; Smith, *Conference Report*, April 1907, 7.

¹¹⁶ Quinn, "Parting the Corporate Veil;" Quinn, "LDS Finances;" Quinn, "I-Thou vs. I-It," 32-33, 38-39.

Plurality, Patriarchy, and the Priestess: Zina D. H. Young's Nauvoo Marriages

*Martha Sonntag Bradley and
Mary Brown Firmage Woodward*

In the evening's dusk of 27 October 1842, Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs and her husband, Henry Bailey Jacobs, sat down to supper. Zina was six months pregnant with their first child. Henry had recently returned from a mission to the eastern states and was about to leave on another. They had much to talk about for it was Zina's wedding day. That afternoon, Zina's brother Dimick had sealed her to the Prophet Joseph Smith as one of his plural wives.¹

MARTHA SONNTAG BRADLEY, formerly of BYU's History Department, teaches at the University of Utah, is co-editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, and the author of community, county, and institutional histories. She is the mother of four daughters and two sons. MARY BROWN FIRMAGE WOODWARD, a descendant of Zina D. H. Young, has done research for years on her maternal history. She lives in Provo with her husband, Ralph Woodward. Together Marti and Mary are preparing a multi-generational biography of "the Zinas," beginning with Zina Baker Hunter.

¹ The marriage ordinance, or sealing, as first initiated by Joseph Smith in Nauvoo, joins husbands and wives in a marriage union for "time and eternity." Children

Zina's and Henry's story is one of the most challenging in LDS Church history. By the time Zina was twenty-five, she was married to one man and sealed to two others—both presidents of the Mormon Church.² She was a member of the elite inner circle of Saints; and in the Great Basin, she became a leader of Mormon women. Zina's story has assumed mythic proportions over time, both her version and those of others presenting intriguing questions about the relationship between content, form, and motive. Nevertheless, examining the story of Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs Smith Young's Nauvoo marriages from a feminist perspective can help us understand the origins of plural marriage and particularly how it enhanced Mormon patriarchy. By introducing plural marriage in the early 1830s to the most trusted inner circle of Saints, Joseph Smith created a new community order, a secretive and exclusive system of loyalties, and a network of familial ties based on patriarchy. Plural marriage created a dynamic institution by male priesthood power and dependent on a supportive, obedient, compliant female class.

Zina Diantha Huntington was eighteen years old when she arrived with her parents and younger siblings at Quincy on the banks of the Mississippi. They had been members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for six years, difficult years during which they had been driven from several homes. The men in Zina's family were priesthood leaders and confidants of Joseph Smith. Her father, William Huntington, helped organize the exodus of the Mormons out of Missouri.

born under this covenant are similarly sealed to their parents. In Mormon temples, these ordinances are available by proxy for the dead (not practiced in Nauvoo). One could also be sealed for time only or for eternity only. Zina and women like her who were sealed for eternity but not for time were referred to as "spiritual wives." It is not always clear whether these marriages were sexually consummated.

² Zina was sealed for eternity to Joseph Smith and for time to Brigham Young. For convenience, instead of using her full name (Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs Smith Young) we will refer to her by the form she traditionally used and by which she was most often known during her life: Zina D. H. Young. The name of her sister, Presendia Huntington Buell Kimball, appears in contemporary documents in at least three ways: Presendia, Prescendia, and Prescindia. We have standardized it here to Presendia.

William Huntington was a prosperous farmer in upstate New York with two hundred acres of land, a house, two good barns, a large stock of cattle, horses, carriages, and farming implements nearly debt free. Then he and his wife, Zina Baker Huntington, joined the Mormons in 1835. Within months, William sold off his property and moved with eight of their ten family to Kirtland. (One child had died in infancy; a grown son, Chauncy, stayed behind in Watertown). The children, ranging from early twenties on down, were Dimick, Presendia, Adaline, Nancy, William, Zina, Oliver, and John. By the time the Huntingtons left Kirtland for Missouri in July 1838, William had lost most of their savings and was, like many others, struggling to help his family survive.

They went first to Far West, then to Adam-ondi-Ahman where William acted as a commissary for the people who fled from mob violence in Far West. After the surrender of the Church in Far West, William became a special agent for the poor in the movement out of Missouri. Family friend Benjamin F. Johnson was inspired by their courage. "Zina and her mother were much devoted to their religion," he wrote, "and often at Mother Huntington's did we have the most spirited and enjoyable testimony of power and never has it left me." Zina's fluency in speaking in tongues seemed particular evidence of her special status in the community of Saints.³

Religion had always been the center of existence for Mother Zina. As a young woman during the second Great Awakening, she searched for a personal awareness of the spirit, hungry for assurance that there was a God and that he approved of her life. Zina Diantha was, therefore, raised in a home where discussions of spiritual matters were intermixed with speculation about the weather or recipes for the morning's bread. Tradition and gender dictated the borders of their world. Still, gender did not restrict their access to spirituality with its attendant personal and social power. The rhetoric of Mormonism allured them with its descriptions of being God's chosen people; after Nauvoo, an afterlife as queens and priestesses ministering to kingdoms, principalities,

³ Benjamin F. Johnson, "My Life's Review," 57, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

and worlds without end was added to this general Christian picture. Nevertheless, in the Mormon context, actual power—patriarchal priesthood power—was male, extended to women through their association with righteous men.⁴

Furthermore, the Huntingtons coped with personal and social disruption in their frequent and dramatic moves. Accelerated change resulting from the Industrial Revolution, from the American obsession with acquiring land, and from the drive toward improved social status upset traditional gender roles in Jacksonian society.⁵ Thus, the two Zinas also sought stability in

⁴ Michael Quinn's essay, "Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood Since 1843," in *Women and Authority*, edited by Maxine Hanks, (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), pp. 365-409, suggests an alternative viewpoint. Endowed Mormon women have always had the priesthood, according to Quinn although the Church has never created offices for Mormon women for the exercise of that power. Contemporary tradition on the issue is that Mormon women have access to priesthood through their husbands. According to Quinn, "The conferral of priesthood on *individual* women occurred through what Joseph Smith and associates called the "Holy Order" or "Anointed Quorum" (men and women who had received the priesthood endowment) (p. 366). Quinn effectively establishes that there was some confusion among Church leaders about the significance of the endowment in terms of priesthood during 1842-43. Numerous contemporary accounts show their struggle to find the right language with which to describe the empowering Mormon men felt from the endowment and its significance in relation to their wives. Quinn describes their "euphemisms" to describe the second anointing, again struggling to accurately catch its significance. Nevertheless, it is the assertion of this paper that Smith never intended to extend actual priesthood power to women, but rather instituted a male priesthood hierarchy which permanently excluded them from admittance. Again, language seems to be key in understanding the distinction between the male relationship to priesthood and the female relationship. Women in the early church clearly understood and frequently maintained that they had access to priesthood and that they had the right to it, but that the men in their lives—usually their husbands but occasionally their fathers—were to act as mediators with the Lord. It was only through their relationship with men that women had actual access to priesthood power.

⁵ Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), offers significant insights into the relationship between religion and culture in the early days of the American republic, arguing that during these important decades American religion was democratized and common people played a new role in religious activity.

their relationships through religion.

When they arrived in Illinois in April 1839, they were "blessed with good health."⁶ Nevertheless, they had lost all their material possessions and had, with the other Saints, been in danger of injury or death, suffered from malnourishment, and undergone the rigors of the recent winter. Brothers Dimick and William, Jr., had preceded the family to Illinois, and Dimick had secured a cabin four miles east of Quincy where the families stopped for two or three weeks. Father William had gone straight to Commerce, where he lived with Sidney Rigdon. When he summoned the family, they obediently moved on, lingering only long enough to bury Dimick's little daughter. They arrived, only three days after Joseph Smith and his family, on 16 May 1839. It was "a wild, forsaken, sickening place, for it was very sickly there," Oliver later remembered. Brother William took up residence with Joseph Smith and "stayed there all summer"⁷ in 1839, but the rest of the family clung together, struggling to survive on the disease-ridden swampland east of the Mississippi River. Zina's reminiscence corresponds with Oliver's—a city of "sickness [and] poverty," transformed into blessings [brought through] the word of God by his Prophet."⁸ Joseph Smith sent his adopted daughter, Julia Murdock Smith, then nine years old, to nurse the Huntingtons and made a personal circuit of all the families suffering with illness daily, laying his hands in blessing upon the most critically ill.⁹

The family sank to its lowest point on 8 July 1839 when Zina Baker Huntington died from malaria. Oliver lamented:

⁶ William Huntington, Sr., "A Brief Sketch of the Life of William Huntington Sen.," photocopy of a holograph in my possession. This autobiographical essay (undated) details William's life before the Saints left Nauvoo and also includes diary entries between 9 February 1846 and 2 August 1846. After being in the possession of the family for a number of years, it is part of the Zina D. H. Young Collection, Historical Department Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter LDS Church Archives).

⁷ Oliver Huntington, *Diary*, 39-40, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City.

⁸ Zina Diantha Huntington Jacobs Young, *Autobiography*, n.d., not paginated; Box 2, file 17, Zina D. H. Young Collection.

⁹ *Ibid.*

"There was scarce anone [*sic*] well and strong enough to dig a grave. . . . Indeed, we were a pitiful sight and none to pity us but God and his prophet."¹⁰ Still in the throes of fever, the survivors moved into a house that brother William and Dimick had built in the woods along the banks of the river. "There Oh God, witness the scenes we have passed through! We were all sick and hardly able to get a drink of water. He only knows how we lived or on what we lived for none of us was able to work hard."¹¹

Benjamin F. Johnson found them in this plight:

Mother Huntington, with others just before my arrival had sickened and died, while Sister Zina, under this great bereavement was confined to her bed with no one of the family [present]. And while feeling to mourn with her and to sorrow in the sickness and death around me; it was still a great happiness to minister comfort to her who was thoughtful of me when a homeless prisoner and comparative stranger. And I will here say that thru all my associations of youth, by no one was I more impressed with [the] purity and dignity of true womanhood than by her.¹²

Joseph Smith manifested the tenderest solicitude for this struggling and bereaved family. In a story that paralleled that of others bonded to him during that difficult time, he had all of the children except Oliver (who went to Hiram Clark's) brought to his house where Emma nursed them back to health. Eighteen-year-old Zina stayed for three months during the winter of 1839-40. In an undated autobiography, Zina praised the Smiths' generosity: "My Fathers life was dispared of. President Joseph took us all home except Oliver he went to Hiram Clarks (they having built a house) some times 30 or 40 would come from there tents and wagons to shake with the ague or have chills on President Smiths floor just to be in the shade. Sister Emma was like a mother, and [I] Fancy I can see the pales of Gruel and quarts of Composition that was retailed to the sick in those shadowy times."¹³ All of the children

¹⁰ Oliver Huntington, Diary, 40.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Benjamin F. Johnson, Biographical Sketch of Zina D. Young, 1896, Zina D. H. Young Collection.

survived, and the widowed William married Lydia Clisbee Partridge, the widow of the first bishop of the Church, Edward Partridge, later that year.

That same winter at the Smith residence, Zina received numerous courtship visits from Henry Bailey Jacobs, a friend of her brothers, who often accompanied Oliver to the house. Simultaneously, Joseph Smith in private conversations taught her the principle of plural marriage, suggesting that she become his spiritual wife.¹⁴ He pressed her for an answer on at least three separate occasions, but she avoided answering him. Weighing against such a proposal was her affection for Emma, her respect for traditional Christian monogamy, the strangeness of this new matrimonial system, and the secrecy it would require. Influencing her toward acceptance were Zina's gratitude for the kindnesses done her whole family and, more importantly, her wholehearted acceptance of him as her spiritual, ecclesiastical, and social leader. She considered him a prophet, God's spokesman, and the embodiment of male priesthood power which was so intimately interwoven with her view of Mormonism as the only church that held divine authority, the only church of which God approved.¹⁵ As an eighteen-year-old girl, she must have also felt flattered by a proposal from the group's most powerful and influential male.

Zina is most circumspect, even in later reminiscences, about her reaction; but records of other young women similarly ap-

¹³ Zina D. H. Young, *Autobiography*. Between 1839 and 1842, Joseph and Emma Smith and their four children lived in the "Homestead," a log and frame house on the west side of Main Street just south of the intersection of Main and Water streets. It was not large, and the constant stream of patients and guests must have severely strained their resources. Joseph Smith III later remembered that the house was "generally overrun with visitors. There was scarcely a Sunday in ordinary weather that the house and yard were not crowded—the yard with teams and the house with callers. This made a heavy burden of added toil for Mother and unnecessary expense for Father." In Mary A. Smith Anderson and Bertha A. Anderson Hulmes, eds., *Joseph Smith III and the Restoration* (Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1952), 72. Although the Word of Wisdom had been announced in Kirtland, the "composition" to which Zina refers was most likely a liquor-based home remedy for digestive disorders.

¹⁴ Zina D. H. Young, *Autobiography*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

proached while working in the Smith home may be somewhat analogous. Zina's stepsisters Eliza and Emily Partridge moved into the old Homestead a year later in 1841 to care for the Smith children. Emma was as kind and charitable toward them as she had been with Zina. During the spring and summer of 1842, Smith independently introduced both young women to the idea of celestial marriage. Emily Partridge remembered much later in Utah: "But I had shut him up so quick that he said no more to me untill the 28th of Feb. 1843, (my nineteenth birthday) and I was married [to him] the 4th of March following."¹⁶

Fifteen-year-old Lucy Walker Kimball and her three brothers and sisters moved into the Smith home during the summer of 1841 after the death of their mother and subsequent illness of their father. In 1842 Joseph Smith asked Lucy if he might speak with her privately, that he had a message for her. "I have been commanded of God to take another wife," he said. "And you are the woman." Astonished by his request, she described it as "a thunderbolt" that shook her to her soul. He asked me if I believed him to be the Prophet of God. . . . He explained to me the principle of plural or celestial marriage. [He] said this principle was again to be restored for the benefit of the human family. That it would be an everlasting blessing to my father's house, and form a chain that could never be broken, worlds without end."¹⁷ If Lucy's experience is typical, Smith foresaw how plural marriage would connect the families of the most faithful and was not reluctant to use his priesthood authority as prophet to convince those reluctant to make this dramatic change in attitude toward marriage.

Because Lucy did not immediately accept his proposition, Smith encouraged her to pray "sincerely for light and understanding" on the matter. "I thought I prayed sincerely," she would later remember. "But was so unwilling to consider the matter

¹⁶ Emily Dow Partridge Young, "Account of Early Life in Kirtland and Nauvoo," typescript, n.p., LDS Church Archives.

¹⁷ Lucy Walker Kimball, "A Brief But Intensely Interesting Sketch of Her Experience Written by Herself." Copied for the Federal Writers Project by Elvera Manful, Ogden, Utah, 1940; typescript copy at the Utah Historical Society.

favorably that I fear I did not ask in faith for light. Gross darkness instead of light took possession of my mind.”¹⁸ Apparently her turmoil did not go unnoticed, for Smith soon asked her for another private conference. Attempting to ease her mind about the implications of the proposed secret union he said, “Although I can not under existing circumstances, acknowledge you as my wife, the time is near when we will go beyond the Rocky Mountains and then you will be acknowledged and honored as my wife.” He continued, “I have no flattering words to offer. It is a command of God to you. I will give you until tomorrow to decide this matter. If you reject this message the gate will be closed forever against you.”¹⁹ That night Lucy’s feelings changed; she was sealed to Smith on 1 May 1843 in the Smith home by William Clayton.²⁰

When Smith asked Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, the wife of Adam Lightner, to become his plural wife, she asked for a witness. “If God told you that why does he not tell me?” Smith responded to this resistance with an appeal to her loyalty: “He asked me if I was going to be a traitor.” He told her to pray, that an angel had promised him she would have a witness. Mary received the desired witness from “an angel of the Lord,” and confessed, “If ever a thrill went through a mortal it went through me. . . . I had been dreaming for a number of years I was his wife. I thought I was a great sinner. I prayed to god to take it from me for I felt it was a sin.”²¹

¹⁸ Ibid, 13.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid. After Joseph’s death Lucy Walker was sealed for time to Heber C. Kimball on 8 February 1845 and bore ten children,

²¹ Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner, “Remarks at Brigham Young University at age 87, 14 April 1905,” LDS Church Archives. Rex Eugene Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers: Mormon Covenant Organization* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 140, suggests that Mary interpreted her sealing as meaning that she would share in Joseph’s salvation in the celestial kingdom. She later remembered Joseph saying that “all the Devils in hell should never get me from him.” Her patriarchal blessing corroborates: “Great is thy glory and exaltation with thy husband the prophet who is working for thee in the presence of our Father. . . . Thou shalt be a Queen to reign in the kingdom and dominion that are appointed unto him.”

Like Mary Elizabeth, Zina yearned after righteousness and, like her stepsisters, was confused by Smith's request. She remembered lamenting, "O dear Heaven, grant me wisdom! Help me to know the way. O Lord, my god, let thy will be done and with thine arm around about to guide, shield and direct. Illuminate our minds with intelligence as you do bless the earth with light and warmth."²²

Zina leaves no record whether the public courtship of Henry Bailey Jacobs made the secret courtship of Joseph Smith less or more confusing, nor does she say whether she had been courted before. Henry was strikingly eligible, a handsome twenty-three-year-old with brown eyes and dark curly hair whose violin entertained the Nauvoo Saints. Like Zina, Henry was born in upstate New York in Jefferson County where he was baptized in 1832. An ardent missionary and popular preacher, he wrote for local publications. Zina leaves no record of their courtship; but Henry was friends with all three Huntington brothers, William's partner in a coffin-making enterprise and Oliver's companion on several future missions. When Zina returned to her father's house in the spring of 1840, Henry's frequent visits must have seemed quite natural. There is no record of Zina's continued contact, if any, with Joseph Smith during the next year. On 7 March 1841, twenty-year-old Zina married Henry Bailey Jacobs, convinced that by so doing she had circumvented any further overtures from Smith.²³ An announcement appeared that day in the *Times and Seasons*: "MARRIED—In this city March 7th by Elder John C. Bennett, Mr. Henry B. Jacobs and Miss Zina D. Huntington."²⁴

A family tradition relates that Henry and Zina had asked Smith to perform their marriage. He consented but did not appear, and John Bennett officiated in his place. When Zina later asked Smith about his absence, he reportedly said that "he couldn't give to one man [the woman] who had been given him by the Lord. The Lord had made it known to him that she [Zina] was to be his Celestial

²² Zina D.H. Young, Autobiography, ZDHY Collection, LDS Archives.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *Times and Seasons* 12 (7 March 1841): 334.

wife."²⁵

Zina's description in her autobiography of this first of three wedding days is sedate but happy: "I was Married to Mr. Henry Bailey Jacobs. He had been a missionary preaching the Gospel for some time. His Father Henry Jacobs was one of the first elders in the Church, faithful and true until the last."²⁶ In short, she characterizes Henry and his father by their commitment to the Church, a valuation that would have important consequences later.

Henry and Zina's first home was a log house with a dirt floor. They created a makeshift "built-in" bed with two-inch auger holes bored into the corner logs of the cabin, fitted with hickory saplings, its "mattress" a cowhide tacked to the frame and padded with straw. Zina became pregnant almost immediately, but her thoughts that first summer were not the tender anticipations of an expectant mother, happy in the love of her husband. Rather, she continued to be tormented by the feeling that she had rejected the Lord's will by failing to follow the prophet's counsel. Although extant records do not document any further contact with Joseph Smith, it seems unlikely that she would have been so perplexed and tormented if he had not specifically told her that her marriage to Henry Jacobs had not removed her beyond his interest.

During that first summer, she prayed continuously for understanding and strength. Almost certainly, she returned repeatedly to the larger underlying issue: her acceptance of his spiritual authority over her. "I received a testimony for myself from the Lord of this work, and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God before I ever saw him, while I resided in the state of New York, given in answer to prayer," she told a public gathering in the Salt Lake Tabernacle in an undated address years later. "I knew him in his lifetime, and know him to have been a great true man and a servant of God."²⁷

In October 1841 Smith sent Dimick with an unwelcome

²⁵ Emma Jacobs to Oa J. Cannon, letter included in an untitled narrative written by Cannon about Zina, 22-23, Oa J. Cannon Collection, LDS Church Archives.

²⁶ Zina D. H. Young, *Autobiography*, [page?]

²⁷ Zina D. H. Young, *Address in the Tabernacle*, n.d., typescript copy of holograph, Zina D. H. Young Collection.

message to force Zina to a decision. "Joseph said, Tell Zina I have put it off and put it off until an angel with a drawn sword has stood before me and told me if I did not establish that principle [plurality of wives] and live it, I would lose my position and my life and the Church could progress no further."²⁸ But when Dimick came, Zina's anguish had been resolved, and she was emotionally prepared to accept the sealing.

No record exists of how Zina explained her decision to Henry or whether she felt additional pressure because the message bearer was her brother. Whatever personal demons they wrestled with, Henry gave his tacit approval believing that "whatever the Prophet did was right, without making the wisdom of God's authorities bend to the reasoning of any man."²⁹ It is unclear whether Zina told Henry about Smith's request before their marriage or if he fully understood what this meant. Regardless, Henry was so convinced of Smith's prophetic mission he was willing to obey, even when it meant relinquishing his claim on Zina in the next life.

From Zina's later writings, part of the appeal was clearly a continuation of family relationships, even though it required a "sacrifice" that Zina considered dishonorable:

When I heard that God had revealed the law of Celestial marriage that we would have the privilege of associating in family relationships in the worlds to come I searched the scriptures and by humble prayer to my Heavenly Father I obtained a testimony for myself that God had required that order to be established in his Church. I made a greater sacrifice than to give my life for I never anticipated again to be looked

²⁸ As quoted by Zina D. H. Young, "Joseph, the Prophet His Life and Mission as Viewed by Intimate Acquaintances," *Salt Lake Herald Church and Farm Supplement*, 12 January 1895, 212. She made this statement at a memorial service commemorating Smith's birthday, for many years a feature among those who had known him. This particular meeting was held 24 December 1894 at Salt Lake City Sixteenth Ward. Speakers included Robert T. Burton, Rachael Grant, Samuel H. B. Smith, Joseph F. Smith, Frederick Kesler, Zina D. H. Young, Lucy Walker Kimball, Bathsheba W. Smith, Walter Wilcox, Claudius V. Spencer, Angus M. Cannon, John Smith, Elizabeth Roundy, Edward Rushton, and Homer Duncan. See also Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1954), 212.

²⁹ Zina D. H. Young, Autobiography.

uppon as an honorable woman by those I dearly loved.³⁰

As clearly as Henry, she considered this request a test of faith and obedience. "Could I compromise conscience," she asked rhetorically, "lay aside the sure testimony of the Spirit of God for the Glory of this world after having been baptized by one having authority and covenanting at the waters edge to live the life of a saint?"³¹

Dimick performed the rite that sealed Zina and Joseph on the banks of the Mississippi River on 27 October 1841. By that time, Smith had been sealed to five other women besides Emma: Fanny Alger, Louisa Beaman, Lucinda Pendleton Morgan, Nancy Marinda Johnson Hyde, and Clarissa Reed Hancock.³² There is no contemporary evidence that Zina and Joseph consummated this union, although Zina later signed an affidavit that she was Smith's wife in "very deed."³³ Nevertheless, Smith was never far from Zina's thoughts from that time. Her journal reports no private interviews or visits, refers to him in the such exalted and reverential terms as "The Sanctified," but reports minutely on his comings, goings, and speeches.

Zina's and Henry's surrender to the authority of Joseph Smith is the key to understanding the origins of plural marriage and the creation of Mormon patriarchy. When Smith reinvented a world through revelation, the New World's Zion, he created a condition of anomie, throwing all norms into flux, casting out and recasting all assumptions about morality, theology, law, and community. For Zina and others like her, Joseph Smith was the central unifying character in a new, often confusing state of

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² For verification of Zina's and Joseph's marriage, plus the earlier sealings, see Danel W. Bachman, "A Study of the Mormon Practice of Plural Marriage," (M.A. thesis, Purdue University, 1975). The evidence includes a personal affidavit, a personal statement, witnesses present, other Mormon statements, inclusion on Andrew Jenson's list, non-Mormon statements, and temple sealings according to Fawn Brodie.

³³ Joseph F. Smith Affidavit Books, 4 vols., LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1:5, 4:5.

reality. Smith had promised them, "All you who will not find fault with the words of life and salvation that God reveals through me for the salvation of the human family, I will stand like an officer of the gate, and I will see you safe through into the celestial kingdom."³⁴

Zina's statements show no conscious awareness of the Church's male orientation and direction. Clearly, Mormon society was already patriarchal in both fact and ideal. Plural marriage enhanced patriarchy by placing new emphasis on faithful, often powerful priesthood holders. Furthermore, after the temple rituals were initiated in Nauvoo and Smith had more clearly articulated the ideal of celestial marriage, a woman's salvation was conditional on her husband's successful ascent into celestial glory. This linkage guaranteed that women would follow men in the patriarchal ordering, accepting their place in a deferential system that led from the faithful and obedient wife through her husband to Jesus Christ. Thus, a woman's ability to achieve salvation could be defined almost exclusively in marital terms.³⁵

³⁴ As quoted by Zina D. H. Young, "Joseph, the Prophet," 212.

³⁵ Carol Cornwall Madsen, "Mormon Women and the Temple: Toward a New Understanding," in *Sisters in Spirit*, edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 83-84, suggests that women moved from an essentially peripheral social (though emotionally powerful) role in the Kirtland Temple to play a more significant and active role in the temple ceremonies of Nauvoo. These ordinances, available to both women and men, "opened up a new concept of spiritual participation relating to the 'privileges, blessings and gifts of the priesthood' which not only enhanced their position in the church but offered limitless potential in the hereafter." Women like Zina felt empowered by temple ordinances and the formation of the Relief Society, particularly, according to Madsen, Joseph's frequent mentions of his intent to bestow the "privileges, blessings, and gifts of the priesthood" on women. Such privileges were conditioned upon a woman's marriage to a Melchizedek Priesthood holder. An analogy is the "virtual representation" so long debated by the founding fathers. Before the Revolutionary War, all British subjects were represented by members of Parliament regardless of where they lived. The actual representation the colonists favored was specific to a particular geographical area or group of people. Nor was the "virtual priesthood" of women real power in the Mormon system. Rhetorical aggrandizement helped women accept their role in Mormon society but failed to change the reality. Priesthood was male. Women exercised or benefitted from priesthood only secondarily and contingently,

The language of acceptance used to describe plural marriage included angels, submission, obedience, and manifestations of the Spirit. Certainly this was true for the young women whose cases most closely resembled Zina's: Lucy Walker, Mary Elizabeth Rolins Lightner, Emily Dow Partridge, and Eliza Partridge. All were intelligent, sensitive young women of deep spirituality, perplexed by the doctrine and struggling with its theological and social ramifications. Standing at the pinnacle of patriarchal priesthood power, Smith held the keys to signs and witnesses supporting the doctrine. Most of the women who were sealed to Smith before his death did so because they felt God wanted them to obey. When they accepted Joseph Smith's system of angels and revelation linked to plural marriage and submitted to his authority, their new status, even as secret plural wives, helped expand and enhance the patriarchy with the network of family alliances thus formed. Zina's three brothers—Dimick, William, and Oliver—were devoted to the prophet even before her sealing. The sealing of Zina and Smith connected the Huntington men to Smith in a new way, for they became part of a family kinship network associated with Mormonism's patriarchal elite.

Each new woman brought into an eternal union increased not only the potential size of the family kingdom but the man's exaltation as well. Benjamin F. Johnson later remembered Smith teaching during this time period about the eternal implications of the families created through plural unions. "The First Command was to 'Multiple' [sic] and the Prophet taught us that Dominion and power in the great Future would be Commensurate with the no [number] of 'Wives Childin and Friends' that we inherit here and that our great mission to earth was to Organize a Neculi of Heaven to take with us. The increase of which there would be no end."³⁶

Six weeks after Zina's sealing, Dimick further solidified the family connection to Joseph Smith by sealing to him a second

through association with a righteous male.

³⁶ In Dean R. Zimmerman, *I Knew the Prophets: An Analysis of the Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George F. Biggs, Reporting Doctrinal Views of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Press, 1976), 47.

sister, Presendia Huntington Buell on 11 December 1841. She had married Norman Buell in 1827 at age sixteen in New York, bore two sons, and was baptized with him in 1836. Norman apostatized from the Church in 1839 but moved with her to Lima, Illinois, in the fall of 1840, a year and a half after Zina and her parents reached Nauvoo. In 1880 Presendia attempted to explain this difficult period to her eldest granddaughter, "The Lord gave me strength to Stand alone and keep the faith amid heavy persecution."³⁷

Like Zina, Presendia continued to live with her husband; but when the body of the Church prepared to move west, she left him, was sealed to Heber C. Kimball in 1846, and joined his large household, eventually bearing him two children in addition to the seven by Buell. The Huntingtons were a close family, affectionate and emotionally supportive even in Utah. The brothers contributed a significant portion of Zina's economic support, even after she was living in Brigham Young's household, and Zina visited Presendia every few days.³⁸ Thus, it seems likely that Zina confided her situation, not only to her brothers but, perhaps more importantly, to her sister, receiving the emotional support she needed as she negotiated her split commitment between her two husbands.

Maintaining the secrecy of the plural union was an absolute requirement; and in some ways, the need to maintain surface normalcy probably made Zina's life easier because she could concentrate on the typical events of a young wife's life. She gave birth to Henry's son, Zebulon, on 2 January 1842. On 24 March she and Dimick's wife, Fanny Allen Huntington, joined the Nauvoo Female Relief Society at the group's second meeting. She later wrote approvingly of the first meeting she attended, "This Society was the means of doing much good."³⁹ Henry left on his fourth mission on 30 May 1843; and that same year, she opened

³⁷ Prescendia Huntington Buell Smith Kimball to Her Eldest Grand Daughter, Letter, 1 April 1881, Zina D. H. Young Collection.

³⁸ See Marilyn Higbee, ed., "A Weary Traveler": The 1848-50 Diary of Zina D. H. Young," *Journal of Mormon History* 19 (Fall 1993): 86-125.

³⁹ Zina D. H. Young, *Autobiography*.

a "school of small schollars in my house being lonely." (She crossed out the words "it helped to pass the times as my husband. . . ." Perhaps she might have completed her thought—"was frequently gone.")⁴⁰ The loneliness was real; but even privately Zina seemed reluctant to complain. Henry went on a least eight missions between May 1839 and May 1841 that varied in length between two weeks and four months and two weeks. Regardless of the length, Zina missed Henry while he served missions, suffering insecurity for herself and Zebulon that seems to have been even more trying than the inevitable financial privation. "This morning Henry again set out on another mission," she wrote on 21 January 1845. ". . . Wilt thou preserve me in his absence, O Lord, and my little son, and thy name shall have all the glory."⁴¹ Henry left no diary or letters from this period, but Zina records nothing in her journal suggesting that he ever complained or resented the demands on him. In Henry's repeated absences, Zina did not, as might be expected, refocus her attention on Joseph Smith. Instead, she turned to the world of female kin and friends. During one typical week, she visited female friends five out of seven days, assisted in a birth and attended meetings at "the stand," again with a woman friend. Henry was away when Joseph was killed in June 1844, and Zina shared her grief with her women friends: "Spent the day at Sister Jonese's [sic], Carlos Smiths Widdow [Agnes Coolbrith Smith], the girls that resides with her, Louisa Bemon [Beamon], and Sister Marcum [Hannah Markham]. Very plesent to day, but ah what drearryness and sorrow pervades every bosom."⁴²

Privately, she wrote a poignant lament that contained a partially coded reminder of her complicated situation: "O God how long before thou wilt avenge the innosent blood that has be[e]n shed? How long must widdows mourn and orp[h]ans cry before thou wilt avenge the Earth and cause wickedness to seace. Wilt thou hasten the day, O Lord, in thine own way. Wilt thou

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Zina D. H. Jacobs, Diary, 5 June 1844-21 September 1845, Zina D. H. Young Collection, LDS Church Archives.

⁴² Ibid., 4 July 1845.

Prepare me to stand all things and come of[f] conqerrr through him who hath Loved us, and give me a seat in the selestial Kingdom with the Sanctified."⁴³ The last phrase is particularly telling. Clearly, Zina grieved the loss of a leader but looked toward a glorified relationship with Smith in the celestial kingdom—not the familial and domestic relationship of husband and wife but something grander. Though vaguely conceptualized, it was characterized by victory and exaltation, "seat" suggesting either a feast, a throne, or both.

Although Zina does not try to record the intensifying political and social pressures mounting against the city, she could not help but be aware of them and fear them. She redoubled her spiritual efforts to combat her loneliness and insecurity. She was, from childhood, drawn to the things of God. Now the Church wove the fabric of her life. She acknowledges on nearly every page of her diary the hand of providence. Actuated by the highest ideals of self-sacrificing Christian service, she cared ceaselessly for others. Although she always lived in less than adequate homes and moved three times after her marriage in Nauvoo, she generously opened her home to the sick and developed important nursing skills she would call upon in Utah in her work as a midwife and healer. "The saints had to struggle for the needfuls of life," she wrote. "[Nauvoo] was a very sickly place, ponds or swamps of stagnate water, musketos in abundance until drainage could be affected."⁴⁴

As difficult as these years had been for Henry and Zina, the next three years challenged their faith to the limits. These were the years of her second sealing and the somewhat brutal ending of her conjugal relationship with Henry.

Although no challenge to the solidity of Zina and Henry's marriage exists, their union, solemnized by John C. Bennett, acting as both civil and ecclesiastical leader, was simply a civil contract. Most ecclesiastical leaders in Nauvoo also enjoyed considerable civic power, recognized at least by Nauvoo and not challenged by the state of Illinois. In the anomie of Nauvoo, one

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 26 June 1844.

⁴⁴ Zina D. H. Young, *Autobiography*.

way the Mormons dissolved civil marriages was by superseding them with a covenant of eternal marriage, a "higher law" that overrode previous marriages without the necessity of a divorce.

Although such a system required compliant men—and especially compliant women—it seems to have operated efficiently in establishing the plural marriage network. Some women whose husbands were not members of the Church or whose civil marriages had never been replaced with sealings entered plural marriages; their motivations are not always known, nor is the type and degree of priesthood persuasion employed in such unions; however, the situations of these polyandrous wives is suggestive. Augusta Adams Cobb joined the Church in Boston during 1832, but her husband did not. When she married Brigham Young on 2 November 1843, she was still technically married to her husband. However, because the Church had never recognized her civil marriage, Brigham Young did not think it was necessary to secure a civil divorce. Ironically, other civil marriages (such as Joseph Smith's justice-of-the-peace marriage to Emma or Brigham Young's marriage to his second monogamous wife, Mary Ann Angell Young) were recognized and maintained throughout their lives. Again, the fluidity and lack of regularity in the early Church reflect Smith's efforts to reshape familial relationships in ways that would strengthen the social structure of the fledgling church.

Orson Pratt soundly criticized civil law in 1847: "As all the ordinances of the gospel Administered by the world since the Aposticy of the Church was illegal, in like manner was the marriage Cerimony illegal." He labeled the offspring of these unions as bastards in need of adoption into the priesthood to "become sons and legal heirs to salvation."⁴⁵ John D. Lee, an adopted son of Brigham Young, recalled the improvisational atmosphere of this normless period in 1877: "If a [couple's] marriage had not been productive of blessings and peace, and they felt it oppressive to remain together, they were at liberty to make their own choice, as much as if they had not been married."⁴⁶ Although Lee made

⁴⁵ As quoted by Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898*, typescript, edited by Scott G. Kenny. 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-85), 3:260.

no verbal differentiation between men and women, plural marriages, especially in Nauvoo, were arranged by men. Women typically entered plural marriage upon the request of a male priesthood carrier who invoked his own righteousness and assured her that God would provide confirmation if she asked.⁴⁷

"We are told that the Prophet Joseph requested the Quorum to marry and take care of his widows," Zina's granddaughter would write, "and in some cases Joseph Smith's plural wives were given their choice of the Twelve as their husbands for time, to give them the full honor and protection of marriage with an apostle."⁴⁸ These men, the highest in the priesthood hierarchy, became proxies in life for Smith. Zina's sister Presendia was sealed to Heber C. Kimball under this arrangement. Henry left on yet another mission after witnessing the sealing of twenty-five-year-old Zina for time to Brigham Young, twenty years her senior, in the Nauvoo Temple 2 February 1846 and resealed to Joseph Smith for eternity. This event occurred one month after Henry and Zina received their endowments on 3 January 1846. She also received the second endowment or "fulness of the priesthood," from Apostle John Taylor.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ John D. Lee, *Mormonism Unveiled: Including the Remarkable Life and Confessions of the Late Mormon Bishop, John D. Lee* (St. Louis: Vandawallew, 1892), 146-47.

⁴⁷ Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers*, 142, describes this situation as being evidence of the simultaneous existence of "the suborder of human law and the suborder of priesthood or divine law. There is an interrelationship between these two forms of law. Since they are based on different premises, however, they are not always consistent. In spheres where both operate, this inconsistency can result in ambiguous rules and regulations."

⁴⁸ Cannon, untitled narrative, 23.

⁴⁹ Nauvoo Proxy Sealings, 1846, 61, Nauvoo Sealings and Adoptions, 511-12; Family History Library, Salt Lake City. These records state that Amanda Barnes Smith and Augusta Adams Cobb Young, both plural wives of Brigham Young, were also present, though whether as participants or witnesses is not known. According to emerging Mormon theology, a man could be sealed to any number of women, but a woman could be sealed to only one man. Thus, if the husband in a sealed couple died, the woman could not be sealed to a second man. Any offspring that resulted from subsequent unions would be born under the covenant she and her first husband had formed. Therefore, when Zina was sealed

Connubial relations with Joseph Smith, if any occurred at all, had certainly been infrequent and irregular. Now both sisters became wives in fact to their apostle-husbands, acting as proxies for Joseph Smith, while remaining spiritual wives of Joseph Smith. At this point their civil marriages to Henry Jacobs and Norman Buell were considered canceled, although no formal divorce or documented ceremony of negation was performed, as nearly as it is possible to determine. Furthermore, it is obvious that Henry considered himself Zina's husband until bluntly informed to the contrary by Brigham Young after they arrived at Mt. Pisgah.⁵⁰

Once again, no contemporary record exists of Zina's motivations nor of her understanding of the implications of this second sealing. Family tradition maintains that Brigham Young urged Zina to take the step, assuring her that "if she would marry him she would be in a higher glory."⁵¹ Certainly he made similar state-

to Brigham as proxy for Joseph Smith, Zina and Brigham's single child, a daughter named Zina, was considered to be the eternal offspring of Joseph Smith. As Orson Pratt explained in *The Seer* 1 (1853-54): 142, the second husband was "obliged to enter into a covenant to deliver her up with all her children to her deceased husband in the morning of the first resurrection. In this case, the second husband would have no wife only [except] for time, neither could he retain his children in the eternal worlds, for they, according to the law of Heaven, would be given up to the wife and her first husband."

⁵⁰ When Hyrum Smith discussed the ordinance of temple sealing with his second wife, Mary Fielding Smith (his first wife, Jerusha Barden, had died on 13 October 1837), he told her that he could be sealed to Jerusha in that same way that one could do work by proxy for the dead. He could then be sealed as well to Mary. Mary responded by saying, "I will act as proxy for your wife that is dead and I will be sealed to you for eternity myself for I never had any other husband. I love you and I do not want to be separated from you nor be forever alone in the world to come." Manuscript History, 8 April 1844, LDS Church Archives. The concept of proxy sealing could take such strange forms as that recorded in the Pratt family. Parley P. Pratt, an apostle, stood as proxy for Joseph Smith and was sealed vicariously to his own estranged wife, Mary Ann Frost Pratt, on 6 February 1846. Mary Ann cohabited with Pratt after that time although there is no evidence of the nature of their new relationship. Pratt explained, "By mutual consent of parties and by the advise [sic] of President Young [Mary Ann] was sealed to Joseph Smith [then deceased] for Eternity and to her former husband [Parley] for time, as proxy." Parley P. Pratt, writing in the diary of another plural wife, Belinda Marden Pratt, 11 March 1851, LDS Church Archives.

⁵¹ Cannon, untitled narrative, 15. Oa is quoting her brother, Briant S. Jacobs,

ments on numerous occasions in public discourses. In October 1861 general conference, he asserted: "There was another way—in which a woman could leave a man—if the woman preferred—another man higher in authority and he is willing to take her. And her husband gives her up—there is no Bill of divorce required in the case it is right in the sight of God."⁵² Zina makes no comment that illuminates her preference in the matter, but her behavior was consistent with her obedience to priesthood authority in the past. We do not know how willing Henry was to relinquish his marriage to Zina or even if either of them understood that this second sealing was the end of their union.

In an ironic replay of the first sealing, Zina was again pregnant during the ceremony. Obviously she was unable to manage the exodus from Nauvoo on her own, so in a heroic display of continued commitment, Henry supervised their departure on 7 February 1846, only five days after the sealing. Zina remembered the event sadly:

Clear and cold we left our house all we possessed in a wagon left many things standing our house unsold for most of our neighbors were as ourselves on the wing. Shall I ever forget standing on Major Russells porch seeing Thomas Grovers wagon had sunk on a sand bar. The Brethren taking the little ones from the wagon cover. The bows just peeped above the water. At the same time the bells were ringing, the Temple was on fire and we leaving our homes for the wilderness trusting God like Abriha[m]. After we had crossed the river I sent back a pair of stockings to get a little thread and a few needles not knowing when we should again have the opportunity.⁵³

For the next four months together, Zina's and Henry's wagon crawled across the muddy roads of Iowa to Mt. Pisgah. Meanwhile, Zina's new husband supervised the entire migration of over a thousand wagons. Although Zina does not always make daily diary entries, she mentions no encounter of any kind with him, whether public or private.

who in turn is recalling the words of their aunt, Zina Young Card, the daughter of Zina and Brigham.

⁵² James Beck, Notebooks, 1859-65, Vol. 1, LDS Church Archives, reports a speech delivered by Brigham Young at General Conference, 8 October 1861.

⁵³ Zina D. H. Young, Autobiography.

The men in Zina's life—her father, her brothers, and her priesthood-leader husbands—reshaped her family life. She struggled with her feelings, torn between loyalty to Henry and obedience to a higher law. But interestingly, she seems not to have admitted any question about the “fairness” or “rightness” of the idea. She later reflected: “This taking of wives was not hailed by the leaders of the Church as a pleasure—undertaking [it] we do honor this the requirement of God or be cut off could the world see both men and women of this Church in there true light how differently they would view us—in poverty, oppressed within with aposticy, with out our enemies not knowing what they ware doing.”⁵⁴

She spent the last six weeks of her pregnancy under trying conditions, though “Mr. Jacobs . . . done all he could for my comfort. The wagon cover was not dry for two weeks, rain and snow visiting us.”⁵⁵ Their second son, Henry Chariton Jacobs, was born 22 March less than twenty miles away from Nauvoo at the crossing of the Chariton River. Zina's son Zebulon later described the event in his autobiography:

March 21st we came to and crossed the Chariton river. The train camped on the east side. Father and a batchelor [*sic*] friend decided they would go over and camp on a dry point just above the road as there was plenty of wood, and the clouds were threatening. The next morning I was bundled up bright and early, taken out of the wagon and deposited in the forks of a scrub oak, and was told “to keep quiet or I would fall and crack my head.” Becoming restless, father called to me and said “be a good boy for a few minutes, and I shall show you something.” In a short time he came and got me. I was tired of sitting in the rain. Father took the damp shawl off me then leaned me towards the head of mother's bed. “What do you see over there?”, “Mama,” “What else?” At that moment I heard a baby squeak. Catching sight of a little red squirming face, father was kept busy holding me. Mother said “you have got a little brother, Henry Chariton Jacobs.”⁵⁶

Zina's stepsister, Eliza Partridge Smith Lyman, after 1849 the plural wife of Amasa Lyman, recorded this pitiful scene in her

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Zebulon Jacobs, *Autobiography*, n.d., 1; Zina D. H. Young Collection.

journal: "At the Chariton river we came across Henry Jacobs wagon in the mud. Zina in bed on the top of the load so near the wet cover that she could barely raise her head, a babe in her arms but a few days old and no wagon near or friend to do anything for her."⁵⁷

After seeing Zina safely camped at Mt. Pisgah with her father and stepmother, Henry bade her good-bye in what must have been their most difficult parting yet. Brigham Young had called him on a mission to England with Oliver Huntington on 31 May 1846. He was reportedly so ill that men had to "put him on a blanket and carry him to the boat to get him on his way."⁵⁸ He survived, but his shattered emotional state can be seen in a letter that captures his struggle between love for Zina and loyalty to priesthood authority. On 25 June 1846, just before sailing from New York City for Europe, he wrote reassuringly:

All we have to do is stand still and see the Salvation of God in all things whether in Life, or in death, whether in time or Eternity Zina my mind never will change from worlds without End no never the same affection is there and never can be moved. I do not murmur nor complain at the Handlings of god no verily no. . . . I do not blame any person or person no may the Lord our Father Bless Brother Brigham and . . . tell him for me I have no feelings against him nor never had; all is right according to the Law of Celestial Kingdom of our god and Joseph. Zina be comforted be of good cheer and the god of our fathers bless you. I know your mind has been troubled about menly things but fear not all things will work together for good for them that Love God therefore be subject to council as you have commenced and you will be saved.⁵⁹

In England Henry was placed in charge of the Clithero-Preston Branch, the largest in his mission, with Oliver B. Huntington as his counselor. Another letter to Zina expresses steadfast faith in the eventual justice of God:

⁵⁷ Eliza Partridge Smith Lyman, Journal, March 1846, typescript, 4; LDS Church Archives.

⁵⁸ Oa J. Cannon, "Short Sketch of the Life of Henry Jacobs," Oa J. Cannon Collection, LDS Church Archives.

⁵⁹ Henry Bailey Jacobs, Letter to Zina D. H. Young, 25 June 1846, Zina D. H. Young Collection.

Dear and respected companion. . . I must say I have been greatly blest since I left the Camp of Israel I never felt the power of God so sensible never in my life as I have on this Mission . . . there is power in the priesthood yet and god lives as in the day of old . . . Zina I have not forgotten you my love is as ever the same . . . and hope it will continue to grow stronger to all Eternity worlds without End when families are joined together and become one consolidated in truth when the keys of the Resurrection will be restored and the fullness of the Gospel given the Law of the Celestial Kingdom be in force and every man and woman will know there place and have to keep it though there will be shiftings in time and revisions in Eternity all be made right in the End . . . my kindest love to all the 12 . . . kiss my Little ones and tell them about there father . . . I am ever your well wisher.⁶⁰

Although this letter does not express the thought very clearly, it suggests that Henry accepted Zina's second sealing, believing somehow that if they were both faithful to earthly priesthood authority, they might be reunited in the afterlife, that the lines separating one patriarchal organization from another would be erased, and that all would "be made right in the End." At this point, he clearly considers himself still married to Zina in some sense, although he calls himself a "well wisher" instead of a husband and refers to her as "companion" rather than a wife. It seems likely that he did not know Brigham Young planned to establish conubial relations with Zina.

In Mt. Pisgah, Zina lived in a room about fourteen feet square, part of a double log house built by her father who had been assigned to preside over Mt. Pisgah with Charles C. Rich. When almost five hundred able-bodied men enlisted in the Mormon Battalion and set off for California, the responsibility for dependent women and children increased manyfold. Zina, in addition to caring for four-year-old Zebulon and newborn Chariton, promptly began nursing the sick. At one time she had ten in her small room. Her father became ill and died 19 August 1846.

Charles Decker, Brigham Young's son-in-law, and others were passing Mt. Pisgah in late September 1846 and offered to

⁶⁰ Henry Bailey Jacobs, Letter to Zina D. H. Young, 19 August 1846, Zina D. H. Young Collection.

take Zina with them as far as Winter Quarters in Nebraska. On 1 October, Zina left her twice-widowed stepmother and started toward Winter Quarters, riding on a bag of oats in Decker's wagon. At night her feather bed was "made up on the top of the barrel heads being careful to get the hip bone into the top of one barrel."⁶¹ Toward the end of the journey they were plagued by heavy rains. Not far from Winter Quarters, the wagon became mired in mud and Brother Decker had to ride horseback for extra teams to pull the wagon out.

With relief, Zina recounted their arrival in the fall of 1846. It was her first experience with living as a plural wife among "the Girls," or Brigham Young's other wives, and she was doubly relieved to find the experience a positive one:

Arrived in Winter Quarters all safe was welcomed into my new home [the home of Brigham Young] lived with the President's Family some 6 or 7 of us in a tent. Log cabins were erected, a meeting house also had now and then a dance to cheer us, good meetings, friendly visits kind associations in this my new life, knowing we were here the cause of God had commanded. The sun shone in the midst of all this inconvenience. Some of the Girls [wives] it was the first time they had ever left there parents, but the Pres was so kind to us all, nothing but God could have taught him and others how to be so kindly to there large Families. This order not being on the Earth for 1800 years with all our traditions like garments woven around us, some could act upon principles with better justice than others, not all are capacited alike in any respect.⁶²

A year later in August 1847, Fanny Huntington, Dimick's wife, wrote to the missionaries, informing them that Zina was living with some of Brigham's other wives in Winter Quarters. Oliver hastily wrote a reassuring but poignant letter to Zina. "Henry is here and herd the letter. He says all is right, he don't care. He stands alone as yet. I have had almost as much trial about you as he has. I have had to hear, feel and suffer everything he has--If you only knew my troubles you'd pity me."⁶³

⁶¹ Zina D. H. Young, *Autobiography*.

⁶² Zina D. H. Young, *Autobiography*, described as September 1846, Zina D. H. Young Collection.

⁶³ Oliver Huntington, Letter to Zina D. H. Young, 27 August 1847, Oa J. Cannon

Brigham Young left on 5 April 1847 to accompany the vanguard to the Great Basin, returning in August. Zina spent the winter of 1847-48 with his other wives and their children. Some were already trusted friends, including her stepsisters. Resolutely and cheerfully they strengthened themselves and each other by giving voice to their belief that they were serving a holy mission, pleasing the Lord, and establishing a great and glorious cause by their ability to live plural marriage. Illness and malnutrition created a desperate need for sisterly nursing; scarce resources and winter weather restricted their activities, but blessing meetings and spiritual meetings where they spoke in tongues intensified the general feeling of sisterhood among the women of Winter Quarters. It seems clear as well that "the girls," or an unidentified inner circle of women formerly sealed to Joseph Smith drew special solace from their association with each other.⁶⁴

Henry and his new English wife, Aseneth Babcock Jacobs, arrived at Winter Quarters in November. Aseneth was a twenty-two-year-old widow—Henry's age; ironically, she was also the mother of a five-year-old son named Zebulon. Zina mentions no conversation or contact with Henry during the next six months until Henry and Aseneth left for Utah with Captain John Lytle in 1848 with the second hundred in Brigham Young's Division.

Brigham Young departed again for Utah in May 1848. Zina waited until the spring of 1849 when Oliver brought her and her children to Utah with his own family. She took up residence in quarters in the Old Fort reserved for Brigham Young's wives. Zina's relationship with Brigham during this period is quite formal. She notes his comings and goings, particularly when he gives her food or supplies. Clearly she accepted him as her religious leader, but a poignant entry marks the day their relationship changed:

As I sat in my wagon with a hart tender as if berieved of a dear friend meditating I was aroused by a knock on the wagon. BY came to inform me a room was finished etc., etc., etc. O did not [I] seek a

Collection.

⁶⁴ Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, "Women at Winter Quarters," *Sunstone* 8 (July-August 1983): 11-19.

lone retreat beside a murmuring the water rolled over a fall of about 3 feet where the sound of my voice would not be heard there. I wept yes wept bitterness of Soul ya sorrow and tears that wore rund [sic] from a heavy hart. Sadness for a while took her seat in my hart and reigned Predominet for a short time. I could exclaim O Lord have mercy on me. Yes I did say it with all my heart and I believe he will hear me in his own time and answer me. About 4 PM I moved into the room⁶⁵

A year later in April 1850, she gave birth to Brigham Young's daughter.

Henry and Aseneth lived for a time in northern California, where their son, George Theodore Jacobs, was born on 15 October 1848. Although no records have been found in corroboration, a family tradition maintains that Henry Jacobs married a second plural wife, Sarah Taylor, in Arizona in 1850.

Henry continued to write heartrending letters to Zina until September 1852. On 2 September 1852 he lamented: "O how happy I should be if I only could see you and the little children, bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. I am unhappy, there is no peace for poor me, my pleasure is you, my comfort has vanished. . . O Zina, can I ever, will I ever get you again, answer the question please."⁶⁶ According to family tradition, Brigham Young forbade Zina to receive these letters and put an official end to the connection; but there is reason to question the family tradition, and it is unclear when the two themselves considered the relationship over.

Zina met her new life with faith and courage, believing wholeheartedly in the mission of the Church to build the kingdom of God. She had close attachments to some of her sister wives, but especially relied on her own family. Presendia, Dimick, Oliver, and William visited her almost daily and gave her physical and emotional support. She became one of the great ladies of Mormonism, providing nurture and leadership that took the renewed Relief Society into the twentieth century.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Zina D. H. Young, *Diary*, 16 April 1849, Zina D. H. Young Collection.

⁶⁶ Henry Bailey Jacobs, *Letter to Zina D. H. Young*, 2 September 1852 (the last in this collection), Zina D. H. Young Collection.

⁶⁷ See Jill Mulvay Derr, Janath Russell Cannon, and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher,

From a feminist perspective, however, Zina's life and marriages in Nauvoo are especially illuminating in establishing the connection between plural marriage and Mormon patriarchy. Feminist sociologist Anne Kasper suggests that human social life is the product of "minded individuals" capable of reflection and communication. She notes that sociologist Max Weber proposes that one must likewise study social action between individuals "in order to understand the individual as a social being, the formation of social structures, and the meaning systems of the culture." Unavoidably, actions emerge from either self-interest or the rules of society.⁶⁸ Behavior, therefore, reflects at least some of the values and beliefs of a culture, inconsistent and contradictory though such behavior often is. Gendered behavior likewise mirrors tradition, ideology, and belief.

By examining the role gender played in the dynamic of plural marriage and its relationship to Mormon patriarchy, some meanings emerge that take Zina's story beyond the response of faith to authority and adversity. Nauvoo plural wives, particularly the young women who accepted Joseph Smith's personal teachings, chose to enter polygamy based on a distinct set of assumptions about religion, their position in Mormon society, and their sense of the future. Polygamy was a new social institution that they were able to accept by redefining it in terms of a female world view.

Simply put, what was the female interpretation of Mormon theology? How did they understand gender and patriarchy? It is important to realize that women experienced Mormonism differently from men. But were they simply passive recipients of theological interpretations that so radically altered their lives? Or did they reshape them and find meaning somewhere in the interplay between informal familial networks and official hierarchal social structure? Zina's willingness to enter plural marriage and her

Women of Covenant (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 127-50; Zina D. H. Young, *Diaries*, Zina D. H. Young Collection; her "How I Gained My Testimony of the Truth," *Young Woman's Journal* 4 (April 1893): 317-19; and Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, "The 'Leading Sisters': A Female Hierarchy in Nineteenth Century Mormon Society," *Journal of Mormon History* 9 (1982): 25-39.

⁶⁸ Anne Kasper, "Consciousness Re-evaluated: Interpretive Theory and Feminist Scholarship," *Sociological Inquiry* 56 (1986): 30, 36.

success at subduing her own feelings in doing so indicates that she did the latter. It expresses her effort and willingness to mediate her personal life within the formal patriarchal structure of Mormonism⁶⁹

Family discourse provided Zina, Presendia, Eliza, Emily, Mary Elizabeth, and others like them with a distinctly female image of themselves and their function in this emerging religious tradition, an image that was both powerful and sacred. Despite the transformative potentialities of Jacksonian America, the female world was in fact contracting, coalescing about a few sweeping assumptions about gender and role.

These women lived in a largely secular culture, but their entrance into Mormonism gave them the possibilities of a sacred world. Within that sacred world lay an inner, more sacralized world: the world of celestial marriage and, in particular, plural marriage. As plural wives, women had a significant role to play in the sacred community. The formal stable world of religious patriarchy where they had access to only limited power was still preferable to the informal secular patriarchal world with uncertain access to power.⁷⁰

By equating home, family, and the feminine with the spiritual and by assigning sacredness to plural marriage, these women

⁶⁹ Debra Kaufman, "Engendering Family Theory: Toward a Feminist-Interpretive Framework," in *Fashioning Family Theory*, edited by Jetse Spray (London: Sage Publications, 1990), 125, observes, in her study of newly orthodox Jewish women, that a feminist interpretive model explains how a woman can often "simultaneously be a victim and agent, subject and object."

⁷⁰ There are striking similarities between the way women in Nauvoo accepted plural marriage and Debra Kaufman's work on newly orthodox Jewish women. Kaufman studied a group of fundamentalist women, at least half of whom began their journey toward Jewish orthodoxy partly as a backlash against feminism and any liberation movement they perceived as valuing individual freedom above social responsibility. Paradoxically, almost all of them selectively incorporate and adopt values and practices about the family and about men that some feminists share. "Therefore, while most of these women openly reject feminism, or what they perceive feminism to represent and advocate, they also maintain a gender identity deeply informed by and consonant with many values associated with some contemporary feminists who celebrate the female and the feminine." Kaufman, "Engendering Family Theory," 128.

could believe that they were valued and respected in the Mormon community. For women like Zina and her mother, Zina Baker Huntington, their personal/social roles as women, wives, and mothers were also their religious roles. The distinctions between their private and religious world blurred as the family and the role of the female assumed sacred status. Furthermore, many of them had experienced the familial and economic instabilities of the early nineteenth century. The stability of this new order must have been appealing in ways that autonomy-valuing Americans of the twentieth century must make an imaginative effort to understand.

Mormon women in Nauvoo formed an economically dependent class. Survival depended on aligning their lives with men sufficiently powerful to dominate hostile environmental forces. Clearly, plural marriage not only affected one's religious life but also had economic, social, and political repercussions. Zina's economic position had caused her uncertainty and suffering. As a young wife in Nauvoo, Zina was more frequently alone than with her husband. Although she had a sympathetic network of family and friends, she knew what it was to support herself.⁷¹ Surely the prospect of traveling to the West and beginning a new life in a strange and wild environment made the prospect of becoming a member of Brigham Young's family much less threatening.

It is also easier to understand why men would be willing to accept the doctrine of plural marriage. As the keystone of family organization, the male's importance was highlighted by plurality. He was the apex of the family hierarchy, given socially sanctioned sexual partners, and granted expanded reproductive capabilities. It was the model of his potential for deity.

Marriage was, for nineteenth-century women, the first moment in their adult lives when they were empowered. Choosing to marry or not to marry, and whom to marry, radically changed the boundaries of their lives. These choices that women made defined their interaction with the community and implied an engagement with the future.

⁷¹ Zina's Nauvoo diary is filled with frequent references to brother William's generosity. During Henry's absences, Zina occasionally moved in with William and his new wife Lydia.

One theory of feminist biography provides an insight into Zina's choice: "A confined and limited future diminishes possibility and that in turn will effect how far a woman thinks she can go in acting for and from herself."⁷² When Zina acquiesced to Joseph Smith's and later Brigham Young's priesthood authority, she moved with the current of change in the Church, filled with a sense of the spirit that colored all her decisions. Another feminist scholar finds that the rhythm of women's lives is marked by repetition and waiting which create "simply another mode of being," inducing a kind of "serendipitous passivity. . . . Responding in this way to the whim of the moment is markedly different from imposing your will on time. . . . The passivity so induced is that of a light object thrown into the water; it is not the object that determines its direction, but the movement of the water."⁷³ While we might assume that such a choice indicates an exercise of some power, in fact it does not. Women had the choice to accept these propositions or accept the consequences. If they refused, they might be criticized by their priesthood leaders, suffer the guilt of disobedience, or be condemned to a life outside the circle of elite members of the Church.

Perhaps the best evidence of essential choicelessness in Zina's life is the description of her marriage to Henry. Numerous versions of the story depict Henry and Zina's marriage as unhappy.⁷⁴ At age seventy-eight, Zina herself, in an interview de-

⁷² Kathleen Barry, *Susan B. Anthony* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), 371.

⁷³ Kathryn Allen Rabuzzi, *The Sacred and the Feminine: Toward a Theology of Housework* (New York: Seabury, 1982), 153.

⁷⁴ This approach was taken so frequently as to become the orthodox position, each mentioning the "unhappy" marriage. See Kate B. Carter, ed., "Zina Diantha Huntington Young," in "Brigham Young and His Wives," *Our Pioneer Heritage* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, 1971), 1:431-32; Andrew Jenson, "Zina Diantha Huntington Young," *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compendium of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901-30), 1:697; and Orson F. Whitney, "Zina Huntington Young," *History of Utah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon, 1892-1904), 4:6. The story is told in the same way for a female audience in "A Distinguished Woman," *Women's Exponent* 12 (1 December 1883): 99. For a critique of this view, see Jeffery O. Johnson, letter to the editor, this issue.

scribed her marriage as "unhappy."⁷⁵ But the primary sources paint a more ambiguous story. Zina had no complaints about Henry, only conflicts presented to conventional domesticity by priesthood authority. Henry was obviously devoted to Zina, caring for her even in conditions that must have been excruciatingly painful. Yet even when Zina tells this story it reflected the establishment viewpoint. As feminist historian Catherine MacKinnon suggests, "What counts as truth is produced in the interest of those with power to shape reality."⁷⁶ Why has the story been told this way? Did family members, Zina's contemporaries, future generations, and even contemporary historians feel more comfortable with this complex series of marriages if Henry and Zina's marriage was unhappy? It seems to provide a human justification for sacrificial faith; but from a social and political perspective, given the anomie of Nauvoo, the decision rested on the centrality of Joseph Smith's authority. In a way, the orthodox position is absolutely correct. Zina entered plural marriage because she chose to believe Joseph Smith.

A feminist interpretation of Nauvoo plural marriage sees that, although women were willing to restructure their lives along new and often radical lines, they believed Joseph Smith was expressing the will of God by recreating patriarchal precedents from the Bible. Mormon patriarchy reflected his attempt to redefine, reorder, and maintain social control through male priesthood. He did this by invoking the moral authority of revelation, priesthood power, and the principle of obedience. We must not underestimate the impact of Smith's prologue of visions and angels in his private instructions to young women. If they believed, the logical consequence was their total submission to his judgment, his authority, and his power. If they did not believe him, there was no way for them to remain members of his church.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ John W. Wight, Interview with Zina D. H. Young, 1 October 1898, in "Evidence from Zina D. Huntington Young," *Saints Herald* 52 (11 July 1905): 28.

⁷⁶ Catharine A. MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence," in *Contemporary Critical Theory*, edited by Dan Latimer (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1989), 611.

⁷⁷ Mark Carnes's masterful work, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991) provides exciting insights into

There are many approaches with which to examine the complex and challenging phenomenon of polygamy. From a feminist perspective, plural marriage and its foundation in Mormon patriarchy powerfully bonded Mormonism's elite. It helped define the boundaries of faith and assured women of their faithfulness by setting them an enormous loyalty test. When they chose to enter a patriarchal religious community, they did so because they believed that the gender system was organized around family-centered and woman-oriented values. The network of familial relationships created through plural marriage created a new and unique sense of community, of family and of self. According to anthropologist Rex Cooper, plural marriage emerged from a very real fear for survival. "In its earliest form," Cooper writes, it might be regarded as an attempt to maintain Mormon group identity and provide for Mormon salvation despite any eventuality."⁷⁸ While it generated conflict with the larger society, plural marriage simultaneously fortified the community of Saints against outside threats through a gender-based hierarchy that facilitated internal stability as well. Furthermore, Zina saw herself not as a passive reflection of her husband's priesthood power but as a participant in the

the widespread involvement of men in secret societies. Tens of thousands of American men, suggests Carnes, entered Masonic lodges and other secret societies because of status anxiety, stimulated by the rapid change of the industrial revolution, which changed familial relations and the roles women played in the home and in society. Men felt they had lost control over their homes. Involvement in secret rituals expressed the effort to control a space and to regain status in the shifting gender relationships of the nineteenth century. Carnes quotes one prominent Odd Fellow who candidly acknowledged their intent: "The simple truth is this: Women is not entitled to and seeks not a place among us. Our institution was originally intended and formed exclusively for men and the various modifications it has undergone have not adapted it to the other sex" (88). Although it is not the focus of this particular study, status anxiety caused by changes in gender relationships could be yet another reason for Joseph's preoccupation with the secret ceremonies and tests of loyalties embodied in temple ceremonies in Nauvoo. Despite the fact that women were, after a time, given a role in temple ceremonies, their secondary position does not jeopardize the hierarchal patriarchal order. See also Carmon Hardy's detailed discussion of the complex reinforcement of male preeminence and polygamy in this issue.

⁷⁸ Cooper, *Promises Made to the Fathers*, 137.

Lord's work.

Whatever forces were at play, Zina chose to enter plural marriage, feeling she had been inspired to do so. Her choice defined the limits of the rest of her adult life. Ironically, because Zina was a generous, energetic, spirited woman, it expanded rather than contracted her options and placed her at the center of the community. Nevertheless, the final myth we perpetuate with the story of Zina's marriages is that early Mormonism, in the words of Thomas O'Dea, "came very close to accepting the equality of women with men."⁷⁹ On the contrary, in defining priesthood by gender, Joseph Smith closed the door on potential equality. Women like Zina, who emerge as leaders in nineteenth-century Utah and exert such a profound influence on the lives of women, proved themselves in Nauvoo, accepting and shaping themselves to the ultimate female role as defined by patriarchy. They were obedient, compliant, and willingly subordinate. Ironically, their empowerment in Utah emerged from their willingness in Nauvoo to deny power.

⁷⁹ Thomas O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 249.

Lords of Creation: Polygamy, the Abrahamic Household, and Mormon Patriarchy

B. Carmon Hardy

NINETEENTH-CENTURY LATTER-DAY SAINT thought was profoundly patriarchal. This essay seeks to recapitulate Mormonism's rhetorical idiom on the subject and to suggest that inspiration for such views is best explained as a response to developments occurring in Western society at large. Polygamy and the Abrahamic household were, I will contend, devices by which husbands and fathers sought to preserve the tradition of male dominance in the home. And these, I believe, were concerns that arose in connection with rising anti-hierarchical philosophy, a historically recent development of great appeal. Although an ordered, patriarchal ethos yet characterizes Mormon society, recent dissent urging greater, nongendered valuation of all Church members is but a restatement of Enlightenment thought and implication. The extraordinary attention given by the nineteenth-century Church to the authority of husbands and fathers, in both preachment and practice, was a reactionary movement.

B. CARMON HARDY is a professor of history at California State University at Fullerton and author of *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

Patriarchal authority enjoys a history of immense antiquity. Whether or not it inevitably accompanied the emergence of organized society, early tribal government, and divine kingship, its presence was everywhere conspicuous in the old world. During classical times, the dependent, pyramidal structure of the household was viewed as sanctioned by the natural order of things. As Aristotle put it, "The male is by nature fitter for command than the female."¹ Roman heads of household exercised the power of life and death over wives and children. Even with the mitigating influence of Christianity, medieval families granted unquestioned priority to the male head of house. And if European societies after the Renaissance displayed oscillating patterns with regard to his preeminence, the domestic authority of the father and husband remained nothing less than towering.²

Monarchical apologists of the seventeenth century found in the nearly universal example of patriarchal authority a major justification for the rule of kings.³ In England and the American colonies fathers enjoyed prerogatives of extraordinary breadth.⁴

¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, 1.12.

² For arguments of inevitable and "natural" male dominance, see John Weir Perry, *Lord of the Four Quarters: Myths of the Royal Father* (New York: George Braziller, 1966); and Steven Goldberg, *The Inevitability of Patriarchy* (London: Temple Smith, 1977). A controversial feminist reading of the evidence is Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Marija Gimbutas, *The Language of the Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper & Rowe, 1989), 318-21 discussed archaeological and anthropological arguments in support of a radical repositioning and subordination of women by early Indo-European societies, as inferred from religious symbols. For *patria potestas* in Roman society, see John A. Crook, *Law and Life of Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 107-13. For the role of the father in medieval families, see Michael Mitterauer and Reinhard Sieder, *The European Family: Patriarchy to Partnership from the Middle Ages to the Present*, translated by Karla Oosterveen and Manfred Hörzinger (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 86-88; David Herlihy, *Medieval Households* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 10-11, 81, 113. But cf. Frances Gies and Joseph Gies, *Marriage and the Family in the Middle Ages* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 287.

³ Gordon J. Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought: The Authoritarian Family and Political Speculation and Attitudes Especially in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), 126-27, 136-43.

⁴ Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books,

A common nineteenth-century assumption was that the more fathers exercised their authority at home the less civil government would cost.⁵ Although these ideas came under challenge, as late as 1891 it was yet possible for an English husband to legally "chastise" his wife by beating her, as long as he used a rod no thicker than his little finger.⁶

Enlightenment thought acted as a solvent during the eighteenth century, eroding practices and beliefs accepted for millennia. Democratic revolutions in America and France gnawed at hierarchical assumptions and questioned the "natural order" of patriarchy.⁷ The English Methodist, Martin Madan, in his three-volume *Thelypthora* (1781), sought to remedy what he described as

1975), 19; Mauricette Craffe, *La puissance paternelle en droit Anglais: Evolution historique: Solutions traditionnelles* (Paris: R. Pichon et R. Durand-Auzias, 1971), 313-14; Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1700* (London and New York: Longman, 1984), 21-22, 96-126; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *Good Wives: Image and Reality in the Lives of Women in Northern New England 1650-1750* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 6-10.

⁵ Michelle Perrot, "Roles and Characters," in Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby, eds., *From the Fires of Revolution to the Great War*, Vol. 4: *A History of Private Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 167.

⁶ See "Chastisement" in Ernest Arthur Jelf et al., eds., *Encyclopedia of the Laws of England*, 3d ed., 16 vols (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1938), 3:76.

⁷ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 261-67. Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation*, Vol. 2: *The Science of Freedom* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 24, commented that "Disenchantment marked not merely the church and its doctrine; it marked all aspects of life." R. R. Palmer, "The World Revolution of the West: 1763-1801," *Political Science Quarterly* 69 (March 1954): 5, captured the fragmenting, democratizing consequences of the Enlightenment's "demand for self-determination, a sense of autonomy of the personality, a refusal to accept norms laid down outside the self . . . or an insistence on self-expression rather than adjustment to preexisting authoritative standards." For the Enlightenment's impact in America, see Henry Steele Commager, *The Empire of Reason: How Europe Imagined and America Realized the Enlightenment* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977), xi-xiii, 236-45; and for the Revolution's impact on domestic life, see Allan Nevins, *The American States during and after the Revolution, 1775-1789* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 420-69; J. Franklin Jameson, *The American Revolution Considered as a Social Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1926); Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

mobs of loose women thronging English streets and the moral ruin of the time by restoring male authority in the home. Not surprisingly, he argued for the inherent superiority of men and for the scriptural and social advantages of polygamy.⁸ Madan represents a reaction to his age, an effort to preserve traditional male supremacy by reforming home life along patriarchal lines.

The unsettling effects of Enlightenment thought acquired added momentum in the tumultuous society of early nineteenth-century America. Jacksonian politics, frontier instabilities, religious debate, rampant capitalism, and the liberty arising from geographical immensity precipitated almost universal anxiety. Traditional assumptions concerning class and gender were debated.⁹ Uncertainties surrounded erotic impulse, some fearing that all restraints—particularly for women—would vanish.¹⁰ The

⁸ [Martin Madan], *Thehyphthora; or, A Treatise on Female Ruin, in Its Causes, Effects, Consequences, Prevention, and Remedy*; . . . , 3 vols. (London: J. Dodsley, 1781). Over forty years earlier, it was said advocacy of polygamy was widespread. [Patrick Delany], *Reflections upon Polygamy, and the Encouragement Given to That Practice in the Scriptures of the Old Testament* . . . (London: J. Roberts, 1737), 1.

⁹ See David Leverenz, *Manhood and the American Renaissance* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989), 3-6, 72-107.

¹⁰ Regarding the older view that women possessed less sexual desire than men, see Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20 (April 1959): 195-216. For the somewhat contradictory view, that allegations of female sexual indifference arose from fear that the opposite might be true, see Peter Gay, *Education of the Senses*, Vol. 1: *The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 197. Complicated scientific explanations buttressed such views. See John S. Haller and Robin S. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), and Cynthia Eagle Russett, *Sexual Science: The Victorian Construction of Womanhood* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989). For representative scholarship on the theory of the woman's "sphere," see Barbara Welter, "The Cult of 'True Womanhood, 1820-1860,'" *American Quarterly* 18 (Summer 1966): 151-74; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg, "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Woman and Her Role in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of American History* 60 (September 1973): 332-56; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Sex as Symbol in Victorian Purity: An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Jacksonian America," in *Turning Points: Historical and Sociological Essays on the Family*, edited by John Demos and Sarane Spence Boocock, (supplement to *American Journal of Sociology* 84) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,

magnitude of the disarray was greater, some have said, than at any other time in American history.¹¹

If only a minority subscribed to Sarah Grimké's denunciations of male domination, it was still a portent.¹² Tocqueville commented on the leveling of the American family. The ancient presumption that men were divinely called to stand to their households as monarchs to their kingdoms, he said, no longer went without saying. While he approved this feature of life in the new nation, he also saw its disorienting and loosening effects.¹³ He would probably have agreed with Frances Trollope that the United States had more freedom only because it tolerated disorder.¹⁴ Enlightenment thought led irrevocably to increasing egali-

1978), 212-47; Martha Tomhave Blauvelt, "Women and Revivalism," in Rosemary Radford Ruether and Rosemary Skinner Keller, *Women and Religion in America*, Vol. 1, *The Nineteenth Century* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 2, 3, 7; and Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75 (June 1988): 9-39. An excellent essay applying these insights to Mormon thought is Julie Dunfey, "'Living the Principle' of Plural Marriage: Mormon Women, Utopia, and Female Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *Feminist Studies* 10 (Fall 1984): 523-86.

¹¹ Rowland Berthoff, *An Unsettled People: Social Order and Disorder in American History* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 177-203, 204-17, 235-53; Edward Pessen, *Jacksonian America: Society, Personality, and Politics*, rev. ed. (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey, 1978), 77-100; and Michael Feldberg, *The Turbulent Era: Riot and Disorder in Jacksonian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 5-6. Religious effects included the individuation of conscience and crises over the nature of authority. Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

¹² Sarah M. Grimké, *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes, and the Condition of Woman: Addressed to Mary S. Parker, President of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society* (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838), 3, 11, 20, 102, 122, 127. For a discussion of forces behind a nascent feminism, see Gerda Lerner, *The Woman in American History* (Menlo Park, California: Addison-Wesley, 1971), 29-90; Michael Grossberg, *Governing the Hearth: Law and the Family in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 3-30; and Stephanie Coontz, *The Social Origins of Private Life: A History of American Families 1600-1900* (London: Verso, 1988), 161-209.

¹³ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, translated by Henry Reeve and Francis Bowen, 2 vols. (1840; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 2:195.

¹⁴ Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1839; London:

tarianism, individualism, and an eager social fluidity.¹⁵

These elements of life in the young republic—pluralistic, volatile, and disturbed—invited a conservative reaction that overtook America for the balance of the nineteenth century. Attempts to confine women to “appropriate” spheres, sexual restraints, and anxious attention to the prerogatives of men were among the most important features of that florid reaction we know as Victorianism. Even utopian movements exercised remarkable control (usually by males) over domestic relations. All were part of responses to threatened change in traditional institutions, values, and gender roles. All reflected an obsession with order.¹⁶

This notwithstanding, the nineteenth century continually renegotiated the ideal formula for male-female relations. Patriarchal authority was continually endorsed—but qualified by arguments for sexual complementarity and companionate intimacy.¹⁷ Female moral reformers attacked the double standard. And women who accepted their relegation to the nursery and kitchen succeeded, ironically, in challenging male rule in the home generally. To preserve self-esteem and affirm male identity, nineteenth-century American men flooded into fraternal organizations.¹⁸ Because these issues permeated American consciousness,

Century Publishing, 1984), 89.

¹⁵ These themes were identified long ago by Max Savelle, *Seeds of Liberty: The Genesis of the American Mind* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1948), 280.

¹⁶ Daniel Walker Howe, ed., *Victorian America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 18-19, 25; and Carol A. Kilmerten, *Women in Utopia: The Ideology of Gender in the American Owenite Communities* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 1-9.

¹⁷ E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

¹⁸ On male/female roles in the home and domestic values, see Charles E. Rosenberg, “Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th-Century America,” *American Quarterly* 25 (May 1973): 131-47; Coontz, *The Social Origins of Private Life*, 161-209, 210-50, 251-86; Colleen McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840-1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 108-49; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg, “Beauty, the Beast, and the Militant Woman: A Case Study in Sex Roles and Social Stress in Jacksonian America,” in *A Heritage of Her Own: Toward a New Social History of American*

confronting Victorian proprieties on every level, the need for answers of one sort or another was urgent. Some, like the Mormons, simply affirmed male supremacy more defiantly than ever.¹⁹

Joseph Smith may well have sometimes considered granting women ecclesiastical parity with men; Mormon women may have sometimes acted in ways that suggest they possessed a measure of priesthood authority. Still, such instances must not be read out

Women, edited by Nancy F. Cott and Elizabeth H. Pleck (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 197-221; and Daniel Scott Smith, "Family Limitation, Sexual Control and Domestic Feminism in Victorian America," *Chlo's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1974), 119-120, 132.

For examinations of how women maximized their influence by using the domestic sphere, see Aileen S. Kraditor, *Up from the Pedestal* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), 5; Glenda Riley, *The Origins of the Feminist Movement in America* (St. Louis: Forum Press, 1973); Mary P. Ryan, "The Power of Women's Networks: A Case Study of Female Moral Reform in Antebellum America," *Feminist Studies* 5 (Spring 1979): 66-85; Carl N. Degler, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), chaps. 2-12; Estelle B. Freedman, "Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America: Behavior, Ideology, and Politics," *Reviews in American History* 10 (December 1982): 196-215; and Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 43-65.

On male displacement, see Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989), 91-127; John Demos, "The Changing Faces of Fatherhood," in his *Past, Present, and Personal: The Family and the Life Course in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 41-67. The extent to which the Mormon temple endowment, in which women participate, fulfills fraternal functions, has not yet been explored.

¹⁹ Mary P. Ryan, "The Explosion of Family History," *Reviews in American History* 10 (December 1982): 188-89; Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: Three American Communal Experiments of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 239; and his "Between Heaven and Earth: Mormon Theology of the Family in Comparative Perspective," *Sunstone* 7 (July-August 1982): 6-13. Jessie L. Embry also emphasizes the Victorian flavor of Mormon family life, in *Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 89, 134-36.

of their context: that of an unremitting emphasis on male dominance.²⁰ Official accounts of revelations given to the young prophet, including the Cumorah theophany, consisted exclusively, so far as we know, of communications between men. The restoration of both the lesser and higher priesthoods were conveyances of males to males. Smith structured the Church around an all-male hierarchy. The practice of patriarchal blessings identified members by male-delineated tribes of Israel. Women were adjuncts in male adoptions. Smith was anointed king, surrounded by male retainers, the Council of Fifty.²¹ As Marvin Hill observed,

²⁰ For studies suggesting that Mormon women were given roles and authority greater than they were subsequently permitted to keep, see Marilyn Warenski, *Patriarchs and Politics: The Plight of the Mormon Woman* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978), 10-11, 42-53, 107-42; Margaret M. Toscano, "The Missing Rib: The Forgotten Place of Queens and Priestesses in the Establishment of Zion," *Sunstone* 10 (July 1985): 16-22; Melodie Moench Charles, "LDS Women and Priesthood: Scriptural Precedents for Priesthood," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18 (Fall 1985): 15-20; Linda King Newell, "The Historical Relationship of Mormon Women and Priesthood," *ibid.*, 21-32; Kathryn H. Shirts, "Priesthood and Salvation: Is D&C 84 a Revelation for Women Too?" *Sunstone* 15 (September 1991): 20-27; D. Michael Quinn, "Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood Since 1843," *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism*, edited by Maxine Hanks (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 365-409.

²¹ Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 7 vols., 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973 printing), 1:154. Accompanied by others, Joseph Smith reportedly had at least one vision that included God the Mother, but this vision was recorded by followers, not by him; and the doctrine of a Heavenly Mother, though attributed to Smith during the Nauvoo period and officially part of Mormon theology, was never part of any public or revelatory pronouncement on his part. As cited in Margaret Merrill Toscano, "'Put On Your Strength, O Daughters of Zion': Claiming Priesthood and Knowing the Mother," in *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 431-32. Gordon B. Hinckley, first counselor in the current First Presidency, while proscribing prayers to Mother in Heaven, acknowledged: "We have a Mother in Heaven. That doctrine rests well with me." Gordon B. Hinckley, "Daughters of God," *Ensign*, November 1991, 100.

On the coronation of Joseph Smith, see Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967), 66, 139-40, 155-58. Regarding

early Mormonism seemed to attract men in greater numbers than women.²²

patriarchal blessings, see Irene M. Bates, "Transformation of Charisma in the Mormon Church: A History of the Office of Presiding Patriarch, 1833-1979" (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1991), 247-63.

For male adoptions, see Gordon Irving, "The Law of Adoption: One Phase of the Development of the Mormon Concept of Salvation, 1830-1900," *BYU Studies* 14 (Spring 1974): 291-314. For historical accounts infusing early Mormon thought about the family with conservative purpose, see Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, *The Mormon Experience: A History of the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 205; Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 10-15, 130-132, 139-146, 166-169, 176-177, 195-199, 226-55; Klaus Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 192-93; M. Guy Bishop, "The Celestial Family: Early Mormon Thought on Life and Death, 1830-1846," (Ph.D. diss., Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1981); and Kathryn M. Daynes, "Family Ties: Belief and Practice in Nauvoo," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 8 (1988): 63-75.

Mormon kingdom-building was boundary sensitive, if not boundary conservative. For the influence of anxiety-producing religious dispute, philosophical skepticism, and social fluidity on early Mormon development, see Mario De Pillis, "The Quest for Religious Authority and the Rise of Mormonism," *Dialogue* 1 (Spring 1966): 68-88; Marvin S. Hill, "The Shaping of the Mormon Mind in New England and New York," *BYU Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 351-72 and his *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989); Gordon Wood, "Evangelical America and Early Mormonism," *New York History* 61 (Oct. 1980): 358-86; Peter Crawley, "The Passage of Mormon Primitivism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 13 (Winter 1980): 26-37; Geoffrey F. Spencer, "Anxious Saints: The Early Mormons, Social Reform, and Status Anxiety," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 1 (1981): 43-53; Louis J. Kern, *An Ordered Love: Sex Roles and Sexuality in Victorian Utopias—the Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 63, 65-66, 73, 78, 83-84; Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, 163-64; "Soaring with the Gods: Early Mormons and the Eclipse of Religious Pluralism," in Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630-1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 133-52; "Social Disorder and the Resurrection of Communal Republicanism among the Mormons" in Kenneth H. Winn, *Exiles in a Land of Liberty: Mormons in America, 1830-1846* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 40-62.

²² Marvin S. Hill, "The Rise of Mormonism in the Burned-over District: Another View," *New York History* 61 (October 1980): 427-28. The parallel with Mark Carnes's study of the extraordinary interest nineteenth-century American men displayed in fraternal organizations is striking.

Furthermore, as early as 1831 Smith indicated that women were not a reliable source for spiritual truths.²³ By 1842, he was even more emphatic. Speaking to the Relief Society, he dismissed Joanna Southcott and Jemimah Wilkinson, English and American prophetesses respectively, cited the Apostle Paul's instructions that women were to keep silent and obey their husbands, and pointed out that the Irvingites, an English and Scottish sect that some believed resembled the Mormons, were false because women participated in the movement's organization. "A woman," Smith declared, "has no right to found or organize a church." Women like Southcott were acting "contrary to all acknowledged rule, principle, and order."²⁴

Whatever expansions in their roles Mormon women may have experienced during the Nauvoo period, they were also met with male suspicion and traditional assertions of male preeminence. Brigham Young, in 1841, told members to "let the head of the family dictate; I mean the man, not the woman."²⁵ At a session held in the Nauvoo Temple following the assassinations of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Heber C. Kimball, indicating that women were not at first invited into the holy order, charged that certain men who had apostatized were led by their wives. If similar cases should occur again, he said, "no more women will be admitted."²⁶ Brigham Young, speaking a few days later in the same edifice, said that father Adam was given the priesthood only after he had learned not to "follow the woman nor listen to her."²⁷ And again,

²³ *History of the Church*, 1:154.

²⁴ "Ladies' Relief Society," *Times and Seasons* 3 (1 April 1842): 745-746; *History of the Church*, 4:577-79.

²⁵ *History of the Church*, 4:309.

²⁶ William Clayton recorded the statement on 21 December 1845. George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books/Smith Research Associates, 1991), 222.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 239, 28 December 1845. For similar statements made in the temple before the end of December 1845, urging female subordination to men, see *ibid.*, 221 (George A. Smith), 224, 226-27 (Heber C. Kimball), 225 (Amasa Lyman), and 239 (Brigham Young). David Rich Lewis, "For Life, the Resurrection, and the Life Everlasting": James J. Strang and Strangite Mormon Polygamy, 1849-1856," *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 66 (Summer 1983): 290, suggested that an

in a sermon reported by Wilford Woodruff at Winter Quarters, Young reminded women that a husband was to be considered not only her head but her "God." He did warn, however, that those men who did not behave like gods but abused their wives would "be hurled down to perdition and their family and kingdom be given to another that is more worthy."²⁸

Mormonism took a discernibly rigoristic turn during and after its removal west, perhaps because of frontier conditions but certainly from the inspiration of America's own increasingly Victorian persuasion. Michael Quinn argues that Church leaders intended to bestow priesthood authority on women in Nauvoo. If so, leaders went to remarkable lengths to obscure that authority.²⁹ Mormon audiences were subjected to sharp reproofs for romantic sentiments and notions of female equality.³⁰ Increased lamentations were heard concerning the rebelliousness of women and children, along with admonitions urging greater submission on their part and greater strictness on the part of men.³¹ Brigham

important reason for Strang's own entry into plural marriage was that he "saw in polygamy a vehicle for power and control over women—a control which he felt he lacked, and which he lamented in his diary."

²⁸ Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journals 1833-1898*, Typescript, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-85), 3:131. Young repeated this threat: *ibid.*, 7:152 (31 August 1873) and "A Few Words of Doctrine," Given in the Tabernacle in Great Salt Lake City, October 8th, 1861, A.M., Reported by George D. Watt, Historical Department Church Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as LDS Church Archives). Similar statements were made by Heber C. Kimball (1868) in *Journal of Discourses*, 27 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1855-86), 12:190 and Rudger Clawson, Diary, 6 October 1900, Rudger Clawson Collection, Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah. For references on wives being bestowed on men of superior priesthood ranks, see George D. Smith, *Intimate Chronicle*, 227 n. 32.

²⁹ Quinn, "Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood," 378-85.

³⁰ See B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: the Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 90-92.

³¹ The following are only a sample: "What Family Government Is," *Millennial Star* 17 (17 November 1855): 734; Thomas Williams, "Obedience to Parents," *ibid.* 20 (18 September 1858): 603-4; "Rebellion against Parental Authority," *ibid.* 26 (30 July 1864): 485-487; Brigham Young, 1867, *Journal of Discourses* 11:289; Junius F. Wells, 1885, *ibid.*, 26:272; "The Modern Crime of Large Families,"

Young, for example, unequivocally condemned any opposition from children: "When I undertake to conquer a child who wants to conquer me," he said, "it shall be death to him before I yield. I would rather see every child I have, go into the grave this day, than suffer them to rise up and have control over me."³² He advised husbands to be kind and help wives with heavy lifting but not to wash their dishes, "as some men do."³³ During the Mormon Reformation of 1856-57, Jedediah M. Grant disdained men whose "wives walk on them, their daughters walk on them, and their sons walk on them, and they are as the soles of their shoes."³⁴

Buttressing male preeminence was the widespread assumption that women were, in fact, inferior. Such a view was not peculiar to the Mormons. Inferred in the doctrine of separate spheres was the frequently stated concept that both nature and scripture prescribed a restricted and lesser station for women. Beyond concerns with social unrest, the feared disintegration of the family, and anxieties about female sexuality, some have suggested that, both in Europe and the United States, the depreciation of women compensated for disappearing feudal and class distinctions.³⁵ "Weak, easy, thoughtless woman," pronounced one

Millennial Star 34 (10 September 1872): 581-82; "The Marriage Question," *ibid.* 35 (22 July 1873): 449-51; "A Bombshell into Yankeedom," *Deseret News*, 2 December 1880; "Discourse by Apostle Erastus Snow," *ibid.*, 6 June 1885; "Decadence of the Family," *ibid.*, 28 August 1885. Charles W. Penrose, "Woman's Mission," *Millennial Star* 30 (1 August 1868): 481, asserted: "Society in the nineteenth century is in a state of the most complete disorder. Its whole framework is out of joint."

³² *Journal of Discourses*, 1:68. Traveler William Chandlee, *A Visit to Salt Lake; Being a Journey Across the Plains and a Residence in the Mormon Settlements at Utah* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1857), 191, said that he heard Mormons speak of restoring the Mosaic law which allowed the stoning of disobedient children. I know of no Mormon sources, however, that approve such behavior.

³³ *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 3:137, 16 February 1847.

³⁴ *Journal of Discourses*, 4:128.

³⁵ For comments on male/female slaveholder/slave parallels, see Sarah Grimké, *Letters*, 62; C. Vann Woodward, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press), 30; Ronald G. Walters, "The Erotic South: Civilization and Sexuality in American Abolitionism," *American Quarterly* 25

popular writer, must necessarily recognize that she is both dependent on and inferior to her husband.³⁶ John J. Howard, a non-Mormon who defended the Saints, said nature had left woman so comparatively lacking that she must be viewed as a perpetual invalid.³⁷

"Inferiority," Martin Madan had declared, was stamped upon woman by "the God of *nature*," for which reason she was placed under her husband's absolute power.³⁸ Brigham Young agreed, contending that "God never in any age of the world endowed woman with knowledge above the man."³⁹ Women, he said, were designed chiefly to care for children, homes, and gardens, "as they anciently did."⁴⁰ God had, said a Mormon writer in the *Millennial Star*, made woman the weaker of the two sexes, and "implanted in her nature a disposition to cleave to man, and a desire to please

(May 1973): 177-201; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). A century ago, Lorenz von Stein, *Die Frau auf Dem Socialen Gebiete* (Stuttgart: F. G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1880), 129-34, commented on European concerns with class and the status of women, especially in Germany. See also Gay's commentary on nineteenth-century French and German concern with the decline of male domestic authority, *Education of the Senses*, 424-25.

³⁶ William A. Alcott *The Young Man's Guide*, 8th ed. (Boston: Merkins & Marvin, 1836), 312 and his *The Young Wife, or Duties of Woman in the Marriage Relation* (Boston: George W. Light, 1837), 26-27, also 22-23, 30, 354. For similar descriptions of women's "nature" see Anna Ferguson, *The Young Lady; or Guide to Knowledge, Virtue, and Happtness* (Boston: G. W. Cottrell & Co., 1848), 8-9, 20; and Orson S. Fowler, *Fowler on Matrimony* . . . (New York: O. S. & L. N. Fowler in Clinton Hall, 1842), 87. Fowler also claimed in *Sexual Science; Including Manhood, Womanhood, and Their Mutual Interrelations* . . . (Cincinnati, Ohio: National Publishing Co., 1874), 141-44, that women who left the home to agitate for moral reform were either "dissatisfied wives" or "unmarried croakers," acting out a "grumbling mood."

³⁷ See all of John J. Howard's brief pamphlet, *A Plea for Polygamy: being an Attempt at a Solution of the Woman-Question* (Boston: John J. Howard, 1875).

³⁸ Madan, *Thelyphthora*, 1:278-79, 290.

³⁹ In Martha Spence Heywood, *Not by Bread Alone: The Journal of Martha Spence Heywood 1850-56*, edited by Juanita Brooks (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1978), 122.

⁴⁰ *Journal of Discourses*, 3:52; see also *ibid.*, 9:307-8.

him, and be obedient to his wishes."⁴¹ To seek to do more, said another Latter-day Saint, was "unnatural" and contrary to the order of heaven.⁴² "Where," asked Benjamin Franklin Johnson in an 1854 defense of polygamy, "upon the 'pages of inspiration,' is there one evidence that woman was designed to fill a sphere equal with man?"⁴³ And "much as it has been disputed by agitators for 'woman's rights,'" said Charles W. Penrose, "man as a sex, by reason of greater physical and mental strength, is placed by nature above woman in the scale of being."⁴⁴

Where women led out, either in their families or in public, the natural order was inverted, social confusion followed, and God withdrew the priesthood, taught Brigham Young in 1862.⁴⁵ The problem lay in women's inherited nature. Eve's descendants bore her curse. Joel Hills Johnson blamed the disobedience of his wives on their inherent proclivity to error, for Satan had planted such weakness in Eve; and her sin, along with its penalty had been "transmitted to her daughters . . . to the present day."⁴⁶

It was in part because of Eve's curse that women were not allowed a plurality of spouses; their affections must be fixed on their husbands. As Belinda Marden Pratt put it, "no woman can serve two lords."⁴⁷ Women simply were not constituted for such

⁴¹ "Family Relations," *Millennial Star* 17 (17 November 1855): 722. Also see "Law and Gospel," *ibid.*, 14 (3 July 1852): 291.

⁴² Alexander Robbins, "Baptism and Plurality of Wives," *Millennial Star* 17 (13 October 1855): 645.

⁴³ Benjamin Franklin Johnson, *A Glance at Scripture and Reason, in Answer to an Attack through The Polynesian, upon the Satnts for Polygamy* (San Francisco: Excelsior Printing, 1854), 18.

⁴⁴ Charles W. Penrose, "Family Government," *Millennial Star* 30 (16 May 1868): 307.

⁴⁵ *Journal of Discourses*, 9:308.

⁴⁶ "Excerpts from a Journal or Sketch of the Life of Joel Hills Johnson (Brother to Benjamin F. Johnson)," 14 February 1882; bound printed copy (N.p., n.d.), 33, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City, Utah.

⁴⁷ Belinda Marden Pratt, *Defence of Polygamy by a Lady of Utah, in a Letter to Her Sister in New Hampshire*, [Great Salt Lake City, n.pub., 1854], 5. For additional Mormon beliefs about the curse of Eve, see *Journal of Discourses*, 4:57 (Brigham Young, 1856); Orson Pratt, "Celestial Marriage," *Seer* 1 (October 1853): 154; and "Discourse by Elder H [enry]. W. Naisbitt," *Deseret News*, 28 March

an arrangement. Luke William Gallup, a Salt Lake City man writing to his father in 1867, put it succinctly: "I can think of only one way that it might be made to work both ways, & that is for the Almighty to send us all back to this earth again, after we leave it, and give us an exchange of sexual organization."⁴⁸ Heber C.

1885. Although some said that women, by enduring the trials of polygamy, could emancipate themselves from the curse of Eve, what this meant for either polygamy or patriarchal authority was never made clear. See Brigham Young's sermon cited above, 57; Jolene Edmunds Rockwood, "The Redemption of Eve," in *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective*, edited by Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 10-13; Carol Cornwall Madsen, "A Mormon Woman in Victorian America" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1985), 177-83; and her "Emmeline B. Wells: A Voice for Mormon Women," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 2 (1982): 162.

⁴⁸ Luke William Gallup to his father, 25 December 1867, Luke William Gallup Reminiscences and Diary, LDS Church Archives; see also his "Thoughts," December 1866, *ibid.* Martin Madan, *Thelyphthora*, 1:279, had asserted the difference in male/female sexual natures in the eighteenth century: "It appears then from the *nature of things*, as constituted by the *Creator* himself, that the *man* hath powers which the *woman* hath not, and therefore may use a freedom of action which the woman cannot."

Without explaining why, one Mormon commentator denounced polyandry as "impracticable, repulsive, unnecessary, unnatural and destructive." "Polygamy and Polyandry," *Millennial Star* 37 (31 May 1875): 340-41; Andrew Jenson, Assistant Church Historian, letter to D. A. Holcom (pseud. for C. J. Hunt), 28 July 1914, fd. 77, Library-Archives, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (hereafter RLDS Church Library-Archives), Independence. Brigham Young, Orson Pratt, and Erastus Snow argued that polyandry, like prostitution, led to disease, reduced fertility, and confused paternity: *Journal of Discourses*, 1:361, 18:55-56, 19:270. See also Orson Pratt, "Celestial Marriage," *The Seer* 1 (April 1853): 60; *The Bible and Polygamy . . . A Discussion Between Professor Orson Pratt . . . and Rev. Doctor J. P. Newman . . .* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1877), 32-33; Abraham M. Musser, "Polygamy," *Millennial Star* 39 (11 June 1877): 374-75; Charles Ora Card, Diaries, 3:14 November 1888, LDS Church Archives; John T. Caine in *Hearings before the Committee on Territories in Regard to the Admission of Utah as a State* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1889), 70. The daughter of polygamist Heber Bennion remembered her father explaining that a woman could not have several husbands because, in an explanation he attributed to Joseph Smith, if that happened everyone would die of syphilis. Mary Bennion Powell, Letter to Dr. George Stewart, 228-page transcript composed 26 January-25 February 1952, p. 129, Huntington Library,

Kimball was more direct: male "seed" was "the seat of life & the foundation of the soul." Because sperm contained both men and women, a man could comprehend and understand both sexes; a woman could not.⁴⁹

The effect on Mormon women of this social and theological message of inferiority has not been measured; but Lucinda Lee Dalton of Beaver, Utah, may have spoken for many women in resenting and resisting contentions of male superiority. Although her attachment to the Church was profound and her faith was firmly based on numerous spiritual experiences, she at first resolved never to marry because she had witnessed "so much that was disagreeable and humiliating to women." She stated that "as long ago as I can remember I longed to be a boy, because boys were so highly privileged and free." She eventually consented to become the plural wife of Charles W. Dalton because he did not hold the common presumption that men stood "a whole flight of stairs higher in creation than a woman." Still, the bitterest paragraphs in her literate memoir excoriate those "artificial rules" concocted by men to perpetuate the "foggy superstition about man's being created first and *consequently* best, noblest, and supreme-est."⁵⁰

Assumptions of female inferiority led directly to arguments that men must necessarily control them. This sometimes resulted in astonishingly bald claims of power. "Get good young women," Brigham Young counseled, so that they "can be controlled."⁵¹ In 1856, Heber C. Kimball recounted a dream of Joseph Fielding's in which his sickle had become dull, inferring a loss of some kind of personal ability. Kimball said the dream came true, that Fielding indeed suffered a loss, and this was because he "had a woman straddle of his neck."⁵² As for Kimball, not one of his wives had

San Marino, California.

⁴⁹ *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 5:73, 11 August 1857.

⁵⁰ Lucinda Lee Dalton, "Autobiography," 1876, letter to Emmeline B. Wells, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.

⁵¹ In *A Mormon Chronicle: The Diaries of John D. Lee, 1848-1876*, edited by Robert Glass Cleland and Juanita Brooks, 2 vols. (San Marino, California: Huntington Library, 1955), 2:89, 17 November 1867.

"a particle of power" to act independently of him.⁵³ Brigham Young told female Saints "not [to] ask whether you can make yourselves happy, but whether you can do your husband's will, if he is a good man." All of this derived from an inherent distinction between the sexes: "Let our wives be the weaker vessels," Young said, "and the men be men, and show the women by their superior ability that God gives husbands wisdom and ability to lead their wives into his presence." Women and children were not even to take the lead in holding family prayer without first consulting their male head. Young claimed that he would never pray at all if he "could not do it independent of the dictation of a woman."⁵⁴ Benjamin Clapp's nomination as one of the Seven Presidents of the Seventy was rejected because he was reportedly "ruled by his wife & children & they were ruled by the devil."⁵⁵ If wives wished for their husbands' love, advised Orson Hyde, they should "copy his mind and his spirit." If they did this, he said, their husband could not help loving them "though he had forty other wives in the same situation."⁵⁶ As a model of marital relations, Young told of a wife asserting her own opinion to her husband. "O no, my dear," he quoted the wife, "I think I understand this matter as well as you do, and perhaps a little better; I am conversant with all the whys and the wherefores, and am acquainted with this little circumstance better than you are, and I think in this case, my dear, that I know better than you." Young's reply, he said, would be: "Get out of my path, for I am going yonder, and you may whistle at my coat-tail until you are tired of it." That, he said, is how he would deal with the advice of wives.⁵⁷

It is true that men were instructed to rule benevolently. Nor

⁵² *Journal of Discourses*, 4:83.

⁵³ *Journal of Discourses*, 6:67. For similar statements by Kimball, see also *ibid.*, 6:127 and 5:17.

⁵⁴ *Journal of Discourses*, 9:38, 248-49, 308; 11:271.

⁵⁵ In *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 4:112, 7 April 1852.

⁵⁶ *Journal of Discourses*, 5:282.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 6:45. Men allowing their wives to rule them were no better, Young said, than "a little black boy. They live in filth and nastiness, they eat it and drink it and they are filthy all over." *Journal of Discourses*, 4:50.

were women required to obey unrighteous husbands.⁵⁸ Yet a husband's unrighteousness had to amount to apostasy, or at least blatant sin, to justify a wife's "disobedience." As a non-Mormon visitor reported a sermon, "Wives should obey their husbands in all things, no matter what they are commanded, or whether they know it to be wrong. What then? Will they be punished? No; the wicked husband will go to hell, and be damned to all eternity; but his wives will be taken from him and given to some better man."⁵⁹

It was, perhaps, an unconscious social manifestation of the assumption of male superiority that women were sometimes segregated in the bowery and seated to the left of the speaker. At least one speaker, reversing the usual order of address, saluted the audience with: "Gentlemen and ladies."⁶⁰ Boys were told from the

⁵⁸ See *Journal of Discourses*, 1:77 (Brigham Young, 1853); 5:30 (Heber C. Kimball, 1857); and 25:368 (George Q. Cannon, 1884). Heber C. Kimball was obviously setting an example of magnanimity when he described in January 1861 how he financially supported and was kind to wives who "had never been subject to his council & will," and Brigham Young was obviously appealing to common sense in scoffing at the foolishness of a man who, fearing that his wife would disobey him, gave her a whipping ahead of time. In *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 5:539, 6:553.

⁵⁹ Chandless, *A Visit to Salt Lake*, 162. Also see, Orson Spencer, *Patriarchal Order, or Plurality of Wives!* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), 16. Again and again in the late nineteenth century, women were told that part of the curse placed on Eve was that men were to rule over them; that their responsibility was to say "amen" to their husbands. Those who did not would bring destruction to their families in this life and lose their eternal reward in the next; male heads of house were to be looked upon as priests, prophets, dictators, governors and kings to their families; and to rebel against one's husband was equivalent to making war against the Almighty. No woman, asserted Charles W. Penrose, "Family Relations," *Millennial Star*, 17 (17 November 1855): 723, would ever reach the celestial kingdom unless she first learned "to humbly submit herself to a man in the Lord." Heber C. Kimball said he did not "give a damn" for a wife who claimed otherwise. *Journal of Discourses*, 4:82. For similar statements by Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Joseph F. Smith, and George Q. Cannon, see *ibid.*, 4:55, 57, 81, 155; 10:104; 11:136, 211; 16:247, 25:369. Also see "Discourse by Elder H[enry] W. Naisbitt," *Deseret News*, 28 March 1885 and further comments by Brigham Young's in *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 5:600-601 and "Maxims for Married Ladies," *Deseret News*, 23 January 1856.

⁶⁰ Richard F. Burton, *The City of the Saints and Across the Rocky Mountains to California*, edited by Fawn Brodie (1861; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 244;

pulpit that in disputes between their mothers and fathers they were to follow the latter.⁶¹ In at least one patriarchal blessing, the patriarch informed the woman her blessings could not be as great as those of her husband because of her "sex."⁶² Women sometimes referred to their husbands as "my Lord" and, although Brigham Young stated that neither men nor women were to worship the other, John D. Lee informed a widow whom he had married "for her soul's sake," that "she must adhere to his council for he was her Husband, Bro., Father, President & Saviour or else he was Nothing."⁶³

Men who bowed to the wishes of their wives and refused to enter plural marriage, Wilford Woodruff warned, were "of but little account in the Church & Kingdom of God."⁶⁴ In the punishing language of George A. Smith, both Mormon and non-Mormon monogamists were "a poor, narrow-minded, pinch-backed race of men, who chain themselves down to the law of monogamy, and live all their days under the dominion of one wife."⁶⁵

and *Journal of Discourses*, 5:173, 275 (Heber C. Kimball, 1857).

⁶¹ Heber C. Kimball and Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 12:190, 3:265-66. It was common in both American and Mormon society for sons to be given charge of the family when the father was away; Mormon history contains instances of older sons using threats and even violence to compel the obedience of their fathers' plural wives. See Beecher, "Women in Winter Quarters," 15; Kimball Young, "Polygamy in Utah: A Westerner's Reappraisal," *The Westerner's Brand Book* 11 (January 1955): 87; and the following interviews from the LDS Oral History Project, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Oral History Project): Seth Budge, interviewed by Jessie L. Embry, 4 May 1976, Lehi, Utah, 5; Lorin "Dutch" Leavitt, interviewed by Leonard R. Grover, 3 January 1980, Bunkerville, Nevada, 15; and Richard Ivins Bentley, interviewed by Leonard R. Grover, 5 January 1980, 4.

⁶² In Bates, "Transformation of Charisma," 283.

⁶³ Lee, *A Mormon Chronicle*, 1:10; see also Heywood, *Not by Bread Alone*, 120, 134; and Belinda Marden Pratt, *Defence of Polygamy*, 7; Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, *A Journey to Great-Salt-Lake City . . .*, 2 vols. (London: W. Jeffs, 1861), 2:105-6; and Heber C. Kimball, *Journal*, Book 90, 28 June 1846, 97-98, LDS Church Archives. Brigham Young's stricture against "worshipping" another human being appears in *Journal of Discourses*, 14:106.

⁶⁴ *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 7:251.

⁶⁵ *Journal of Discourses*, 3:291; see Charles Smith, Letter to Henry Eyring, February 1869, Charles Smith Diaries, microfilm of typescript, Manuscripts and

It may be possible to discount such sermonizing as hyperbolic, but principles of male domination and female submission had their counterpart in patriarchal practice. Preston Nibley remembered that his family regarded the father, Charles W. Nibley, almost as a "king," even after the children were grown.⁶⁶ Elizabeth H. Packer attributed her "congenial" childhood home to her father's strong role. "We wouldn't dare upset father's plans," she said, "or at times not even satisfy our own feelings in things. He was the commander in chief, and we did what he said."⁶⁷ Winnie Haynie Mortensen remembered her father not only pronounced the law but enforced it with the toe of his shoe.⁶⁸ A plural wife reported that, despite her husband's capricious and unreasonable treatment of her children, she dared "talk up to him" for the first time only a year before he died.⁶⁹

It was in polygamy that male preeminence found its most natural ally. Many reasons were given to justify the practice but none surpassed its service as a brace for paternal authority. Evidence for such an interpretation dates from even before the Prophet's 1843 revelation on polygamy. In the first formal defense of plural marriage, Udney Hay Jacob's 1842 pamphlet, Jacob gave

Archives, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

⁶⁶ In Michael E. Christensen, "Charles W. Nibley: A Case Study of Polygamy," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 110.

⁶⁷ Elizabeth H. Packer, interviewed by Jessie L. Embry, 1 September 1976, p. 4, Provo, Utah, LDS Oral History Project.

⁶⁸ Winnie Haynie Mortensen, interviewed by Leonard R. Grover, 26 January 1980, Salt Lake City, Utah, 4, LDS Oral History Project.

⁶⁹ In James Edward Hulett, Jr., "The Social Role of the Mormon Polygamous Male," *American Sociological Review* 8 (June 1943): 546. Also see his "The Sociological and Social Psychological Aspects of the Mormon Polygamous Family," (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1939), 83-84; Juanita Brooks, "A Close-Up of Polygamy," *Harpers* 168 (February 1934): 303; Embry, *Mormon Polygamous Families*, 121-22; her "Families in Religion, Mormon Polygamy, and Monogamy: Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century," 6-7, paper presented before the Organization of American Historians, 26 March 1988, Reno, Nevada; and the following LDS Oral History Project interviews: Seth Budge, 5; Lorin "Dutch" Leavitt, 15; Richard Ivins Bentley, 4; and Celia R. Geertsens, interviewed by Jessie L. Embry, 5 May 1976, Orem, Utah, p. 13.

less space to the rightfulness of plural marriage than to the urgent need to restore men as supreme rulers of the home. As Madan had done in his *Thelyphthora*, Jacob, whose tract was printed by Joseph Smith's press and undoubtedly expressed the Mormon prophet's views, defined domestic disorder as the chief malady of the time, prescribed death for adultery, and attributed the apostasy of early Christianity to violations of the marriage covenant. But most emphatically he insisted that whenever women exercise any government whatsoever over men, social and moral confusion result. The great frailty of contemporary society, Jacob said, was due to the surrender of male independence and authority to women. "Adam was enslaved by the woman, and so are we." Family government, he argued, was the basis of all social stability and must inevitably fail without a revival of male domestic authority. Jacob protested the growing disobedience of children, the error of giving divorced mothers custody of their children, and female imperiousness toward husbands. He said that neither nature nor scripture supported equality. Rather, a careful reading of God's word would show that "the wife is pronounced the husband's property, as much so as his man servant, his maid servant, his ox, or his horse." The only way to check the disease of women "hiss[ing]" at men as "the lords of creation," he urged, was to revive polygamy.⁷⁰

In some ways, Joseph Smith's revelation on plural marriage (Doctrine and Covenants 132) the next year, was but an appendix to Jacob's tract. It held up Abraham and other patriarchs as models for Joseph's and Emma's relationship. Emma was ordered to emulate Sarah in accepting the wives God gave her husband. The certainty of an enlargement of Joseph's eternal estate through

⁷⁰ Udney Hay Jacob, *An Extract from a Manuscript Entitled THE PEACE MAKER, Or The Doctrines of the Millennium* . . . (Nauvoo: Illinois: J. Smith, 1842), 4, 5, 10, 11, 16. See Lawrence Foster's analysis of both the pamphlet and its author in "A Little-Known Defense of Polygamy from the Mormon Press in 1842," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 9 (Winter 1974): 21-34. See also Kenneth W. Godfrey, "A New Look at the Alleged Little-Known Discourse by Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies* 9 August 1968): 339-50; and David J. Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering," (Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1982), 368 n. 2.

imitating Abraham is a major theme of the revelation. If Emma refused to follow the example of Sarah, Joseph was yet promised "an hundredfold in this world, of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and children, and crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds" (vv. 1, 32-39, 52, 54-55). It was a thoroughly patriarchal decree, assuring a virile dominion over "many wives and concubines" and "virgins" (vv. 1, both 63) in this world and that to come.

Polygamy promised its practitioners many benefits, according to nineteenth-century defendants, including health and longevity.⁷¹ But nothing was more important than the allocation of power resulting from the gender ratio and, perhaps, its impact on fertility.⁷² Tucson: University of Arizona, 1982); and her *Mormon*

⁷¹ Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 84-125.

⁷² Although the topic of fertility in polygamy is disputed, in most polygamous societies, the rank order of wives tends to be inversely proportional to the number of children each wife bears. Because Mormons prized fertility so highly, the status of plural wives who had relatively few children could be diminished. "The church would forgive a bad job of rearing sooner than the failure of a mother to have all the children possible. The plight of a childless married woman was sadder than that of a spinster. So strong was the recognition of that duty that few women dared or desired to evade it," observed Nels Anderson, "The Mormon Family," *American Sociological Review* 2 (October 1937): 606. For comments on declining fertility among Mormon plural wives, see Remy and Brenchley, *A Journey to Great-Salt-Lake City*, 2:149; Stanley S. Ivins, "Notes on Mormon Polygamy," *Western Humanities Review* 10 (Summer 1956): 236; Lester E. Bush, Jr., "Birth Control among the Mormons: Introduction to an Insistent Question," *Dialogue* 10 (Autumn 1976): 38 n. 48; James E. Smith and Phillip R. Kunz, "Polygamy and Fertility in Nineteenth-Century America," *Population Studies* 30 (November 1976): 471, 479. Studies commenting on this subject in other culture includes Binet, *Le mariage*, 94-100; Remi Clignet, *Many Wives, Many Powers: Authority and Power in Polygynous Families* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 29; and Vern L. Bullough, *Sexual Variance in Society and History* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1976), 679.

Other factors affecting polygamous fertility include number of wives (most Mormon polygamists had only two), age, rank order of wives, and socio-ecclesiastical position. See D. Gene Pace, "Wives of Nineteenth-Century Mormon Bishops: A Quantitative Analysis," *Journal of the West* 21 (April 1982): 53-54; Dean L. May, "A Demographic Portrait of the Mormons, 1830-1980," in *After 150 Years: The Latter-day Saints in Sesquicentennial Perspective*, edited by Thomas G. Alexander and Jessie L. Embry (Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Center

Polygamous Families, 42-47, 52, 193-94. Also see Vicky Burgess-Olson, "Family Structure and Dynamics in Early Utah Mormon Families, 1847-1885," (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1975), 69-82, 131; and Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 209.

Other subtle messages reinforced the view of women as property, a phenomenon Gerda Lerner called the "commodification" of females.⁷³ Mormon men preached from the pulpit that women were weaker vessels who instinctively gravitated to the most able men, that they were like children, that they must be watched over and protected against theft from strangers, that righteous men would be rewarded with women, flocks, and herds, and that the unrighteous would see their wives bestowed

for Western Studies, 1983), 52, 56; L. L. Bean and G. P. Mineau, "The Polygyny-Fertility Hypothesis: A Re-evaluation," *Population Studies* 40 (March 1986): 67-81; Larry M. Logue, *A Sermon in the Desert: Belief and Behavior in Early St. George, Utah* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 76-79; and Embry, *Mormon Polygamous Families*, 37, Table 11. Douglas L. Anderton and Rebecca Jean Emigh, "Polygynous Fertility: Sexual Competition versus Progeny," *American Journal of Sociology* 94 (January 1989): 832-55 suggest significantly that declining fertility by wife order was influenced by the husband's sense of reproductive satisfaction. Sociologically speaking, a plural wife would always be reckoned at lesser valence than the husband in a polygamous domestic unit. This was part of what gave the arrangement strength. Authority naturally flowed to the male head of house because a husband could easily withdraw from a wife who disagreed with or displeased him. He had less incentive to negotiate, seek compromise, or work things out. Udney Hay Jacob praised this phenomenon as the "direct" consequence of plurality, for it was a system, he said, that has the effect of making the wife's chief object "to win, and retain the affections of her husband." The child of one polygamous family remembered the first wife's complaint: "There is one thing that makes me so mad. Every time I scold Cars . . . [the husband], then he would get ready and go over to Nellie's [the second wife]. I couldn't discipline him or get after him because I knew as soon as I did, he would go over there." Heber C. Kimball's remark that, "Those that haven't but one [wife], she rules," not only spoke to men's fears concerning women's forward behavior but acknowledged the desired, subordinating consequence for women in the polygamous domestic configuration. Plural marriage assured male authority while teaching wives perseverance and obedience. *Illennial Star* 14 (1 April 1852): 98; Lee, *A Mormon Chronicle*, 2:26; George A. Smith and Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 5:224, 11:268; and Bates, "Transformation of Charisma," 274.

⁷⁷ Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 15-35, 212-17.

on others.⁷⁴ Gentile visitors sometimes compared the Saints to Muslims because of such views.⁷⁵ Samuel Bowles quipped that a man in the East expected to steal into heaven "under the pious petticoats of his . . . wife." But Mormon women went to heaven only because their husbands chose to take them. "The Mormon religion is an excellent institution for maintaining masculine authority in the family," he summarized. "And the greatness of a true Mormon is measured . . . by the number of wives he can keep in sweet and loving . . . subjugation."⁷⁶

The natural confederacy of polygamy and patriarchy assumed new theological importance as a mirror of heavenly order in an important 1853 pamphlet by Orson Spencer.⁷⁷ Like other restorationist claims, the male-centered household, he said, was a divine institution, known to the ancient patriarchs, especially Abraham. As with antebellum Southern defenders of slavery, Spencer attached great significance to God's visits to Abraham and argued that God showed the Old Testament patriarch the social and family patterns of heaven. Recognizing Abraham's righteousness and childlessness, Spencer continued, God gave his friend, Abraham, wives and concubines so that he could

⁷⁴ John Hanson Beadle, *Life in Utah or, the Mysteries and Crimes of Mormonism* . . . (Philadelphia: National Publishing Co., 1870), 362, 365; Wilford Woodruff's *Journal* 4:270; John Smith, "Patriarchal," *Millennial Star* 14 (1 April 1852): 98; Lee, *A Mormon Chronicle*, 2:26; George A. Smith and Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 5:224, 11:268; and Bates, "Transformation of Charisma," 274.

⁷⁵ Chandless, *A Visit to Salt Lake*, 1962; Burton, *City of the Saints*, 481, 443; see also Spencer, *Patriarchal Order*, 16.

⁷⁶ Samuel Bowles, *Across the Continent: A Summer's Journey to the Rocky Mountains, the Mormons, and the Pacific States, with Speaker Colfax* (Springfield, Mass.: Samuel Bowles & Co.; New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1866), 124. Also see Horace Greeley, *An Overland Journey, from New York to San Francisco* . . . (New York: C. M. Saxton, Barker & Co., 1860), 217-18; Wilford Woodruff's *Journal*, 5:367, 13 July 1859; and Gail Farr Casterline, "'In the Toils' or 'Onward for Zion': Images of the Mormon Woman, 1852-1890" (M.A. thesis, Utah State University, 1974), 14-16.

⁷⁷ Orson Spencer, *Patriarchal Order; or, Plurality of Wives!* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853). For a biographical sketch of Spencer and a summary of his polygamy defense, see Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering," 359-63.

fulfill the first and greatest commandment, to "effect the perpetuity and increase of God, in an endless succession of families." The great patriarch's polygamous relationships thus constituted the all-important Abrahamic law, assuring that his seed would be multiplied beyond counting. The "law of Sarah" permitting one's husband to enter plural relationships, thus raised wifely submissiveness to a divinely mandated principle. This female deference was precisely what Mormon leaders, since at least the early 1840s, had been saying every household craved.⁷⁸ It was what Joseph Smith's 1843 revelation on polygamy had required from his wife, Emma, on pain of destruction. (D&C 132: 31-34, 52-55, 65). According to Spencer, "patriarchal marriage" was not only the best form of social order but the actual purpose of creation: "The grand design of God in bringing the spirits of men and women to occupy bodies upon this earth was to establish a system of perfect Patriarchal government, according to the pattern of the family of Heaven."⁷⁹ Thus, he insisted, "polygamy was a blessing and a duty binding upon God's people in *all* generations."

This view of plurality as mirroring celestial order was widespread among Mormons. One editorialist referred to it as "the doctrine of Celestial Family Organization" now "made plain to the Saints."⁸⁰ Orson Pratt wrote that patriarchal government in the home, with a righteous father and husband as "fixed and immovable as the throne of heaven," was the original government God had established on earth, and one "to be continued in all generations."⁸¹ By restoring the male-governed home, modeled on the Abrahamic household, the Saints were, in the words of Charles W. Penrose, introducing "a divine social system which will grow into a universal political system."⁸²

"Patriarchal marriage," as polygamy was called, had such

⁷⁸ Spencer, *Patriarchal Order*, 2, 3-7; see Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 119 n. 103.

⁷⁹ Spencer, *Patriarchal Order*, 4, 14; emphasis his.

⁸⁰ "The New Year," *Millennial Star* 16 (7 January 1854): 1.

⁸¹ Pratt, "Celestial Marriage," 143-44.

⁸² Penrose, "Woman's Mission," 482; also see additional references in Hardy, *Solemn Covenant*, 119-20 n. 109 and n. 110.

priority that the Saints saw it as a key to successful government everywhere and an explanation for the historical rise and fall of societies. Whenever men were replaced by women or children as leaders in the home, the natural order was reversed and, uncorrected, would bring down entire nations.⁸³ The Israelites prospered or suffered according to their adherence to the Abrahamic example, and its decline caused early Christian apostasy. Outlawing polygamy led only to prostitution, fulfilling John's apocalyptic vision of a church as "the mother of harlots."⁸⁴

Reinstitution of male authority in the home, reinforced by the practice of a plurality of wives, was a vital part of Mormon restorationist intent. When visitors expressed surprise at Salt Lake City's domestic and civic peace, Mormons forthrightly ascribed the reason to male rule in plural households.⁸⁵ Establishing Abraham's perfect social arrangement was necessary to reform human society, save humankind, and prepare the earth for the second coming of Christ.⁸⁶ The patriarchal principle was perhaps a more urgent priority in the Mormon mind than even the multiplication

⁸⁷ Jacob, *An Extract*, 18, 22, 24, 35; "President Woodruff's Communication," *Deseret News*, 20 August 1887; and L[ouis] A[lphonse] Bertrand, *Mémoires d'un Mormon* (Paris: E. Jung-Treuttel, [1862]), 176-78.

⁸⁸ George Q. Cannon, Jedediah M. Grant, Moses Thatcher, and Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 13:202-3, 1:346, 26:315, 9:322, 11:127-28, 12:262; Parley P. Pratt, "Marriage and Morals in Utah," *Deseret News*, 16 January 1856; Wilford Woodruff's *Journal*, 4:152-53; "A Reply to the 'Christian Herald' on the Plurality of Wives," *Zion's Watchman* 1 (4 March 1854): 79; Spencer, *Patriarchal Order*, 7, 9; Orson Pratt, "Celestial Marriage," 80.

⁸⁹ Jules Remy reported a Mormon wife proudly describing how her husband governed eight wives and twenty-five children "like a second Abraham." Remy and Brenchley, *A Journey to Great-Salt-Lake City*, 2:105-6. See also "Dialogue between Elder Freeman and a Visitor from Abroad," *Deseret News*, 12 January 1854; Harriet T. Clarke, "A Young Woman's Sights on the Emigrant Trail," 1878, handwritten interview, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley; Robert Kent Fielding, *The Unsolicited Chronicler: An Account of the Gunnison Massacre, Its Causes and Consequences* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Paradigm Publications, 1993), 62, 276-81.

⁹⁰ Orson Pratt, "Christian Polygamy in the Sixteenth Century," *Seer* 1 (December 1853): 182; Parley P. Pratt and Erastus Snow in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:308, 24:164-65; Penrose, "Family Government," 306; and "Remarks by Elder Charles W. Penrose," *Deseret News*, 20 September 1879.

of children. Domestic government, as with Victorians generally, was a matter of the highest importance.

Given the determination to uphold male supremacy and insist on female submission, it is ironic that an unintended side effect of Mormon plural marriage was that many women experienced considerable freedom and some left records of remarkable achievement.⁸⁷ As numbers of scholars have observed, the polygamous arrangement unexpectedly contributed to female independence.⁸⁸ Inevitably, Mormon patriarchs were often absent,

⁹¹ Casterline, "In the Toils' or 'Onward for Zion,'" 71, 80-81; Leonard J. Arrington, "Blessed Damozels: Women in Mormon History," *Dialogue* 6 (Summer 1971): 22-31; Claudia L. Bushman, ed., *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Emmeline Press, 1976); and Vicky Burgess-Olson, ed., *Sister Saints* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1978). Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, "Women's Work on the Mormon Frontier," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 49 (Summer 1981): 276-90 argues that frontier conditions, not preference or design, caused most of the differences in work habits and aspirations between Mormon women and their eastern counterparts; however, she demonstrates that Mormonism's "leading sisters," most of whom were plural wives of "leading brethren," constituted a social elite that exercised considerable influence through their networks and common efforts. Beecher, "The 'Leading Sisters': A Female Hierarchy in Nineteenth Century Mormon Society," *Journal of Mormon History* 9 (1982): 25-39.

⁹² Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 211-16 summarizes in detail compensations available to women in polygamy. See also his "Polygamy and the Frontier: Mormon Women in Early Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 50 (Summer 1982): 281-82; Hulett, "The Social Role of the Mormon Polygamous Male," 546; Vicky Burgess-Olson, "In Her Own Words: A Feminist Studies Mormon Polygamy and Remarkably, Finds That It Liberated the Wives," *People Weekly* 10 (10 July 1978): 58. Joan Iverson, "Feminist Implications of Mormon Polygyny," *Feminist Studies* 10 (Fall 1984): 511-13, linked female independence and the emotional bonding between polygamous wives with their rejection of romantic love. Sandra L. Myres, *Westering Women and the Frontier Experience, 1800-1915* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), argues that women in the West stepped out of their "spheres" more than women in the East. But compare Beecher, "Women's Work on the Mormon Frontier," 288 and Embry, *Mormon Polygamous Families*, 89-104, for the view that Mormon women did what they could to retain the conventions of Victorian female behavior. Nineteenth-century defenders of polygamy like Brigham Young, could preach the submission of women while simultaneously asserting, "I can say with confidence, that there is

both on business and on church service, leaving wives to manage households and farms. This situation inevitably made for a measure of detachment between men and their families. Not all polygamous husbands were emotionally remote, but there is at least one documented case apart from Mark Twain's humorous story of Brigham Young of a father failing to recognize his own child in public.⁸⁹ As Elna Cowley Austin indicated, when describing her polygamous father, Apostle Matthias F. Cowley, to the children he seemed but an occasional "visitor."⁹⁰ Michael E. Christensen probably put it best in his account of Charles W. Nibley: "The children did not have a father as much as they had an image."⁹¹ There is the story told by Dana Bennett of the Mormon husband living with four wives, who, clothes folded over his arm, wandered into the kitchen in search of a place to sleep. Locating one of the women, she "told him which wife's turn it was, and he dutifully went off to bed."⁹² At its ironic extreme, Mormon polygamous society seemed on its way to becoming a matriarchy.⁹³

It is unlikely, however, that most wives ever interpreted these circumstances to mean any real forfeiture of the husband's authority. Women's independence, except for certain elite families, seems to have resulted almost exclusively from their husband's absences, leaving them the responsibility for raising the children, managing the household, and sometimes supporting

no people on the face of this earth that pay more respect to females than do this people. I know of no community where females enjoy the privileges they do here"; and Apostle Moses Thatcher claimed, "Nowhere in the world . . . [are] women freer than in Utah." *Journal of Discourses*, 9:195 and 26:314.

⁸⁹ Marcus Fielding Hart, interviewed by Jessie L. Embry, 31 May 1976, Preston, Idaho, 8, LDS Oral History Project.

⁹⁰ Elna Cowley Austin, interviewed by Leonard R. Grover, 26 January 1980, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2, LDS Oral History Project. .

⁹¹ Michael E. Christensen, "Charles W. Nibley: A Case Study of Polygamy," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980): 114.

⁹² Dana Bennett, "Mormon Polygamy in Southeastern Idaho," *Idaho Yesterdays* 28 (Spring 1984): 29.

⁹³ For scholarly comment on this paradox, see Julie Roy Jeffrey, *Frontier Women The Trans-Mississippi West* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979), 158, 174-77; and Bushman, *Mormon Sisters*, xix.

their husbands financially as well.⁹⁴ The emotional strains these women endured, especially loneliness and financial uncertainties, could be enormous.⁹⁵ Lusannah Goodridge Hovey was left for months in Cache Valley, pregnant with her eighth child, while her husband stayed with another wife in Salt Lake City. Hearing he was ill, she made the trip to Salt Lake City only to learn, to her shock, that he was already dead and buried. No provision had been made for her. Left to herself, she returned to Cache Valley and "took up life's burdens . . . alone with my seven children."⁹⁶

An important technique for negotiating difficult passages in the patriarchal arrangement was a formalistic deference that fulfilled the *appearance* of patriarchal rule. For example, fathers were often given ceremonial preferment that silently obscured the emotional and economic impact of their absences and the otherwise important roles filled by their wives. While there must

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Wood Kane, *Twelve Mormon Homes Visited in Succession on a Journey through Utah to Arizona* (1874; Salt Lake City: Tanner Trust Fund and University of Utah Library, 1974), 9-10, described one prominent pluralist in Provo, Utah, as a "guest" in the home of one of his wives. Ernest Ingersoll, "Salt Lake City," *Harper's* 69 (August 1884): 399, described another as the economic "agent" of his farmer wives: "He hives their swarms of bees, and charges them for it; he renders special aid when called upon, and is paid for it; he sells their crops and honey when it is ready, and credits each wife with her due share." Even more telling, perhaps because they are partially unconscious of their revelations, are the memories of children of polygamous families from the LDS Oral History Project, interviewed between 1976 and 1979, primarily by Jessie L. Embry, with Leonard R. Grover, Jerry D. Lee, and Tillman S. Boxell (interview dates omitted; unless otherwise noted, all locales in Utah): Torrey L. Austin, Logan, 3; Teresa Richardson Blau, Mesa, Arizona, 5, 7; Seth Budge, Lehi, 11; Rose Eyring Calder, Salt Lake City, 8, 12; Clawson Y. Cannon, Sr., Provo, 44, 46; Rudgar H. Daines, Logan, 1, 2; James Burtrum Harvey Tridell, 4; Evan B. Murray, Logan, 9; Elizabeth H. Packer, Provo, 2; George S. Pond, Lewiston, 6; Esther Webb Pope, Richmond, 2, 7; Amy Allen Pulsipher, Salt Lake City, 2, 4; Roxey Roskelley Rogers, Provo, 4; and Rinda Bentley Sudweeks, Lindon, 10.

⁹⁹ See Suzanne Adel Katz, "Sisters in Salvation: Patterns of Emotional Loneliness Among Nineteenth-Century Non-Elite Mormon Polygamous Women (M.A. thesis, California State University at Fullerton, 1987); and Linda Thatcher, "Women Alone: The Economic and Emotional Plight of Early LDS Women," *Dialogue* 25 (Winter 1992): 45-55.

¹⁰⁰ In M. R. Hovey, comp., "A Brief Sketch of Lusannah E. Goodridge Hovey," 9; typescript copy in my possession.

have been exceptions, children and wives often seemed determined to make visits by the father, after time away from home, special and worked hard to avoid anything that would mar the occasion. The husband's favorite foods were prepared, he was honored with special manners and dress, and nothing seemed too good for him. Clawson Cannon remembers that his father, George Q. Cannon, was treated almost like "a little god [by] the family" after his periodic absences.⁹⁷ According to Juanita Brooks, when Dudley Leavitt came home, "Grandpa was truly a patriarch; everyone waited on him; everyone wanted to wait on him."⁹⁸ Rose Eyring Calder remarked simply: "If there were two eggs in the household, Dad got both of them."⁹⁹

Mormon women, whether monogamous or polygamous, did not look upon such deference as an empty rite but rather as an acknowledgement of the ideal. As we have seen, patriarchy received powerful, revelatory endorsement from the Church's leaders. Equally important, Mormonism was a relatively closed society. Contact with the broader American society, especially by women, was comparatively restricted during much of the nineteenth century, despite the coming of the railroad and the telegraph. Even more important, hostility of the larger society toward Mormonism led many female Saints, quite naturally, to look upon the views of outsiders with suspicion.¹⁰⁰ Annie Clark Tanner reported that leaders encouraged Mormon women to find fulfillment in the Relief Society, not civic clubs, while another

¹⁰¹ Clawson Y. Cannon, Sr., interviewed by Jerry D. Lee, 5, 7, 19, 20, 1974 February, Provo, Utah, 46-47, LDS Oral History Project.

¹⁰² Brooks, "A Close-Up of Polygamy," 303.

¹⁰³ Calder, oral history, 3. For other examples of familial ceremonial deference recalled by the children from the LDS Oral History Project, all interviewed by Jessie L. Embry between 1976 and 1979 unless otherwise noted, see: H. H. Farr, Payson, Utah, 21; Viva S. Brown, Salt Lake City, Utah, 5; Lorna Call Alder, Provo, Utah, 18; Roxey Roskelley Rogers, Provo, Utah, 4; Annie Richardson Johnson, interviewed by Leonard R. Grover, 23 April 1980, Mesa, Arizona, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 61-69, explores the clashing perspectives of Protestant missionary women and Mormon plural wives on female degradation, oppression, and sexual purity.

woman, a generation later, agreed: "My whole life was going to church. . . . You didn't go any place unless you went to church; you didn't do anything unless it was in church."¹⁰¹

Some women, no doubt, rebelled, were disillusioned, or sabotaged patriarchal presumption where they could through passive aggression; but the vast majority adopted it as God's inspired plan for their lives and labored intensely to make that ideal a reality. Theologically, they could interpret difficulties under patriarchal rule as "tests" or as evidence of human weakness, not as calls to reappraise the system. Josephine Streeper Chase, like other plural wives, loyally affirmed her commitment: "I tell them it is true. I was taught so. . . . I thought I was doing right when I went into it though it went hard for me."¹⁰² Mormon women, whether polygamous or monogamous, saw sacrifice, patience, submission, and obedience as among the most important lessons they had come to earth to learn. Because full understanding and full rewards would come in the hereafter, questioning or rebellion threatened their salvation and exaltation. Lola Van Wagenen's important study of Utah's 1870 enfranchisement of women identified genuine feminism among Mormon women leaders, but a major concern in their chief strategy in suffrage activities was to avoid conflict with the male hierarchy.¹⁰³

Lucinda Lee Dalton's protest at the educational limitations placed on her was a voice raised where most women would have been silently accepting. Helen Mar Whitney, in a published defense of plural marriage, echoed the larger cultural truism that women, as the weaker sex, required men's leadership.¹⁰⁴ After

¹⁰⁵ Tanner, *A Mormon Mother*, 148-49; Jane Campbell, interviewed by Leonard R. Grover, 17 November 1979, Salt Lake City, 8, LDS Oral History Project.

¹⁰⁶ In Fae Decker Dix, ed., "The Josephine Diaries: Glimpses of the Life of Josephine Streeper Chase, 1881-94," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (Spring 1978): 172.

¹⁰⁷ Lola Van Wagenen, "In Their Own Behalf: The Politicization of Mormon Women and the 1870 Franchise," *Dialogue* 24 (Winter 1991): 35, 39, 41. Also see Warenski, *Patriarchs and Politics*, 14, 143-80.

¹⁰⁸ Helen Mar Whitney, *Why We Practice Plural Marriage. By a "Mormon" Wife and Mother—Helen Mar Whitney*. (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office,

visiting a number of Mormon homes in the early 1870s, Elizabeth Wood Kane said that the image of unwilling, coerced wives, as portrayed by outsiders, was incorrect. Female Saints, she said, "honestly believe in the grand calling their theology assigns" to them. Hence, she concluded, "Nowhere is the 'sphere' of women . . . more fully recognized than in Utah."¹⁰⁵ Annie Clark Tanner, growing up in a plural household, "was imbued with the old tradition . . . that man is superior to woman. . . . A woman should never oppose her husband as he was supposed to have superior wisdom."¹⁰⁶ When she took her doubts to Zina Diantha Huntington Young, a plural wife of both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, "Aunt Zina" responded that she would be "proud to follow an Adam into the Celestial Kingdom."¹⁰⁷

Sincerely wishing to follow the Church-marked path and believing in its divine mandate, many women must honestly have come to feel and think as they were told they should. While we must not construe women's roles in the nineteenth century as inflexibly subordinate, it is likely that both sexes accepted the propriety of women's submission. Theresa Yelverton, who visited Utah in the 1870s, saw Mormon women as domestically centered: "quiet, homely, hardworking, scrubbing women."¹⁰⁸ And a Mormon woman in Washington, D.C., wrote to a Utah correspondent that she was nauseated with talk about women's suffrage. "I shall be glad when I get back to Utah," where women "vote as their dear husbands tell them and then attend to their own work and leave the affairs of State to 'the Lords [of] Creation.'"¹⁰⁹

1884), 54.

¹⁰⁹ Kane, *Twelve Mormon Homes*, 70.

¹¹⁰ Tanner, *A Mormon Mother*, 116-17.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 62. Also see *ibid.*, 29, 60-62, 169.

¹¹² As quoted in "The Women of Utah," *Millennial Star*, 36 (6 October 1874): 625-26. On the valuation of domestic work, see Jeanne Boydston, *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

¹¹³ Elise Furer Musser, Letter to Paul Henning, 8 March 1912, Paul Henning Collection, mss. 300, bundle 4, Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

With the perspective of nearly two centuries, we can see that the early Church was profoundly affected by uncertainties in antebellum American life. Anti-hierarchal challenges seemed to rise about them like a flood. In reaction, Victorian canons as well as numerous utopian experiments responded with vigorous approval for male preeminence; and for the better part of a century, they prevailed. In Michelle Perrot's image, the nineteenth century temporarily thwarted the French Revolution.¹¹⁰

The Saints further added to their defense of masculine rule the claims of revelatory command, scriptural precedent, and, for those willing to live it, polygamy. As the French scholar Paul Veyne pointed out, young sects often impose on their adherents a particular aspect of contemporary society "for they cannot imagine any other," but they impose it "with great vigour" as an obligation.¹¹¹ Identifying male domestic authority as an eternal principle, Mormons went to extraordinary lengths to preserve it. The result was that nineteenth-century Mormon views of family life, both in and outside of polygamy, were, in the words of Lawrence Foster, "more victorian than . . . Victorians" themselves.¹¹²

With the official abandonment of plurality at the turn of the century, some of the embankment thrown about patriarchal forms was washed away. Victorian assumptions were eroding all round. Even then, not only was polygamy given selective approval for a generation following the Manifesto of 1890, but the doctrine has never been repudiated, with all that it connotes for the law of Sarah and the patriarchal home. Mormon men and women are yet the object of firm sermons on masculine priority.¹¹³ This notwith-

¹¹⁴ Perrot, "Role and Characters," 99, 172,

¹¹⁵ Paul Veyne, *Bread and Circuses: Historical Sociology and Political Pluralism*, translated by Brian Pearce (London: Penguin Press, 1990), 24.

¹¹⁶ Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 239.

¹¹⁷ Several writers have pointed to diminished opportunities for women's participation in holy ordinances, the conforming effects of the Church's correlation program, and opposition to women pursuing careers outside the home as evidence that women's circumstances are more constricted than during the pioneer period of the Church's history. See especially Warenski, *Patriarchs and Politics*, 42, 43-44, 46-49. For studies of marital power in Mormon households, including the expectation that the husband will "preside," see Victor

standing, pleadings for male privilege by groups of any persuasion are increasingly beset by the powerful currents of Western democratic thought. And without the reinforcement of polygamy, rhetorical idealization of the Abrahamic household and comparative cultural enclosure, Mormon patriarchy is yielding, however slowly, to the insistent, post-Enlightenment tide of equality.

A. Christopherson, "An Investigation of Patriarchal Authority in the Mormon Family," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 18 (November 1956): 328-33; and Ray Russell Canning, "Changing Patterns and Problems of Family Life in Provo, Utah, 1905 to 1955" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1956), 92-94; Raeo Passey, "The Patriarchal Imperative," *Sunstone* 10 (Spring 1986): 2-3; "Rodney Turner Defines Women's Role," *Sunstone Review* 2 (August 1982): 10-11; and Marybeth Raynes, "Mormon Marriages in an American Context," in Beecher and Anderson, *Sisters in Spirit*, 232-36. See also the citations provided in *Salt Lake City Messenger* 42 (April 1980): 4-5; Stuart M. Horne, "LDS Women: Conforming to Male Role Models," *7th East Press* 2 (12 April 1983), 3, 8; Shane B. Inglesby, "Priesthood Prescription for Women," *Sunstone* 10 (March 1985): 28-33; Newell, "Gifts of the Spirit," 140-143; and Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), 249.

Authoritative statements by Church leaders on the inherently hierarchical nature of ordered society, with men as the keepers of that order are found in N. Eldon Tanner, *The Role of Womanhood* (Salt Lake City: Corporation of the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1973); Dean L. Larsen, "Marriage and the Patriarchal Order," *Ensign* 12 (September 1982): 6-13; Ezra Taft Benson, "The Honored Place of Woman," *Ensign*, November 1981, and "To the Mothers of Zion," satellite broadcast 22 February 1987, then published as a pamphlet (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ as Latter-day Saints, 1987); and, most recently, Boyd K. Packer, "For Time and All Eternity," *Ensign*, November 1993, 21-24.

For women's protests against their treatment in the Church, see Alison Walker, "Theological Foundations of Patriarchy," *Dialogue* 23 (Fall 1990): 81 and LaRee B. Aldous, "What Women Crave: Not the Priesthood, but Respect," *This People* 13 (Spring 1992): 56; and all numbers of the *Mormon Women's Forum Newsletter*.

REVIEWS

James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard. *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*. 2d. ed., rev. and enl., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992; xiv + 802 pp., maps, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$25. ISBN 0-87579-565-X.

Reviewed by Richard E. Bennett

James B. Allen, professor of history at Brigham Young University, and Glen M. Leonard, director of the Museum of [LDS] Church History and Art in Salt Lake City have combined their prodigious writing and research talents anew to revise, enlarge, and update their earlier version of *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* published seventeen years ago (1976). In the process they have produced a more comprehensive, very readable, and carefully balanced history. It markedly improves upon their earlier efforts and will be welcomed by both the seasoned scholar and the historical novice.

The book takes the reader on a 170-year journey from Joseph Smith's first vision in 1820 in upstate New York and his organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ten years later, to 1990 and the current era of rapid growth (they cite a figure of 7.6 million at the end of 1990 [p. 632]; membership in the fall of 1993 was over 8.7 million), international expansion, and intercultural challenge. Neither an intellectual study nor a theological treatise, the work is a narrative, a story of Mormonism within its American context, a history text that sacrifices in-depth discussion of any one issue for breadth of overview.

The book consists of twenty-one chapters divided into five sections: "Laying the Foundations of Zion, 1820-1839"; "New Directions, 1839-1856"; "Defending the Kingdom, 1857-1896"; "A New Era, 1897-1950"; and "Toward Becoming a Universal Church, 1950-1990." Certainly all the prominent themes and presidential administrations are covered including Joseph Smith and the restoration, Brigham Young and the establishment of the Church in the Rocky Mountains, John Taylor and the underground era, and Wilford Woodruff and the Manifesto that ended plural marriage—all in the nineteenth century. And in the twentieth, attention is focused on the budding acceptance and eventual popularity of the contemporary Church, the famous welfare program of the 1930s, the quest for priesthood correlation within the governing structures of the Church, and, latterly, international growth.

Whether the full meaning of the Church's mission can ever be captured by pen and paper remains an open question, but perhaps the story of its people can be. Allen and Leonard make this critical distinction their central premise on the very first page when they propose that the book will tell the "story" of "a religious people" who "genuinely believed in

the authenticity of their faith." From this single premise the book gains its credibility as an account of faith in practice. Its three other theses—that the Church has been influenced by its environment, that it has a growing "global presence," and that it is constantly changing due to "continuing revelation" and practical application—though important in their own right, are likewise based upon the foundation of a faith-full and believing people. This may be the only safe ground for such a work to stand on and be understood and appreciated by all its varied readers.

The book has much to commend it. The research is impressive and thorough, relying on many of the best of printed works and a vast array of archival resources. Its wide scope and careful detail bring a new awareness of the breadth and length of church history while including enough singularly rich details—whether the Joseph Morris apostasy (p. 323), or the central role of international representative David Kennedy in opening new lands to the Church—to inform even the most knowledgeable.

Nor does it fail to confront embarrassments and difficulties in Church history despite the fact both authors are well-known and respected Latter-day Saints who write sympathetically about the Church. The trial and tragedy of the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 1858 (pp. 311-14), plural marriage and the running legal battles with an antagonistic U.S. government from 1852 to 1890 (pp. 297-434), the apostasies of apostles Amasa Lyman (p. 343), John W. Taylor and Mathias Cowley (pp. 449, 477), the 1914 organic evolution controversy at Brigham Young University (p. 487), the junior college controversy in the 1960s (pp. 581-84), the sham of "baseball baptisms" (p. 610), the Mark Hofmann forgeries (pp. 664-65), and the excommunication of Elder George P. Lee from the First Quorum of the Seventy (p. 650)—all these and more are addressed. In short the book shows a certain quality of steadiness, a measured account of both the good and the sad that lend it integrity and credibility.

More than any other comparable study, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* devotes much attention to the twentieth century—some 240 pages of text. And while it allows for the spirit of revelation in the prophetic office, this second edition in particular gives insight into the grassroots influences upon Church policies and administrations. The development of the home/stake missionary programs (p. 530), missionary teaching plans (p. 549), the Indian Placement program (pp. 577-82), and the early morning seminary program (p. 575) are just some of the examples of changes coming from the local membership.

Furthermore the physical layout of the book is impressive. It features scores of photographs, large type, few distracting footnotes, helpful tables and charts, highly readable section and chapter overviews, excellent maps, a good index, and a superlative and updated bibliography from which has been weeded the chaff of every thesis and dissertation that encumbered the first edition. And if a book can be judged by its dust jacket cover, then *Story* ranks among the best thanks to the aesthetically

pleasing design of Bailey Montague and Associates (xiv).

Yet the book has its weaknesses, many of which result from its very structure and purpose. In trying to cover all, it often bogs down in detail and administrative history, especially in the middle chapters on the twentieth century. Its very chronological structure requires repetition about subjects and the book seems to tire as it goes.

The attention to broad developments and trends does not drown out all the human interest accounts—such as A. F. Mensah's role in Ghana (p. 613), or M. Douglas Wood's inspirational efforts to evacuate missionaries from Germany in 1939 (p. 537)—but the narrative would have benefited from more of the spice of personal experience and testimony. There are not enough stories in *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, especially in the twentieth century. Furthermore the later chapters lack evaluation and synthesis and, lamentably, after 671 pages of facts, the authors shy away from offering a conclusion, a meaningful wrap-up of what it all might mean.

Some may argue that the work is too light on theology and doctrine, that such staples as the Book of Mormon, the plan of salvation, and the three-fold mission of the Church are not given enough prominence, although this second edition has more of this than the first. Others may argue even more strongly with the interpretive context of certain chapters and the degree of influence the larger American context wielded on Mormon history. In Chapter 6, for instance, were the fall of Nauvoo, the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, and the subsequent exodus really due more to Illinois politics than to religious persecutions?

And finally and perhaps most seriously, there are several cases of undeveloped history. There is too little on the dissenters who refused to follow Brigham Young westward in the late 1840s and very little on the Reorganization and its counter arguments. Wilford Woodruff's 1890 visit with Isaac Trumbo in California just before the Manifesto declaration is mentioned but without development, and the story of post-Manifesto plural marriage is largely avoided. In the twentieth century, the more complete story of priesthood correlation, the Ernest L. Wilkinson-inspired junior college controversy, and the Ricks College conflict have yet to be fully written. Furthermore, despite the heavy emphasis on administrative history in this century, the narrative lacks any thorough discussion of Church finances and expenditures. The authors seem to have recognized in their bibliography the flood of Mormon history scholarship of the past twenty years without incorporating as much of it in their text as expected.

A careful comparison with the first edition, republished in 1986 many years after it had first sold out, suggests special insights into the flavor and tone of the second edition and perhaps the politics of its publication. The changes, both obvious and subtle, are far too many to itemize here. Quite obvious is the write-up of sixteen years of new history with a fine, fast-moving account of the Spencer W. Kimball/Ezra Taft Benson years,

the revelation providing black males with the priesthood, and the international, intercultural challenges within the Church.

More subtle are such changes as increased use of modern scripture citations, more faith-promoting accounts such as Moses Thatcher's prayer in Star Valley in 1878 (p. 393), and more careful use of current church terminology. Not in the first edition but appearing on page 401 of the second is a challenging paragraph condoning the Church's defiance of Supreme Court rulings in defense of the anti-polygamy laws on the grounds of Thoreau's essay on civil disobedience. There is also more material on the family, the Relief Society, and the role of women (pp. 388-90) with particular reference to Zina D. H. Young and Eliza R. Snow. While many of the changes are cosmetic, grammatical or, in a very few cases, correctional ("just under" 3,000 came in handcart companies rather than "just over" [p. 294]), there are enough to show the authors' careful concern with satisfying their supporters while reaching out to the wide world of readership.

As a good history and a delicate balancing act, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* may have drawbacks but it surpasses anything comparable and provides us with the single most comprehensive study of Mormon history available. Allen and Leonard are not only to be commended for writing such a comprehensive work but praised for the courage to try. Writing denominational history is a daunting task, especially when the subject church proclaims to be the true and restored Church of Jesus Christ with the fullness of the gospel. To the staunch defender, a book such as this will always have too little of the faith-promoting and message-proclaiming. To the secular critic, too much is based on the unproven, the spiritual, and the subjective. So a good book like this one, as Wallace Stegner once wrote, sails in the "swampy" waters of Mormon historiography where few are pleased and many are critics, though for entirely opposite reasons. The success of such a work, therefore, may well be measured not by the praise or criticism of onlookers but by their relative silence.

RICHARD E. BENNETT is head of the Department of Archives and Special Collections at The University of Manitoba, Winnipeg. He is the author of *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846-1852: "And Should We Die—"* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987) and is preparing a new manuscript on the Mormon trek of 1847.

Marjorie Newton. *Hero or Traitor: A Biographical Story of Charles Wesley Wandell*. John Whitmer Historical Association Monograph Series. Independence, Mo.: Independence Press, 1993; 104 pp. ISBN 0-8309-

0617-7.

Reviewed by Richard L. Saunders

With this publication the John Whitmer Historical Association commences a new monograph series in Latter Day Saint history, intended to provide an outlet for "historical scholarship . . . shorter than a book but too long for an article." In choosing Wandell, this series presents a suitable biographical bridge between post-martyrdom cultures, a topic only recently attracting professional exploration. Even more interesting, it is a look at Mormonism in the often overlooked hinterlands—the missions.

Newton's work is the first serious biography of Charles Wesley Wandell, a curious and overlooked individual, whose firm roots as a missionary in both LDS and RLDS cultures has bequeathed him, as implied by the title, an ambiguous notoriety. Wandell carried the lion's share of responsibility but has reaped the lamb's share of credit in opening Australia as an LDS missionary field, 1851-53. Bright and energetic, he successfully carried most of the burden for preaching, publishing, and organizing for his ill companion and mission president, John Murdock. A vigorous opponent of the rumored but as-yet-unannounced Mormon polygamy, he became a victim of distance and slow communication when the practice was first openly confirmed, learning of the public August 1852 affirmation as he literally boarded the boat to return home. Twenty years later and much embittered against his former faith, he returned to labor in Australia as an RLDS missionary. Coping in his turn with ill health that eventually ended his life, he failed to recapture the drive, the success, and the self-confident security of his former labor.

Newton has not constructed Wandell's story as a mere recitation of historical fact. Much of the book is dedicated to examining the issues and suppositions behind the man and his works. Wandell's personal stress over this issue, and later his self-driven research into the Mountain Meadows Massacre, created an abiding hatred of Brigham Young and anything affected by him. This, coupled to the man's perceptions and reinterpretations of his own past experiences with Joseph Smith, led him to first reject the Utah culture and then embrace the Reorganization.

Like any good history, this work pops some legendary bubbles. Newton resolves (at least historically) Wandell's call to the RLDS Australasian Mission as something less than the "miracle" that Wandell himself exploited fully. If the book has a flaw, it is in the failure to isolate Wandell rather than to fit him into the larger cultural context, an endeavor that may have been greater than the author intended the scope to be. Still, the book admirably meets its purpose, recounting a fascinating story of a nearly overlooked laborer in the missions.

The work is copiously and accurately footnoted (a quarter of the pages) from published and unpublished primary resources in both the

LDS and RLDS archives; but Newton does not fall into the trap of merely stringing references together. The text is a well-qualified historical summary and exposition.

Marjorie Newton is to be commended for her fine work, and the John Whitmer Historical Association lauded and encouraged for its foresight in producing another key to unlocking the richness of the Latter Day Saint past.

RICHARD SAUNDERS is Special Collections Librarian/Cataloguer for Montana State University whose scholarly interests include the Mormon schismatic groups of the post-martyrdom diaspora period, and Mormon socio-intellectual and printing cultures. He is currently working on a social history of printing in territorial Utah.

Clark V. Johnson, ed. *Mormon Redress Petition: Documents of the 1833-1838 Missouri Conflict*. Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 1992; xxxvii, 830 pp.; illustrations, maps, appendix, indices; \$24.95. ISBN 0-88494-850-1

Reviewed by Stephen C. LeSueur

Clark V. Johnson's *Mormon Redress Petition: Documents of the 1833-1838 Missouri Conflict* is an indispensable reference source for historians writing about the Mormon experience in Missouri. The book reprints in their entirety numerous petitions, affidavits, and pamphlets that were sent to Washington, D.C., by Saints seeking redress from the federal government for their sufferings in Missouri. While these documents were previously available to historians who had the means and time to examine them at the LDS Church Archives in Salt Lake City, Johnson brings them together in a single book and provides a short history of the documents themselves. The book's price is about half the cost I would expect for a collection of this size.

The existence of all but a few dozen petitions was unknown to historians until about twenty years ago, when Paul C. Richards discovered more than 200 of them in the U.S. Archives. Five hundred more were uncovered shortly afterward in the LDS Church Archives, leading to Clark Johnson's ten-year effort to catalogue and reprint the petitions. Joseph Smith had envisioned the affidavits as part of an effort to obtain redress for the Saints' losses in Missouri, where they were driven from Jackson County in 1833, Clay County in 1837, and finally from the state in 1839. Johnson said the Saints made at least three and probably four separate attempts to obtain federal assistance between 1839 and 1844,

none of which succeeded. Most Mormons today are familiar with the Saints' first appeal to Washington in which President Martin Van Buren reportedly told the Prophet: "Your cause is just, but I can do nothing for you . . . if I take up for you I shall lose the vote of Missouri." (p. 101). *Mormon Redress Petition* contains the hundreds of documents and petitions carried by Joseph Smith and other Mormon leaders in each of their redress attempts over five years.

Johnson organizes the documents into six main sections. The first consists of two published pamphlets sent to Washington as part of the Saints' appeal: John P. Greene's *Facts Relative to the Expulsion of the Mormons or Latter Day Saints from the State of Missouri, under the 'Exterminating Order'* (Cincinnati: R. P. Brooks, 1839); and Parley P. Pratt's *History of the Late Persecution Inflicted by the State of Missouri Upon the Mormons* (Detroit: Dawson & Bates, 1839). The next three sections reprint the hundreds of individual Mormon petitions and affidavits, written primarily in 1839 and 1840, which were part of the first two appeals to Congress, and a brief four-page petition signed by 3,419 Saints. The last two sections contain appeals and testimonies by Church leaders, including some written while they were in Missouri jails, and miscellaneous documents and undated statements that were found with the petitions.

Johnson's introduction to the petitions gives a brief summary of their historical context and provides interesting statistics about the documents themselves. Altogether, the book contains 773 petitions written by 678 different petitioners (some people wrote more than one) (p. xiv). Of the 678 individual petitioners, 70 were women and 607 were men (Johnson doesn't explain why the gender breakdown leaves us one shy of the total); at least 25 men and 10 women signed with marks instead of writing their names; 25 witnessed the Haun's Mill massacre or arrived shortly after the event; and 576 (85 percent) made claims totaling \$2,275,789, for an average of \$3,761 per person. (pp. xxvii-xxviii)

Despite statistical refinement, Johnson's introduction does not go much beyond previous articles that he and Richards have written for *BYU Studies* outlining the importance of the petitions. The chief contribution of the book is the publication of the petitions themselves and their portrait of nineteenth-century Mormon life on the Missouri frontier. In reprinting the documents, Johnson maintained the individual spelling and style of each author as much as possible without sacrificing clarity. Some petitioners misleadingly attempt to present the Mormons' case in the best possible light: William Seely, for example, says he was taken prisoner by Missouri troops while "on business" south of Caldwell County; he failed to mention that his business was spying on the Missourians (p. 532). But the petitions' matter-of-fact accounts of persecution can also be gripping, though some of the authors knew their tales seemed beyond belief. After recounting the Missourians' brutal attack on Haun's Mill, where more than 30 Mormons were killed

or wounded, Isaac Leany offered: "I am aware that this is a hard story to credit but I have the scars to prove the fact which can be seen at any time" (p. 267).

Most petitions do not provide narrative accounts, but contain only simple, though often detailed, listings of land holdings, crops, household furnishings, and livestock. The Saints provided this information to calculate their financial losses in Missouri; but as Kenneth W. Godfrey points out in "New Light on Old Difficulties: The Historical Importance of the Missouri Affidavits" (a chapter in a forthcoming book), this information can also be used to examine the everyday life of American frontier families in the 1830s. From the petitions, Godfrey reconstructed the diet of Missouri Mormons: ham, chicken, eggs, milk, honey, butter, boiled maize and hot wheat bread, supplemented at times with elk, deer, and wild turkey. Similar information in the petitions about tools, weapons and other possessions should prove useful to cultural historians.

Johnson reprinted the Greene and Pratt pamphlets because they were found with the petitions sent to Congress. I think it would have been appropriate to have also included Sidney Rigdon's pamphlet, *An Appeal to the American People: Being an Account of the Persecution of the Latter Day Saints; And of the Barbarities Inflicted On Them by the Inhabitants of the State of Missouri* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Glezen and Shepard, 1840) and John Taylor's *A Short Account of the Murders, Robberies, Burnings, Thefts, and Other Outrages Committed by the Mob and Militia of the State of Missouri, Upon the Latter Day Saints* (Springfield, Illinois: 1839). Although these pamphlets were not found among the petitions, both were published to sway public opinion in the Saints' favor and would have equal interest for historians.

The publication of this book comes at a time when historians are reassessing the actions of both Mormons and non-Mormons in the Missouri conflict. Johnson acknowledges that *Mormon Redress Petition* does not present both sides of the conflict, but it would have provided valuable balance had he gone a step further and pointed out areas where some of the book's documents—especially the pamphlets—present now-questioned accounts of Mormon activities and sufferings. I do not think the BYU Religious Studies Center would publish similar one-sided accounts by Missourians with as little explanatory comment regarding possible exaggerations and inaccuracies.

This criticism, however, should not detract from the value of *Mormon Redress Petition*. Johnson's painstaking cataloguing and organizing have essentially done ten years of historical "dirty work" that will help future historians in the task of writing Mormon history. I say this not to diminish Johnson's own contributions to Mormon history, but to acknowledge the debt of all future historians writing about Mormons in Missouri. It is an extremely important but time-consuming, tedious task to count names and petitions, decipher handwriting and irregular spellings, chart who wrote more than one petition, and create one index for the people who

wrote petitions and another for the people mentioned in the petitions. *Mormon Redress Petition* helps us to understand who wrote the petitions and why, and then allows the petitions to tell their own stories of persecution in Missouri.

STEPHEN C. LESUEUR is author of *The 1838 Mormon War in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1987). He covers national security issues for the weekly newspaper *Defense News* in Springfield, Virginia.

Stan Larson, ed. *Prisoner for Polygamy: The Memoirs and Letters of Rudger Clawson at the Utah Territorial Penitentiary, 1884-87*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993; x, 256 pp., photographs, appendices, index; \$29.95.

Reviewed by Jessie L. Embry

Just as I conclude that everything has been said about Mormon polygamy, someone comes up with a new insight. Stan Larson's editing of Rudger Clawson's memoirs and letters shows there is still more to learn about the Mormon practice of plural marriage. The autobiography shows Clawson's concern for his wives, his feelings about being in prison, and his views of polygamy. Few polygamy documents are as full of feelings and emotions as Clawson's.

Clawson (1857-1943) was an apostle and ultimately president of the Quorum of the Twelve. He had two wives, Florence Ann Dinwoodey (1881) and Lydia Elizabeth Spencer (1883) at the time he went to prison. Florence divorced Clawson while he was there.

The book is divided into three parts: (1) an introduction to Rudger Clawson's life and his documents, (2) an autobiography that Rudger Clawson wrote while he was in the Utah Territorial Prison for unlawful cohabitation from 1884 to 1887, and (3) letters that Clawson wrote to his wife Lydia while in prison.

Clawson wrote six drafts of his autobiography. Larson itemizes these versions and describes how they differ in his excellent introduction, which provides enough detail to help the reader understand the autobiography but not so much that it becomes tedious. The autobiography itself, which makes up most of the book, is delightful reading. Clawson writes well, describing in great detail his daily life in prison. For example, his "first meal consisted of boiled beef, soggy potatoes, butterless bread, and coffee unaccompanied by either milk or sugar. My appetite suddenly failed and I could eat nothing" (p. 45). Scholars interested in prison life or early Utah history will find these memoirs worthwhile. Clawson also

provides useful information about Mormon polygamy. He carefully lists the other Mormons who were jailed for cohabitation during his term and describes his relationship with them.

Larson has done extensive research and the endnotes to each chapter provide a massive amount of material about the subjects that Clawson mentions. In the on-going debate about when and how much to annotate, Larson is a "more is enough" scholar. I ignored the notes when I felt that Clawson's story was complete—which was often—but found the endnotes satisfyingly full when I had questions.

I enjoyed Clawson's letters in the third part most of all. They say little about prison life but instead concentrate on Clawson's relationship with Lydia, to whom he had been married only months before beginning to serve his sentence. They are truly love letters, full of encouraging words and tender thoughts. Clawson frequently made up endearing little signals so he and Lydia could express their love without being noticed by the guards. For example, on 22 August 1887 he asked her to "look me square in the eye and say 'Pineapple,' which will be the equivalent to saying: Rud, my heart yearns with an intense yearning, for the caresses and endearments, which thou hast promised me." He would then say "Peach" which would mean "Loved one, they shall yet be thine" (p. 188). Even more endearingly, Lydia forgot to pronounce the citric syllables, leaving Clawson very upset: "What am I to think?" he demanded in his next letter. "Shall I say that it was due to indifference on your part or that you simply forgot it? And yet how can I accept the latter view?" (p. 188). Some historians have downplayed the role of romantic love in the nineteenth century. Victorian conventions of propriety and modesty may have led them to take a passionless view of married love; Clawson's letters, however, are a definite exception.

Larson's appendices are also very useful, beginning with a list of Clawson's wives and children. The text is an autobiography; the appendix includes Clawson's 1884 prison journal. The third appendix is a listing Larson has compiled of Mormon polygamists who served in the Utah Penitentiary from Rosa Mae M. Evans's BYU masters thesis. The final listing is what Larson calls "the more important first-hand accounts written by Mormon cohabs [who served in the Utah penitentiary] that are located at major repositories."

Larson and the University of Illinois Press should be applauded for publishing this valuable document which increases our understanding of the Mormon past.

JESSIE L. EMBRY is the Oral History Program Director at the Charles Redd Center at BYU. She is the author of *Mormon Polygamous Families* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987).

Richard P. Howard, *The Church Through the Years. Volume 2: The Reorganization Comes of Age, 1860-1992*. Independence: Herald Publishing House, 1993. 531 pp.; introduction, notes, selected readings, index; \$27.50. ISBN 0-8309-0629-0.

Reviewed by Danny L. Jorgensen

The second volume of Richard Howard's account of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is a selective topical survey and sketch of events from about 1852 to the present. It contains a two-page "Introduction," nineteen chapters (numbered 19 through 37), six appendices (A through F), selected references and readings, and an index. Howard's interpretation is grounded in faith, strongly reflecting his long-time role as RLDS Church Historian. It, unlike the scholarship of Roger Launius or Robert Flanders, for instance, does not derive fundamentally from intellectual problems as defined by academic disciplines. He employs a scholarly perspective for analyzing certain events, mixing a non-sectarian historical approach with an effort to reconstruct the sacred story of the RLDS tradition. However, in a drastic departure from nonprofessional, faith-promoting approaches of the past, he skillfully employs conventional standards of scholarship and the related literature. Howard's work, thereby, is the blend of professionalism and personal faith that characterizes much of the New Mormon history.

Picking up loose ends from the first volume, Chapter 19 recounts the efforts of several "new organization" missionaries to reach out and "reclaim former co-workers in the Latter Day faith" using lengthy quotations from their letters and journals. The next four chapters (20-23) deal with images of the Kingdom of God, economic deprivation and the exigencies of financing missionary endeavors, opposition to Utah Mormonism, and pluralistic tensions within the Church, all during the administration of Joseph Smith III. Three points—leadership by a lineal descendant of the founding prophet, opposition to plural marriage, and common consent for authority—defined the early RLDS consensus. Subsequent chapters describe the Church's publishing activities (Chapter 24), canonization process (Chapter 25), ministerial education and the founding of Graceland College (Chapter 26), activities of local branches (Chapter 27), and the meanings of Joseph Smith's "new translation" of the Bible (Chapter 28), largely during the nineteenth century.

The arduous transition to the presidency of Frederick M. Smith, especially conflict over and adjustment to a more centralized organization, is told in Chapter 29. Its implications for branch and district levels of the Church are discussed in Chapter 30, while financial activities and developments through the post World War II period are reviewed in Chapter 31. Other topics receiving special attention are youth programs (Chapter 32) and women's roles (Chapter 35). Chapters 33, 34, and 36

deal with the Church's expansion, intellectual and theological developments, as well as conflict, dissent, and schism from the 1950s to the present. In the concluding chapter (37), Howard deliberates on the meaning of the temple, partly by reference to baptism for the dead and other traditional Mormon rituals that have been rejected by the RLDS. Five of the appendices are Sections 107, 109, 110, 113, and 123 of the RLDS Doctrine and Covenants that were relegated to the back of that volume as historical documents and then later dropped entirely. Appendix F is prophet-president W. Wallace Smith's letter of instruction regarding Wallace B. Smith's succession to the Church's leadership as specified by Section 152.

Richard Howard's two-volume work, contrary to general expectations, is not, nor does it claim to be, a comprehensive, official documentary history of the RLDS Church.¹ This volume contains lengthy quotations from primary sources, many of which are not sufficiently interpreted and integrated with the narrative. Yet, unlike the older, non-scholarly, multiple-volume *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, it does not attempt to explain the organization chronologically. "These essays," Howard advises the reader, "meander all over the place, following a faint chronological line. But for the most part they probe here and there, take a few soundings, include some items that will make you wonder, and leave out much that may surprise and disappoint" (p. 9).

There are tremendous gaps in the story. Israel Smith's presidency, for example, is scarcely mentioned; and while there are excellent discussions of the most controversial issues of W. Wallace Smith's administration, they are not systematically deciphered.²

All of the topics selected for discussion are appropriate and significant, although why they and not others were included and exactly what themes or contentions connects them is not elucidated. Some of the essays, such as the interpretative analyses of canonization (Chapter 25),

¹ Richard Howard's *The Church Through the Years. Volume 1: RLDS Beginnings, to 1860* (Independence: Herald Publishing House, 1992), especially pp. 9-47, should be consulted for an extensive discussion of the history of this project, its purposes, development, and philosophy. The first volume was reviewed by Roger D. Launius in the *Journal of Mormon History* 19, no 1 (Spring 1993): 163-67.

² A concise but more comprehensive, chronological, administrative history has been provided by Paul M. Edwards, *Our Legacy of Faith: A Brief History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* (Independence: Herald Publishing House, 1991), and each of the Church's past prophet-presidents has been the subject of a separate administrative biography, although the volume planned on W. Wallace Smith is not yet in print.

local church life (Chapter 27), Joseph Smith's "new translation" (Chapter 28), world-wide expansion (Chapter 33), and women's roles are innovative and provocative. There are, however, other substantial omissions, such as the informal, everyday life activities of the membership, Zion's experiments (except for Lamoni), missions to American minorities, the elderly and some highly successful programs for them, music and media (except for print), historic preservation, consequential RLDS medical and health institutions, and relations with external communities, especially in the Kansas City area, among certain other possibilities.

These essays do not satisfy the need for a scholarly history of the Reorganized Church, at least not in the sense that the studies of Thomas O'Dea, Leonard Arrington and Davis Bitton, or Jan Shipps have done principally for the LDS tradition. They, unlike the work of James Allen and Glen Leonard, do not provide a comprehensive faith-based history; and unlike Klaus J. Hansen's essays on Utah Mormonism, they are not critical scholarship. Many of these limitations, it must be emphasized, resonate the long-standing RLDS ambivalence for honestly reckoning the past, result from extremely haphazard informal and formal record-keeping with the consequence gaps in primary source materials, and contradictory institutional expectations for Howard's work.

These historical essays inevitably and sometimes uneasily mirror the conflicts, tensions, and dilemmas the RLDS have experienced in seeking to discover and define a distinctive identity.

Yet this history is a remarkable document, unified on a more fundamental level by Richard Howard's intelligence, candor, and (too rarely) spritely humor. Those who know Richard Howard personally will also find in these pages a reflection of the exceptionally sensitive, thoughtful Christian ministry and example he has provided over many difficult and sometimes painful years of lustrous service. Richard Howard clearly achieved the goal of raising faithful history to a level of professional scholarship, thereby making a vital contribution to the RLDS Church and its members. Scholars will find in his work significant insights and topics worth pursuing further. It is to be hoped that a broader readership will also esteem his profound existential perseverance in "lifting to the light this precious gem, this struggling little church I love so much, and turning it round and round, seeing new lights and shadows and reflections all the time" (p. 10).

DANNY L. JORGENSEN, professor and Graduate Director of Religious Studies at the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg and Tampa, is the author of *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies* (Newbury Park, California: Sage, 1989), *The Esoteric Scene, Cultic Milieu, and Occult Tarot* (New York: Garland, 1992), recent articles and a forthcoming book about the Cutlerites, and several forthcoming edited works about the experiences of RLDS women.

E. Dale LeBaron, ed. *All Are Alike Unto God*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990; maps, photographs of narrators; \$9.95. ISBN 0-88494-738-6.

Eric B. Shumway, ed. *Tongan Saints: Legacy of Faith*. Laie, Hawaii: The Institute for Polynesian Studies/BYU-Hawaii, 1991; index, maps, photographs of narrators; \$19.95, ISBN 0-939154-52-8

Reviewed by Jay M. Haymond

I advocate using oral history for documentation and filling-in where the record is scant or nonexistent. I also advocate using oral history for biography and local history when sources are inadequate. Oral history is also useful to update the record or to bring in a narrator's current opinion.

Nowhere is the use of oral history more justified than to document the ways of people who observe the oral tradition as part of their cultural heritage. Such is the case in the two books cited above. We, as readers, would not otherwise have access to Africans and Tongans whose history is in the memories of their living elders (men and women) and historians. Peoples who rely on the oral tradition use their cultural memory. And thus it is sharper and more reliable and covers a longer span of time than does the memory of most historians of western civilizations. Only those who sit at the feet of these cultural purveyors as they recite, know their history.

However, the danger in using translated, edited, and selected oral history records is that the editor, in league with the translator, can fail to faithfully communicate cultural mores and traits. Thus, they risk losing the human qualities of the story teller and the meaning of the story. When this loss occurs, readers do not get and cannot appreciate the true dimensions of the cultural implications. Editing the oral histories in these two books has removed evidence of the questions the interviewer asked to provide directions to the narrator's words. Such editing is helpful when the goal is to provide a narrative that speaks to the reader as if in a story, rather than presenting the give and take of a formal transcript that is not only very lengthy but can also lose the reader. LeBaron writes, "In editing . . . efforts were made to retain the authentic voices of the interviewees, their language being changed only to the extent necessary to assure clarity" (preface). Similarly, Shumway says, "I have endeavored to be faithful to the original accounts, if not in precise word-for-word renditions, then always in the spirit of the intended meaning" (p. xxxv). The tapes, transcripts, and translations of the Shumway book have been deposited in the Joseph F. Smith Library, BYU-Hawaii; it is to be hoped that the LeBaron materials will also find a permanent home in some library where they will be available to scholars who wish to deal directly with the recorded materials.

LeBaron has gathered twenty-three conversion stories about black

Latter-day Saints from five African countries. The total project included about 400 interviews and about 400 hours of recorded information. The editor selected stories for their faith-promoting qualities and to represent converts from the first five African countries proselyted since 1982 by Latter-day Saint missionaries. One story told by Baeride L. E. I. Isekuncola of Kinshasa, Zaire, includes the account of reading a pamphlet that commented on the Mormon practice of paying tithing. The account stated that Mormons practiced tithing "the way it should be practiced." That statement enticed him to find out more about the Church. He was baptized in 1984 and serves faithfully.

Faustina Aba Haizel of Lagos, Nigeria, relates the agonizing tale of growing up in a poor home where the family did not function more than to provide a roof. Two pregnancies before she was twenty left her an outcast, destitute and alone. She decided to find some other answer to her plight and started investigating churches. When her cousin said she was studying Mormonism, Faustina also asked for lessons. She was baptized in 1985 and, though still poor and struggling, now has hope.

To some extent, the stories in *All Are Alike Unto God* lose cultural flavor in their editing and translation. The interviewees speak like English people, make few allusions to their African heritage, and react to hardship like Americans. Still, these narratives carry the message of faith and chance as believers adapt their lives to the gospel of Jesus Christ. This book also shows the diversity of lives as they are touched by the missionaries. African converts, generally speaking, tend to be educated and to prize exposure to western ways. These faith-promoting stories will be a source of satisfaction to the people who gave the interviews and to those who read them.

Eric B. Shumway commemorates 100 years of missionary work in Tonga with his fifty-six edited stories of Tongan Saints. The book jacket calls this period "a century of sacrifice and steadfast endurance, woven through with glowing faith and quiet miracles." This book gives voices to Tongans and missionaries to Tonga who relate their stories and testimonies based on their faith. A helpful chronology in the first pages provides orientation.

A diversity of experience is apparent in *Tongan Saints*. Narrators describe the beginnings of missionary work by early missionaries and testimonies of converts and Saints as they practice their religion. Ada Layne and Jay Cahoon, two American high school graduates in the 1920s, were planning to marry, but Jay's "father, who was the bishop of the ward he lived in sent in Jay's papers for a mission" to prevent the marriage. However, Jay refused to go on his mission unless Ada came too. Since missions by married couples were an option at the time, he carried his point. After their first year, the mission president was released, Jay became president, and Ada was mission mother, Relief Society president and Primary president. They were capable leaders, but the story shows that missionary work was spread a little thin.

Another story relates the adventures of a counselor in a district presidency, who is to conduct a conference on a neighboring island. His private boat broke down in rough seas and the anxious Tongan elder relied on faith and prayer and brought the boat and conference to a successful end. The Tongan stories tend to be shorter, but the addition of photos enhances the history of the mission significantly.

Both African and Tongan stories use accounts of miraculous spiritual experiences to accompany the conversion or faithful episode. Because these stories are consistent with Mormon faith-promoting stories everywhere, the result is to give Africans and Tongans status equal to European and American converts, if anyone thought otherwise. These stories demonstrate that the Spirit is working with Saints and missionaries in countries everywhere.

JAY M. HAYMOND works for the Utah Division of State History in the Public History section.

Robert Kent Fielding, *The Unsolicited Chronicler: An Account of the Gunnison Massacre: Its Causes and Consequences, Utah Territory, 1847-1859* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Paradigm Publications, 1993); xiv, 474 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$49.95. 0-912111-38-0.

Reviewed by Ronald W. Walker

John W. Gunnison was one of those nineteenth-century figures whose path somehow got inseparably tangled with that of the Mormons. A second-in-his-class West Pointer from Sullivan County, New Hampshire, Gunnison was a bright, hard-working officer, who was dispatched to Utah in 1849-50 as topographer Captain Howard Stansbury's second-in-command. Dangerously ill when entering Utah, Gunnison slowly regained his health; and later, when Stansbury took winter quarters in Salt Lake City, he passed his time studying, as he phrased it, "Botany, Mineralogy, and kindred sciences"—and more especially Mormonism.¹ The latter inquiry resulted in his book, *The Mormons* (1852), which attempted to steer between the usual extremes of the time, Mormon polemics and Gentile censure. The book

¹ John W. Gunnison, Letter to Martha A. Delany Gunnison, 2 February 1850, John W. Gunnison Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

recognized both the Saints' virtues and their enthusiasms and urged the American public to exercise patience until Mormon adolescence matured. Because of its fair-mindedness and thoughtful analysis, *The Mormons* was easily one of the half dozen best books about Mormonism written in the nineteenth century.

In the fall of 1853, Gunnison returned to Utah Territory—but this time with far less happy results. Charged with leading a federal survey for a possible Missouri-Pacific coast railroad route, Gunnison and his party entered central Utah by Sanpete Valley and briefly visited Mormon local authorities at Fillmore. Then, dividing his expedition, Gunnison led what was meant to be a brief, final survey of the season to the Sevier Basin. There, at daybreak on 26 October 1853, a band of Pahvant Indians attacked his twelve-man camp. In the *melée* that followed, eight of the white men, including Gunnison, were killed. Gunnison's body was dismembered; and according to one later account, his still-throbbing heart torn from the chest cavity. Several weeks earlier, California immigrants had killed Towipe, a leading headmen, and wounded several other Pahvant warriors. Towipe's three sons demanded retribution.

Brigham Young—LDS president, territorial governor, and Superintendent of Indian Affairs—learned of the disaster on the evening of October 31. Within hours he dispatched the territory's leading Indian scout and interpreter, Dimick B. Huntington, to pacify the Indians and secure the lost government arms and equipment. He also hastily informed the U.S. War Department under whose auspices Gunnison had been sent west and explained the incident to the eastern press. In the months and years that followed, Young sent additional reports of the massacre, some detailed and lengthy, to Gunnison's widow, to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and to Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War. His prompt and detailed attention was necessary because of the climate of the times. Because many easterners deeply distrusted the Mormons, it was inevitable that the Saints would be charged with the crime.

For a time the eastern press carried just such reports, but the weight of Young's documents was convincing. Moreover, many Gentiles on the scene agreed. In his official report of the expedition, Lieutenant E. G. Beckwith, Gunnison's assistant, cleared the Mormons of any blame. John F. Kinney, the Washington-appointed chief justice of the territory, also examined the case and decided the "evidence showed conclusively that the Indians committed the crime of their own volition."² Others like Colonel Edward J. Steptoe, Captain R. M. Morris, and even the anti-LDS Indian agent Garland Hurt either sustained Mormon innocence or made no charges against them in the tragedy. The year after the

² John Fitch Kinney, Memorandum, n.d., 3, John Fitch Kinney Papers, LDS Church Archives.

massacre, Andrew Gunnison, the captain's brother, investigated the killing "by all means in my power" and concluded that the Saints had not been involved.³

Following this pattern of evidence, Utah historical writing has generally written off a Mormon role in the matter—at least until the publication of Robert Kent Fielding's *The Unsolicited Chronicler: An Account of the Gunnison Massacre*. While Fielding chooses his words carefully and writes no explicit indictment, his meaning is clear. Brigham Young and other Mormon leaders either schemed to kill Gunnison and his party or, at the very least, their inflammatory Temple Square preaching inspired others to do the deed. Fielding quotes a passing comment made by Presiding Bishop Edward Hunter at the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple site to show the Mormons' alleged dislike for Gunnison and his book ("Lt. Gunnison, our very learned, distant, polite, but unsolicited chronicler," p. 22), a phrase so crucial to his argument that it becomes the title of the book. Fielding also points to the "unusual feeling of security" that Gunnison felt after talking with Mormon officials at Fillmore just prior his death. According to this argument, though the local settlers feared an imminent attack on their new settlement at Fillmore, Huntington, who had been dispatched from Salt Lake City by Young to quell the difficulty, lied to Gunnison about the seriousness of the danger. The Mormons, in short, set Gunnison up. Finally, as a further sign of LDS complicity, Fielding argues that Brigham Young and the Saints later tried to protect some of the guilty Pahvants from trial, the LDS jury reduced the charges from first degree to third degree murder, or manslaughter, and Mormon jailers allowed the three convicted Pahvants to escape from the penitentiary.

Fielding wants to revise more than the usual narrative of the Gunnison massacre. Half of his volume is devoted to the years after the Gunnison killing, ending with the more famous massacre at Mountain Meadows in 1857. These pages illustrate Fielding's larger thesis—a redefinition of the Mormon pioneer experience and *Weltanschauung*. Contrary to the usual "faith-promoting rationalization of Mormon behavior" (p. iv), Fielding describes early Mormonism as a brittle, persecution-obsessed, Old Testament literalism fully capable of murder. Fielding accuses "recent works by credible scholars" of being "notoriously remiss" on the subject (pp. iii, 451-52). These unnamed authors have glossed early Mormon history and, in the process, missed the depth of Mormonism's "institutional and theological change" (p. v).

This is a stylish book, both in design and writing. The portrait sketches by Sarah Fielding-Gunn, apparently the author's daughter, add charm.

³ Andrew Joseph Gunnison, Letter, to Martha A. Delany Gunnison, 16 March 1854, Gunnison Collection, Huntington Library.

Fielding, in turn, knows how to turn a phrase and set a scene. There is much new material here. Sometimes it is a small item for the specialist. (Finally we learn the given name of Salt Lake City merchant James Kinkad.) Or perhaps for the general reader it is the unfolding of a larger topic, like the colorful description of the Gunnison trial at Nephi City or the licentious behavior of some of Colonel Steptoe's men in blue during the 1854-55 social season.

These virtues, unfortunately, have offsetting values. The book is diminished by an air of *exposé* that touches almost every page. *Exposés* universally promise Truth and as certainly never deliver it. Reflecting this approach, the book mistakes the inevitable inconsistencies and gaps that exist in all past records as items of proof. Other historians may find them less so. Rather, we see in such work the telltale signs of "history as conspiracy." This genre lets suspicions rather than facts rule.

For me, at least, there are many unanswered questions. How had so many non-Mormons, some closely connected with the incident, been misled? How important was a single, vague statement by a second-level Church leader? Were the Utah citizens incapable of seeing their own self-interest? Why would they kill a man who advised the nation against interfering in the territory, something they very much wanted to avoid?

The problem is not simply with logic and interpretation. The book proceeds with the assurance of having carefully examined all available testimony. But many important pieces of evidence are little-used or overlooked. Crucial lapses include:

1. Brigham Young, Letter to P. W. Conover, et al., 16 October 1853, describes Huntington's first October mission, not as a conspiracy against Gunnison nor as an effort to suppress an expected Indian attack on Fillmore, but as part of Young's general peace campaign to end the Walker War. "We must cease our hostilities and seek by every possible means to reach the Indian with a peaceful message," Young told local leaders, "which shall extend [?] a salutary influence over them which shall cause them to consider us their friends."⁴

2. Henry Standage, Letter to George A. Smith, 29 September 1853.⁵ Standage provides a contemporaneous account of the Pahvant hostility toward the California emigrant party. It effectively sets aside the argument that Mormons later made up or magnified the details of the dispute.

3. Erastus Snow and Franklin D. Richards, Letter to Brigham Young,

⁴ Miscellaneous Files, Indian Affairs Papers, Box 59, Folder 2, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives. Too, Huntington's mission may have been part of a larger Indian proselyting policy announced at the Church's October general conference.

⁵ George A. Smith Papers, LDS Church Archives.

29 October 1853.⁶ Hastily penned at Fillmore by two LDS General Authorities who had just learned of the massacre, this letter tells the same narrative that Brigham Young and others would later tell. It carries no hint of a Mormon involvement in the attack, nor of a Mormon cover-up.

4. 4. Brigham Young's instructions to Dimick B. Huntington, 31 October 1853, and Huntington's subsequent report, 11 November 1853.⁷ Contrary to Fielding's suggestion that the Indian scout was sent to Fillmore to "to make sure that everyone . . . had their facts 'straight'" in an effort to suppress the Mormon role in the massacre (p. 172), Young gave Huntington the charge to "make all speed" in the hope of recovering government property. Moreover, "you will confer with Capt. Morris and act under his suggestion to render every possible aid and try and ascertain what Indians committed this deed; their whereabouts and general localities." In turn, Huntington's later report provides the data that became the core of the Mormon accounts: "I ascertained from other friendly indians of the Pahvante tribe that the cause of this massacre was the killing of an Indian of the Pah-vantes and the wounding of two others by a party of emigrants who went through the Territory on the southern route to California with a flock of sheep."

5. Letters exchanged between Utah Territorial Delegate John Bernhisel and Brigham Young, 30 November 1853; 13 January and 11 and 31 March 1854; 18 December 1855; and 17 May 1856.⁸ These confidential letters fail to confirm a hidden Mormon role in the event and include Young's appraisal of Gunnison and his book: "Col Abert [Gunnison's former superior] is mistaken if he thinks we were offended at Gunnison's pamphlet, the only remark upon the matter that I know of amounting simply to this, that his experience and information were [in]sufficient to print his views free of inaccuracies, still I know of no feeling at all akin to anger on account of the errors that were printed."

6. Brigham Young, Memorandum on the Gunnison Massacre to Jefferson Davis, 8 September 1855.⁹ Twenty-two pages in length, this document is one of the most comprehensive and important LDS accounts of the event. Especially helpful in explaining the Gunnison

⁶ Incoming Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives.

⁷ Young's Letter: Governor's Letterbook 1:10, Brigham Young Papers; Huntington's Report: Miscellaneous Files, Indian Affairs Papers, Box 59, Folder 3, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives. Huntington's formal report also verifies published material in the *Deseret News*, which Fielding suggests was carefully crafted dissimulation by editor Willard Richards.

⁸ Brigham Young Letterbooks and Correspondence from Bernhisel, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives.

⁹ Jefferson Davis Papers, Rice University; copy Brigham Young Letterbooks, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives.

Indian trials and the LDS role in them, Young denies influencing the Mormon jury and makes clear that the escaped Pahvants were in fact captured and returned to the territorial prison—largely due to his initiative. Despite the importance of this lengthy letter, Territorial Delegate John Bernhisel failed to publish it. To Young he explained: “There is not an individual to be found at present who gives any credence to the libelous charge that Captain Gunnison was massacred by some of our people.”¹⁰

These documents, largely ignored by Fielding, do much to fill the supposed gaps in the historical record that he takes as evidence of a Mormon conspiracy. On the contrary, they must be interpreted as evidence *against* a conspiracy—or force those who see the sinister hand in history to take their theories one step further: The Mormons systematically wrote fraudulent documents to cover their tracks and mislead future historians.

None of this should be taken as a defense of some of the traditional histories of Utah and Mormonism that Fielding finds so much to his disliking. He is right in suggesting that Utah, like other frontier communities, had its share of violence. Indians could be treated badly, especially by outlying settlers in wartime. Likewise, Fielding adds important information to the events at Mountain Meadows, as LDS leaders during the first months of the Utah War encouraged the Native Americans to harass emigrant trains. The hope, apparently, was to pressure the national government into settling the difficulty—with no expectation that such a policy could bring the tragedy that it did.

The challenge, as always, is to fit the historical interpretation to the “facts.” Mormon society has changed from its first years. But what was it first like? Did the tragedy of the Fancher party characterize it? Was the Gunnison Massacre prologue to Mountain Meadows?

In the deep dichotomies that so often afflict Mormon and Utah history, where disciples and their opponents each make faith-claims with resulting, warring stereotypes, these questions will elicit different responses. This book has the unmistakable imprint of this on-going battle and, accordingly, bears the usual diminished results.

Mark T. Banker. *Presbyterian Missions and Cultural Interaction in the Far Southwest, 1850-1950*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993; xiv, 225 pp.; photographs, maps, tables, bibliography, in-

¹⁰ Bernhisel, Letter to Young, 18 December 1855, Bernhisel Correspondence, Brigham Young Papers, LDS Church Archives.

dex; \$36.95. ISBN 0-252-01929-6.

Reviewed by John Sillito

As Mark Banker observes, "encounters between newcomers and native peoples" have shaped the history of the American Southwest. The Presbyterian missionaries of the late nineteenth century found the "mosaic of cultures that repeated migrations" had brought into this area both "intriguing and bewildering" (p. 3). More importantly, the missionaries regarded these "exceptional populations" as significant deviations from the "prevailing cultural standards of their own nation . . . [and] its values and institutions" and saw southwestern pluralism as "a challenge—and an opportunity" (p. 3).

The Presbyterian response was simultaneously typical of and quite different from that of other antebellum American efforts "to resist and even remove vestiges of cultural diversity" (p. ix). On the one hand, the missionaries—reflecting the typical nineteenth-century view that cultural heterogeneity would bring only misfortune—considered it their duty to share these superior ways with those who were less fortunate. Like other evangelicals, Presbyterians "came to assume that their nation's cultural and moral standards and ideals were preferred by God and superior to those of other peoples" dutifully tried to transmit them to the less fortunate natives (p. 12). Yet these Presbyterian missionaries, unlike some of their contemporaries, also believed that "native southwesterners could *and* should be incorporated into the national mainstream" (p. 12).

Ultimately for Presbyterians, the means for this regeneration resided in mission schools where "Christian education would produce nothing less than a radical cultural transformation." Between 1880 and 1900, Presbyterians operated seventy-six schools (in Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Wyoming, and southern Idaho), employed 183 teachers, and enrolled between four and five thousand students annually (p. x).

In the Southwest, Presbyterians encountered three groups. First were the Indians, a generic label that "fails to capture the richness and diversity of these Native American peoples." Second were the Hispanics, who intermingled with the Pueblos to produce the mestizo, whom Banker labels "the New Mexicans." He notes: "At the very time constitutionalism, capitalism and Protestant reform were transforming Western civilization they 'still clung to the feudal political and economic patterns, mores and values, and the Catholic faith of their medieval forebears.'" And finally, the Mormons were "in many ways similar to the newcomers yet in other ways shockingly different" (p. 6).

While these three groups were different from each other, for Presbyterians they shared "a common flaw—they did not conform to the cultural norms of the American mainstream." They "lacked the balance between freedom and order that nineteenth-century Americans confidently believed had assured the triumph of their nation's republican experiment"

(p. 8). For nineteenth-century evangelicals, paganism, Catholicism, and Mormonism "were hopeless, potentially dangerous delusions." They were, as one early mission official put it, people "who are with us—but not of us" (p. 10).

For readers of this journal, Banker's examination of the Mormons is most pertinent. While Presbyterians "blamed aggressive whites for the Indian problem" and New Mexicans could be dismissed as aliens from the "true religion and the Anglo-Protestant way," Mormons posed a far different problem because they had "rejected Christian civilization for the 'dark', 'corrupt' and 'foreign' religion and society of their desert Zion." As Banker notes, their success in building a kingdom and attracting converts made Mormonism the "most challenging and threatening of the exceptional populations" (p. 35).

In their efforts to discredit Mormonism, Presbyterians went to great lengths to explain "how this corrupt and misleading religion emerged in the pure air of Christian America" (p. 35). Like most nineteenth-century critics of Mormonism, the Presbyterians pictured Joseph Smith and his family as con artists and impostors, asserted that he had plagiarized the Book of Mormon, and "particularly objected to Mormonism's anthropomorphic, materialistic concept of God and Arminian understanding of the nature of man" (p. 36).

More distressing, however, was the "degrading social impact" of polygamy which they felt destroyed morality, marriage, and family life. Presbyterians believed that the "true villains were the Mormon hierarchy who exacted . . . loyalty from their 'ignorant and misguided' peoples" (p. 37). For them the key to destroying Mormonism was education—"The Presbyterian Panacea" (p. 49).

Asserting that "a major purpose of Utah's existing schools was "to protect and preserve Mormon social unity," Presbyterians made "the school question . . . a focal point in the broader Gentile-Mormon conflict" (p. 51). Despite some initial opposition to educational approaches from denominational officials, for the next half century, the Presbyterian schools became the battleground in their war against Mormonism.

Ultimately, as Banker correctly observes, a combination of the Woodruff Manifesto, the public school law of 1890, and statehood weakened missionary efforts. While Presbyterians continued to assert that Mormons "dominated the local schools and used them to inculcate their peculiar doctrines," they "correctly recognized that the transformation of Mormonism in the 1890s posed a serious threat to the continuation of the work" (p. 152).

In the opening years of the twentieth century, a burst of renewed energy saw the creation of four schools in Utah and southern Idaho—the "last gasp of the aggressive mission school policy" (p. 159). Indeed, 1900 to 1920 was a "transitional era" in which the expansion of publicly supported school systems, bolstered by the spirit of progressivism which suggested the need to strengthen the public school system, not compete

with it, and significant changes within the denomination, which broadened the scope of missionary work, raised doubts about the efficacy of Presbyterian efforts.

Based on solid research in primary and secondary sources, Mark Banker has significantly enhanced our knowledge of Mormonism's crucial period from the Manifesto to World War I. Moreover, he places this study within the context of developments in the Southwest, and larger national patterns and trends. Additionally, for readers of the *Journal of Mormon History* he raises important questions about the nature and motivation of missionary work. Gradually, he demonstrates, Presbyterians came to realize that the "exceptional populations" of the Southwest were real people with significant cultures, not simply objects to be saved. In this sense, "mutually held stereotypes and distrust eroded and natives and newcomers sometimes learned to accept and appreciate one another" and embrace cultural and religious pluralism in a "way that differed radically from their nineteenth century predecessors" (p. xii). For students of Mormonism and other religious traditions committed to proselytizing, Banker's observations have a particular resonance and relevancy.

JOHN SILLITO is Archivist and Associate Professor of Libraries at Weber State University, Ogden, Utah. He has written on religious and political history in early twentieth century Utah.

Erich Robert Paul. *Science, Religion, and Mormon Cosmology*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1992; 272 pp.; index, notes, bibliography, illustrations, ISBN 0-252-01895-8

Ronald Numbers. *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1992; 458 pp.; notes, illustrations, index; \$27.50; ISBN 0-679-4014-0

Reviewed by Richard Sherlock

Over the last twenty years, a number of authors, including me, have published studies dealing with some aspects of the history of the Mormon interface with modern science. But unlike most other areas of Mormon studies, there has as yet been no serious, book-length study of any part of this tangled set of relationships. Thus, Erich Robert Paul's important book fills a large part of this lacuna. Paul's study draws on his expertise in the history of science, especially modern astronomy and cosmology, to explore Mormon science relations principally around

cosmological themes.

The book is divided into two sections. The first three chapters deal with "issues in science and religion" especially issues in modern science and the philosophy of science. The second section treats primarily Mormon cosmological pluralism ("worlds without number") but also a number of subsidiary issues in Mormon-science relations. Mormonism's cosmological pluralism sets it profoundly apart from the static one-world cosmology of classical Christianity; however, it drew little attention from contemporary science, which during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was moving toward its own versions of pluralism. Mormonism also posited a material universe that operated according to rational laws which even God must follow. Such a combination clearly left Mormonism more open to the fundamental world view of modern science than much of nineteenth-century Christianity. It also stimulated much of the Mormon interest in science which allowed battles over specific issues like evolution to be tamer than they might have been, precisely because there were a number of prominent life, earth, and physical scientists among its leadership who could balance the views of even extremely conservative nonscientists.

Though this book brings together widely scattered materials in a masterful way, I have two reservations about its content. First, the author may have tried to put too much within its covers in two ways. His wide-ranging knowledge of the history and philosophy of modern science allows him to make brief references to a number of non-Mormon examples at key points, especially in the first three chapters. For those versed in the literature, this contexting is important. But the average historically minded Mormon reader may not get the point. This material makes the book much richer in context, but those who are expecting the typical Mormon-science story should be forewarned. Simultaneously but more significantly, Paul may try to cover too much Mormon material; as a consequence, the connections between his chapters are not entirely clear. For example, if the theme is cosmological, then a discussion of Orson Pratt is obviously central. But the reason for including a chapter on "science in the church hierarchy" in a discussion of cosmology (e.g., apostles John A. Widtsoe, James E. Talmage, Richard R. Lyman, and Joseph F. Merrill) is not so obvious. This book is too brief and not intended to serve as a general history of Mormon-science relations. But it also wavers too much at points from the cosmological theme.

Second, I would have appreciated more sensitivity to some of the deeper implications of modern science for Mormonism in practice, perhaps even the implications of Mormon cosmology for Mormonism itself. As early as the eighteenth century, Hume showed that a commitment to a material, rule-governed universe would make belief in the miraculous difficult if not impossible. In such a universe the supposed "miraculous" events could only be unexplained events, not necessarily divine actions. In Mormonism's very material cosmology, what happens

to the miraculous which has been so much a part of Mormonism from the beginning? I would have appreciated some discussion of these sorts of issues that are naturally connected to Paul's theme.

It might also have been illuminating to consider why Mormonism has produced an abundance of scientists but almost no serious work in the philosophy or theology of science. This fundamental Mormon phenomenon of avoiding philosophy and theology, while engaging heavily in "practical" efforts in natural and applied sciences (e.g., engineering, agronomy, and medicine), may partially explain why Mormonism does not appear more prominently in Ron Numbers's brilliant history of modern creationism, which has been very heavily influenced by another uniquely American religious tradition, Adventism. But the scriptural literalism of Adventism's founder Ellen White sent that religious movement down an anti-evolutionary path that led directly to the work of the major anti-evolutionary voice of the twentieth century in America—George McCready Price. Price and his disciples were the major influence in a wide number of creationist ventures such as the Deluge Geology Society, the Religion and Science Association, and the later work of Henry Morris, founder of the now-dominant Creation Research Society. Unlike Mormonism these organizations were dominated by conservative theologians.

Not coincidentally Joseph Fielding Smith cited Price heavily for a number of years. But unlike Adventism and fundamentalist Christianity, Mormonism never seriously embraced creationism. We have no official statements condemning evolutionary theory per se or holding the church to particular geological or age of the earth positions. In fact, when Joseph Fielding Smith published *Man: His Origin and Destiny* and Melvin Cook of the University of Utah's Metallurgy Department began attacking evolution, both in church publications and in the pages of the *Journal of the Creation Research Society*, they were widely viewed as aberrations from a tolerant norm and not just more of the same.

In the chapter "Creationism in the Church," Numbers has a six-page summary of the Mormon involvement, drawn largely from secondary sources. It is a competent overview, but Mormons do not appear, as do Lutherans, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Adventists, in the main story line.

Paul's book helps explain why Mormonism does not appear more widely in Numbers's volume, and Numbers's volume will enable the serious Mormon reader to gain an unmatched entree into the world of creationism, appreciating just how different Mormonism has been and remains from the conservative Christian movements with which we are most frequently grouped by others.

RICHARD SHERLOCK is professor of philosophy at Utah State University and author of "A Turbulent Spectrum: Mormon Reactions to the Darwinist Legacy," *Journal of Mormon History* 5 (1978): 33-59 and *Preserving Life: Public Policy and the Life Not Worth Living* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987).

Garth L. Mangum and Bruce D. Blumell. *The Mormons' War on Poverty: A History of LDS Welfare 1830-1990*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993; 1xvi, 320 pp.; index; \$29.95. ISBN 0-87480-414-0

Reviewed by Garth N. Jones

This welcome book deals with a much-praised and a much-misunderstood subject. In popular belief, Mormons "take care of their own"; and from its earliest days the LDS Church has waged a war on poverty with remarkable successes. Historically, the Church may be characterized as a powerful institution of social uplift, transforming the disadvantaged into productive citizens.

For the first time two perceptive scholars, economist Garth L. Mangum and historian/attorney Bruce D. Blumell examine this complimentary self-view in a chronological narrative of an introduction and ten chapters: "Economic Welfare in Ohio and Missouri," "Resettlement and Relief in Nauvoo, 1839-1846," "The Economies of the Exodus, 1846-1887," "Economic Welfare in the Mountain West, 1847-1900," "Twentieth-Century Welfare, 1900-1930," "Response to the Great Depression, 1929-1935," "The Church Welfare Plan, 1936-1990," "The Maturing of the Welfare Services in the United States and Canada, 1960-1990," "The Welfare Program in the International Church," and "The Future of Welfare Services." Leonard J. Arrington's foreword explains how this study was initiated in 1974 under his auspices as Church Historian by Blumell, then set aside until Mangum became involved several years later.

By titling the book with the "war on poverty" tag, the authors placed the issue in a contemporary context, from which the book must be examined. Although a politically resonant phrase, "war on poverty" is not completely successful. Mormonism originated in a highly undifferentiated society and survives on in a highly differentiated one. A solid transition would have helped the reader bridge this gap with the authors. Nineteenth-century Mormonism was not a quest to eradicate poverty so much as a mission of building communities. Welfare as we know it is a product of the industrial age.

The Church has dealt with the poverty of its members pragmatically, both inside and out of the United States. Methods have included enhancing subsistence living (family resources, farming, fishing, grazing), assisting in self-employment, fostering small enterprises, stimulating entrepreneurship, joining large corporate undertakings, helping in job placement, and establishing businesses and cooperative ventures. It has simultaneously held humanitarian (disaster relief for individuals and groups) and self-sufficiency (teaching skills) goals. Its welfare farms and related production projects, mainly initiated in belated response to the Great Depression, constituted an innovative way to integrate both purposes. Current welfare philosophy stresses human development by providing only limited relief (after personal and family resources are

exhausted) to minimize the deleterious consequence of prolonged aid and holding up as an ideal (often breached in practice) that recipients will work for what they receive. Welfare programs try to serve spiritual as well as temporal needs, with the bishop playing the central role in the delivery process.

Despite remarkable achievements, the authors document that the Church has never had the corporate resources to "take care of" all of its members. Throughout most of Mormonism's first century, massive poverty kept much of the membership at near-subsistence level. Although they break little new ground in their pre-1900 chapters, the economic focus of Mormon activities is clear and well documented. By the turn of the twentieth century, agrarian Zion had given way to a more urban model, even while upholding the agrarian ideal of the family farm. New converts were advised to build new Zions in their own countries. Massive out-migration took tens of thousands of Mormons in search of economic opportunities elsewhere—mainly to southern California and the Pacific Northwest. Most were third-generation Mormons, born between 1900 and 1925.

The Great Depression devastated Utah. One out of every four Utahns was on government relief, and the state ranked second in per capita welfare expenditures—even with the welfare plan functioning. This corrective view is long overdue. Tied to national economic cycles, Utah broke out of its oppressive poverty/unemployment only with World War II, benefitting fully from twenty-five years of post-war prosperity where family income trebled, leaving the Church and its members generally affluent for the first time in history.

In the early 1970s, soaring baptismal rates in Third World countries (primarily Central and South America and the Philippines) brought a steady influx of poor members into the Church. About 85 percent of the funding for Church activities in these societies presently comes from Canada and the United States. Simultaneously missionaries were converting sizeable numbers of low-income converts in the American South and inner cities, both areas demographically marked by economic weakness. Yet this growing need coincides with twenty years of a slowing U.S. economy, resulting in a decline in real family income. The Mormon corridor maintains higher-than-average employment levels, but its economic capacity places it at the lowest 20th percentile in per capita income.

The lesson is clear: As a body, Mormons typically prosper when their nations prosper. Skilled niche management can move some Mormons to favored levels of their national economies, but what are the limitations of this strategy?

And can the Church afford the heavy cost of its international and domestic burdens? The authors provide insightful viewpoints about emergent costs and possible program changes that help explain the Church's current retrenchment efforts.

The Church's historical intent in eradicating poverty for its own members cannot be faulted. Mormons have been quick to try new social ventures, maintaining those that work, and discarding marginal ones. Its record in creating and managing formal organizations to better social and economic conditions is impressive. Yet the Church was never ensnared by the social ethic which dominates so much of contemporary Catholicism and Protestantism—a facet I wish the authors had addressed. It has no social creed, with its underpinnings of sin and guilt. Mormons show little compassion for the “unworthy” poor who will not work, will not struggle against substance abuse, and will not seek education. Hence, humanitarian assistance has never been a major feature of the Church. It has withdrawn, in recent decades, from such schools and hospitals that it had created earlier. It has capped enrollment at its institutions of higher learning, has no program analogous to Catholic Charities, and concentrates mainly on disaster relief, not long-term assistance, for its own members. It has narrowed its purposes and consolidated program activities within a bureaucratic structure. Economic development activities (for example, the cooperative canal systems and support of the sugar beet industry) have been virtually eliminated. In contrast to the Methodist Church, for example, Mormonism has been relatively passive in dealing with such social wrongs as political corruption, tyrannical government, racial exploitation, and economic injustice.

The Church currently articulates its mission as spiritual: “To proclaim the gospel, to perfect the Saints, and to redeem the dead.” The authors ask whether proselyting or vicarious ordinance work will be curtailed so that “more church resources” can be devoted “to improving the economic well-being of members.” I agree that “it seems unlikely” (p. 267). Perfecting the Saints is an ennobling purpose: to make each individual fully human and responsible in a larger socio-religious context. Self-reliance is seen as the basis for selfless unity with the community of Zion. Economically, the Church encourages individual self-reliance, backed up by family assistance. Institutional resources are administered on the ward level, with limited short-term emergency help available but encouragement to see governmental welfare programs or non-profit agencies for long-term needs.

The authors are correct in pointing out that the Church is approaching a critical juncture in its balance between needs and resources, but they leave unaddressed several important, related issues. Organizationally, the Church is trying to use the same program in both differentiated (the industrial West) and undifferentiated (Third World) societies. How successful is it likely to be? And for how long? How well does the law of consecration and stewardship fit within a free enterprise system, which is basically driven by human greed?

In this context, the Church's modest but substantial humanitarian aid to distressed non-members, usually channeled through non-Mormon agencies, is not as much of an innovation as it might be, although the

authors' account of this 1980s development is one of the book's most interesting features. Another is the analysis of needs in developing nations. Education has so long been the ladder to economic stability for Americans that few recognize how futile education can be in a country without a solid economic and technological infrastructure. Many native missionaries, living at an American standard with American companions, adopt the same pro-educational views and make enormous sacrifices to achieve educations, stranding themselves as overeducated unemployables while the country is in desperate need of mechanics, technicians, and other skilled personnel.

It is at this point in the book, in its closing chapters, where the authors suggest that the Church is at a crucial transition in its long war on poverty. In its emergent international form, it has encountered the cruelest form of poverty—the poor who have no hope. They are more than twentieth-century rice-bowl Christians, since the gospel teaches that the good life is now for those that accept its word.

The authors document efforts by the Church to give its Third World members an advantage in the battle for survival within their stabilized national economies. The authors extensively document (particularly in Chapter 9, "The Welfare Program in the International Church") efforts by the Church to give to Third World members an advantage in their terrible struggles for survival. Overwhelmingly, these efforts were initiated by sensitive Mormon mission presidents and missionary couples who encountered for the first time in their lives conditions of abject poverty. The numerous but brief accounts given in this book shows the inherent goodness of missionary work.

Initial international efforts in using the 1940-50 model of welfare farms along with ancillary services met with little success, since the masses of the new converts were urban poor with little experience in agriculture. The health services missionaries, expanded into welfare missionaries, met with some measure of success, but the program was not sustained to any significant size.

In recognition of the transitory nature of Third World societies, significant efforts have been given to making members employable. Involved has been the establishment of employment centers with a range of assistance activities such as counseling to job information.

In countries such as the Philippines, large numbers of members are engaged in petty entrepreneurial enterprises. The authors note that some promising results have occurred when in limited ways the Church has provided assistance. They urge that more attention should be given in this area.

Possibly the Church's finest contribution in socio-economic uplift has been through its educational efforts. This includes a range of activities from elementary schools to adult education classes. Emphasis has been given to technical and practical subject matter.

In cautious but innovative ways the Church has been increasingly

involved in small-scale humanitarian service projects such as those undertaken by the Friends of West Africa. The authors report encouraging accomplishments.

The most significant contribution of the Church, however, was scarcely addressed—the development of superior social and organizational skills. This is the most critical weakness in poverty-afflicted societies. My own work reveals remarkable socio-economic progress when the number of members was sufficient to carry out basic Church activities. They get their lives in order and connect to larger affairs outside of their once confined community life. The basic strength of the Church in its war on poverty is to be found in the establishment of viable wards. The missionary program with its high turnover of personnel is too transitory to systematically cope with the endemic problems of poverty. While the Church has no coordinated or consistent program to deal with Third World poverty, this externality may prove to be its best “weapon.” But it must be pointed out that maintaining viable wards is not an easy matter in weak economies—especially those being impacted by exponential population growth. Another problem the Church has not faced: Each day 250,000 new souls are born. About fifty years hence, world population will reach 10.5 billion, double the current number.

As these two authors cogently point out, the Church is not a financial cornucopia. Its financial strength comes from the donations of faithful tithe-payers, not from its corporate enterprises. There is no hard evidence in this book that such matters are receiving attention at the highest levels of the Church. After reading this book, I am convinced more than ever that Mormonism needs a new ethic to replace its current model of material-based growth and accretion of numbers. This ethic is a return to Joseph Smith's first attack on poverty, that of substance-sharing. Until affluent Mormons living in the American “Zion” curb their appetites (campers, boats, skis, summer homes, rifles, five-bedroom homes, three automobiles, four television sets), they have few solutions to offer to the problem of international poverty.

GARTH L. JONES is dean/professor emeritus of business and public affairs at the University of Alaska. A large part of his professional life was spent in South and Southeast Asia in economic development activities. His publications include “Expanding LDS Church Abroad: Old Realities Compounded,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8 (Spring 1980): 8-22, and “Spiritual Searchings: The Church in Its International Mission,” *ibid.*, 20 (Summer 1987): 58-75.

George D. Smith, ed. *Faithful History: Essays in Writing Mormon History*. Salt Lake City; Signature Books, 1992; 324 pp., endnotes accompa-

nying each article. \$18.95. 1-56085-007-8

D. Michael Quinn, ed. *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992; 305 pp., endnotes accompanying each article. \$18.95. 1-56085-011-6.

Reviewed by F. Ross Peterson

These two volumes gather together thirty-one separate articles, sixteen in *Faithful History*, and fifteen in *The New Mormon History*. In each case the editor has relied almost totally on previously published essays, primarily from *Dialogue*, *Sunstone*, the *Journal of Mormon History*, and *Utah Historical Quarterly*. Only two articles, both in *Faithful History*, are original, one by D. Michael Quinn and the other by Edward Ashment. The books make a major contribution by making the articles available within a single cover and focusing on a major theme. However, for those well versed in Mormon thought and historiography, there is little new.

Both volumes actually focus on the writing of religious history and whether the so-called New Mormon historians have successfully brought professionalism and objectivity into writing of ecclesiastical history. Smith's *Faithful History* brings opposing view points to the forefront and allows the traditionalists a definite response. At issue is whether history defines faith or faith defines history. Do historians who write about their particular faith have a moral obligation to promote faithful history or do they have an intellectual commitment to write the best objective history possible? Each contributor offers numerous examples of how they handle the issue. Richard Bushman's lead article, "Faithful History," published over twenty years ago is a dynamic beginning to the book. A historian of eighteenth-century America, he eloquently describes the excitement of creating actual historical interpretations. Writing religious history is viewed as a fantastic challenge. The stage is set and the historical drama unfolds.

Rereading the essays reminded me that each person and each generation rewrites its history. Every author must confront a dilemma if faith and history collide. Ever since Fawn Brodie's *No Man Knows My History* and Juanita Brooks's *Mountain Meadows Massacre*, Mormon writing about Mormons have confronted the perceived crisis. Critics like Louis Midgley, "The Acids of Modernity and the Crisis in Mormon Historiography," and David Bohn, "Unfounded Claims and Impossible Expectations: A Critique of New Mormon History," postulate that history can destroy faith and that revisionist New Mormon historians bear a heavy responsibility for humanizing the godly and chipping away at religious foundations. These two BYU political scientists adopt a traditional approach to Mormon historiography and in responding to

other articles, enhance the debate.

The two original essays in *Faithful History* deserve closer analysis. Quinn describes his own odyssey and accompanying travails as his career as historian evolved. Though lengthy, it deserves a very close reading because it illustrates how official responses to historical inquiry can generate crises of faith. Yet this personal essay is simultaneously confusing and moving. Why he talks of himself in the third person for part of the essay and in first person for the remainder is a mystery. It is almost as if he is a different person before his crisis of position and faith at BYU.

Ashment's discussion of "The Historiography of the Canon" foreshadows the issue of historicity of scripture and urges that Mormon scripture undergo the same analytical scrutiny that Mormon scholars reserve for the Bible. Can different versions evolve and should the language be changed or questioned? Ashment feels that creative experimentation is possible and desirable.

The New Mormon History also begins with a classical essay by Leonard Arrington, "The Search for Truth and Meaning in Mormon History," now twenty-five years since its printing. Arrington discusses five biases which still influence Mormon historiography. They are (1) theological marionette, (2) male, (3) solid achievement, (4) centrifugal, and (5) unanimity. In calling for history that reacts to the biases, Arrington seeks revisionism. The essays in this book respond in that they challenge tradition and myth by examining historical documents that question conventional history. Linda King Newell's essay on women's activities as healers, Mario De Pillis's exploration of the quest for religious authority, and Kenneth Cannon's study of post-manifesto polygamy are included. Quinn's selection of these essays demonstrates a difficult reality. Historical evidence published in reputable journals neither destroys faith nor does it change traditional views of history. In spite of these excellent well-documented articles, historical myth and unquestioning faith still persevere. If William Hartley's article on the seagull story was intended to alter a miracle legend, it failed. Although it may be irritating to hear the "miracle of the gulls" story repeated on Temple Square, it is reassuring evidence that faith is more deeply personal and more resilient than either history or miracles. This realization alone should remove a great deal of the fussy protectionism that "orthodoxy patrols" expend on safeguarding the presumed weak in faith from having the foundations of their faith eroded. These ordinary members are probably oblivious both to the myth-revisers and to the protectionists.

However, within the more specialized field of Mormon history, one can safely say that the New Mormon History has changed the world for historians of Mormonism. Those who study and research can and do reconcile faith and history. Their conclusions add breadth and meaning to the entire religious experience, yet they do it by highlighting the humanity of historical figures. Consequently, historical figures confront-

ing crisis, not always successfully, model how individuals can reconstruct more realistic views of their own world.

Fear is not a positive emotion, and a Church of over eight million members need not fear its history or its historians. These volumes document the reality that if history is strictly used to create and bolster faith then it can be dangerous because it must be altered. For years, RLDS missionaries taught that polygamy started with Brigham Young and LDS missionaries taught that it ended with the 1890 Manifesto. The Church has effortlessly survived the knowledge that polygamy began with Joseph Smith and did not end, for the official Church, until long after 1890—and has not ended at all in the larger community of Mormonism. When new evidence destroys old assumptions, mature reflection is necessary. No one should be frightened by either the process or by the product. For the most part, these essays are very mature reflections.

The editors should have given full citations of the previously published essays and perhaps included a short introduction on why each piece was chosen. The exclusion of women and ethnic minority topics was conspicuous, especially since some exceptional essays on women's topics are in circulation. Both *Sisters in Spirit* and *New Views of Mormon History* have numerous articles worthy of reprinting.

Mormon historiography is in a relatively early stage. Shaping historical interpretations takes time. As long as some believe in a "true" history and others feel that objective history transcends an official view, the debate will continue. As historians write and as the institution evolves, faith and Mormon history, new or old, will inevitably clash. From my position, that clash is positive. It will yield a greater understanding of past realities, creating an opportunity to solve contemporary dilemmas.

F. ROSS PETERSON is professor of history and director of the Mountain West Center for Regional Studies at Utah State University. Former co-editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, he is author of *Idaho: A Bicentennial History* and *Prophet Without Honor: Glen H. Taylor and the Fight for American Liberalism*.

Lyndon W. Cook, ed. *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness*. Orem, Utah: Grandin Book Co., 1991; xxvi, 276 pp.; photographs, appendices, index; \$18.95. ISBN 0-910523-38X.

Reviewed by Richard Lloyd Anderson

"Locate eyewitnesses, and interpret their experiences with full informa-

tion from them." This historical axiom stresses a double process that is both A-B-C and graduate work in reconstructing events. With proven ability in gathering and transcribing, Lyndon W. Cook has already aided every Mormon historian by publishing invaluable sources and thoughtful commentary. In this latest volume he gathers various reports of some four dozen interviews with David Whitmer, several short letters from this last-surviving Book of Mormon witness, and some miscellaneous materials for a total of about ninety documents. These raw records, coupled with a medium-good index and an uneven introduction, provide historians with an important yet limited tool. David Whitmer's recollections are indispensable on finishing the Book of Mormon translation at his father's farm, on the natural-supernatural appearance of the angel with the plates to the Three Witnesses, and on the rise of the Church and Whitmer's alienation from its leaders. Cook's collection can be misused by quoting Whitmer's opinions on other subjects beyond these eyewitness experiences. Cook's collection also gives less than complete available information from Whitmer, partly due to the design of focusing on interviews and partly due to publishing before full research was done.

Though Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were gone by mid-century, the last of the Three Witnesses lived in Richmond, Missouri, four decades beyond that. In later years he was often interviewed, giving strong and quotable views. Although each interview sounds final, it is important to survey all that he said on a subject, for he despaired of seeing an accurate report and typically wrote letters of correction or complained to visitors about misquotations. Thus, verification on Whitmer must rely on repeated themes in these interviews. Cook's collection significantly helps, though it lacks approximately 20 percent of the available materials that document David Whitmer conversations. More seriously, Cook's collection lacks about a dozen major historical comments by Whitmer sprinkled through his published writings, principally in the pamphlet he issued the year before his death, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (1887). Of course, the editor aims at a collection of interviews, but the reader needs to be reminded that reports of conversations are incomplete without the direct statements that Whitmer himself put in writing. Nine of Whitmer's personal letters are included in Cook's appendix, but an equal number do not appear in this compilation. Unfortunately, the sheer size of *David Whitmer Interviews* can give a false sense of the completeness and directness of the Whitmer materials it provides.

In this context, it is fair to raise the ongoing question of individual enterprise vs. cooperative authorship or institutionally supported endeavor in the creation of critical editions. Locating the most reliable versions of sources, proofing repeatedly and meticulously for accuracy, and publishing expensive documentaries are the lifeblood of serious history. These are almost superhuman burdens for one individual. More teamwork with other historians would have upgraded the quality of Cook's product, though even in its present state it is a required book on

the shelf of the serious student of the origins of Mormonism.

Understanding these interviews requires care and awareness. For David Whitmer, the center was always the glory of the angel, seeing the plates, and the validating divine voice. He was unyielding on these core statements. Interviewers of all types recorded Whitmer's witness to these realities. If they failed, he publicly corrected them. But accuracy on Whitmer's details rests heavily on characteristics of the interviewer's integrity, reporting competence, preconceptions, care in questioning, etc. Since Whitmer was highly consistent, conflicting particulars generally arise from the quality of each discussion and its compilation.

Some interviews, for instance, leave loose ends on the angel's voice, though resolved by Whitmer's concise comments in *An Address to All Believers* and other reports. Edward Stevenson, on three visits, records that Whitmer had a vision before the group vision of the Three Witnesses. Whitmer was plowing and by himself "saw a personage who said, 'Blessed is the Lord and he that keepeth his commandments'" (Cook, p. 11). Stevenson is the most explicit recorder of the pre-group-vision voice. However, Joseph Smith and others quote such a phrase as part of the Three Witnesses event (*History of the Church* 1:54). Thus, it is surprising for Cook to say the angel "did not . . . apparently speak to the witnesses" (Cook, p. xiv), especially since Whitmer also recorded (by personal dictation) that "the angel . . . declared unto us that the Book of Mormon was true," a point he emphasized by repeating that God's "own voice and an angel from heaven declared the truth of it unto me" (*Address*, pp. 29, 43).

George Q. Cannon, a generally impressive reporter of details, describes Whitmer's angelic message as part of the experience of the three together (Cook, p. 108). And B. H. Roberts's 1884 visit to Whitmer does not appear in Cook's collection; but he summarized his interview soon afterward and forty years later told the October conference audience that Whitmer, in describing the group vision, said that, while the angel turned the leaves, "Moroni looked directly at him and said, 'David, blessed is he that endureth to the end.'" Roberts considered it a "hidden warning," to the witness who remained out of the Church (*Conference Report*, October 1926, p. 126).

Meticulous care in printing the original text generated by the author is a requirement in editing documents. As expected, Cook's work appears to be careful, but there are warning signs. James H. Moyle's recollection of interrogating Whitmer appeared in the *Church News*, 2 August 1941. Yet this publication is incorrectly dated 1944 (Cook, p. 161), an error possibly picked up from Preston Nibley's 1946 collection, *Witnesses of the Book of Mormon*. Cook's transcription of the 1941 Moyle statement contains four errors, "by" for the original "with" (Cook, p. 162), "what" for the original "that" (Cook, pp. 161-62), "question" for the original "questions" (Cook, p. 163), and the deletion of a remembrance that Whitmer had a white beard (Cook, p. 162). Likewise,

occasional errors appear in other Moyle transcriptions, making him say, "We didn't have laws in those days," when the nonexistent item is "lawns" (Cook, p. 165); and the standard error of jumping from a word to the same word, accidentally omitting the following italicized words between: ". . . that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, *and that the revelations he received up to the year 1835 were from God*" (Cook, p. 160).

There are two glaring misreadings of manuscripts. The first is Edward Stevenson's 23 December 1877 journal entry after visiting David Whitmer, adding David's report of his mother being shown the plates by the messenger the translators and David had met in 1829 on the move to the family farm. The manuscript clearly reads: "the same person was under the shed . . . and the next morning David's mother saw the person at the shed." "Shed" is clearly formed twice with four distinct letters, but the editor reads the first appearance as "bed" (Cook, p. 13) and builds an erroneous conclusion that the guardian of the plates "was under one of the beds" in the Whitmer home (Cook, p. xii).

A second journal misreading is from James H. Moyle's entry of 28 June 1885, summarizing his Whitmer interview that day, which Cook transcribes as follows: "Mr. Whitmer conversed and r[e]hearsed at me the Papas for 2½ hours" (Cook, p. 158). But Moyle himself, speaking in a 1945 sacrament meeting, read his own copy of this sentence differently: "Mr. Whitmer conversed and showed me the papers for 2½ hours."¹ Moyle's own reading exactly mirrors his handwritten journal, as I have examined it.

At this point there is a larger problem than misreading, for Cook reproduces only the brief day entry from the 1885 Moyle journal without including several pages at the end of this pocket diary, where evidently the same evening the returning law student rounded out the full interview with the same care he had used in questioning the witness. As just indicated, Moyle's 1945 sacrament meeting talk quoted the short entry in the limited space of the day book, but this speech also added the full notes he made in the blank pages at the end of this small volume. Basic research on Moyle also could have located part of the longer interview notes as reproduced in Gordon B. Hinckley's biography.²

Bridges of interpretation may be crossed, though some are precarious, after David Whitmer's words are recovered. Beyond Whitmer's solid and

¹ Gene A. Sessions, ed., *Mormon Democrat: The Religious and Political Memoirs of James Henry Moyle* (Salt Lake City: LDS Historical Department, 1975), 459. I have modernized spelling and punctuation in the quotations in this review.

² Gordon B. Hinckley, *James Henry Moyle* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1951), 149.

unfailing reiteration of the formal Testimony of Three Witnesses, problems begin when the historian probes issues that were less personally important and therefore tended to recede in Whitmer's memory. Historians must also be wary of the tunnel vision induced by using only Whitmer when others are involved. Martin Harris also saw the vision of the angel and plates. But how long after he separated himself from the Prophet, Cowdery, and Whitmer? One should start with Harris, though he mainly left statements of reiteration, not explanation. In two high-quality accounts, Whitmer said that Harris saw the angel and plates "the same day" (Pratt-Smith interview in Cook, p. 40; *Kansas City Journal* interview in Cook, p. 64). Yet Cook seems undecided: "The reports suggest that this [vision] was later that same day or perhaps the following day" (Cook, p. xv, n. 8). Nevertheless, counting Whitmer interviews is too indirect. Joseph Smith was present at the Cowdery-Whitmer vision, and he describes finding Harris immediately afterward and reexperiencing the vision with him (*History of the Church* 1:55). Moreover, in Lucy Mack Smith's history, she relates the late afternoon return of the Three Witnesses, including Harris, all elevated by the intensity of their supernatural experience that day (*History of the Church*, pp. 55-56, footnotes).

Whitmer comments on Joseph Smith's translation procedures, although he admitted he was not "all of the time in the immediate presence of the translator" (1881 letter, Cook, p. 72). He repeatedly said that the Prophet translated through a single seer stone, shutting out light with his hat. Whitmer also insisted that the "interpreters" were originally in the Prophet's possession, but taken from him when he lost the 116 pages, after which Joseph used a single seer stone for translation (1881 letter in Cook, p. 72; Gurley interview in Cook, pp. 156-57). But the scribe for the present Book of Mormon, Oliver Cowdery, who came on the scene after the 116 pages were lost, does not speak of translation only by a single seer stone. Cowdery described sitting "day after day" as Joseph translated through the "interpreters" (*Messenger and Advocate* 1 [Oct. 1834]:14; also JS-H note after 1:75). In fact, Cowdery wrote or influenced an editorial published in the *Evening and Morning Star*, in January 1833, which describes "an unlearned man, [translating] through the aid of a pair of Interpreters, or spectacles."

The above summary shows major differences on some aspects of translation between early Cowdery and late Whitmer, whose detailed descriptions of method postdate 1875. My own memories of World War II convince me that a forty- or fifty-year span does not necessarily block out accurate recall, but long-sustained rationalization is another thing. Cook merely reports Whitmer here, rather than developing his own theory of translation; Whitmer consistently said the characters and translation appeared as on a visual screen and vanished when correctly written (Cook, p. xiii). In his writings and in many interviews, Whitmer claimed that Joseph fell because he introduced changes, including

changes in the revelations. But Joseph's explanation of revelations should parallel translation, and he insisted that he gave divine revelations in human language (D&C 1:24). Is Whitmer right on the outward appearance, and Joseph on the inner process? The words on the visual screen could reflect the translator's language instead of the divine grammar implied in Whitmer's view. In a personal note, Richard L. Jensen concisely reworded my skepticism of David's interpretation of what he at times saw Joseph doing: "Having left the Church, Whitmer developed a theory to explain Joseph's 'fall,' then explained translation in a way that fit his theory."

On some topics, Whitmer was a nonwitness. For example, Cook says Whitmer "categorically denied the restoration of priesthood power through John the Baptist" and higher priesthood messengers (Cook, p. xix), a statement roughly true of the later Whitmer but too summary; Whitmer's views evolved considerably on this subject. Joseph Smith and Cowdery testified of being together when angel-prophets restored the two priesthoods, and their ideas of authority and keys remained remarkably similar. But Whitmer groped for a theory of legitimacy after severing ties with the Church. As Cook notes, the witness later denied the validity of the offices of high priest and First Presidency. Yet in 1847 he, his brothers, and Hiram Page allowed William McLellin to ordain them high priests and reestablish the First Presidency with Whitmer as head. They soon repudiated this action, but this first Whitmerite movement still believed that ancient apostles brought the full priesthood as a necessary condition for the Restored Church. Hiram Page officially spoke for Whitmer and his group in explaining their modified position:

In the beginning we find the first ordinations were by Peter, James, and John. They ordained Joseph and Oliver. To what priesthood were they ordained? The answer must be to the holy priesthood or the office of an elder or an apostle, which is an additional grace added to the office of an elder. These offices Oliver received from those holy messengers before the 6th of April, 1830.³

David Whitmer evidently respected Cowdery's testimony of priesthood restoration for some time, since David H. Cannon vividly remembered Whitmer's comment on the subject while the two stood together at Oliver Cowdery's gravesite a few blocks from the Whitmer home. *David Whitmer Interviews* includes only a bare summary Cannon made in one of several recorded talks (Charles Walker, Journal, corrected date 1894, Cook, p. 219). But Cook is wide of the mark in guessing that David Cannon came to Richmond with his brother Angus in 1888. In fact, published family history dates the visit as 1861, based on personal

³ Hiram Page, Letter to "Brother Wm.," March 4, 1848, 2d part, RLDS Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

recollections, the best of which is a holograph autobiography dated 13 March 1917. Few historians put much faith in exact quotations remembered after a half-century, but it does not strain credulity to think that Cannon remembered the topic and David Whitmer's emphatic gesture. As Whitmer recreated Cowdery's deathbed scene, "this tall, greyheaded man went through the exhibition of what Oliver had done":

And in describing Oliver's action when bearing his testimony, said to the people in his room, placing his hands like this upon his head, saying "I know the gospel to be true, and upon this head has Peter, James and John laid their hands and conferred the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood."⁴

Historians must rely on memory but do so cautiously, often assuming that embellishments are proportional to the number of years elapsed from the event. But the Whitmer corpus illustrates the need for more sophisticated judgments, adding factors of the vividness of the first impression, the retentive capability of many, refreshing memory through early writing or oral repetition, the known integrity of the individual, etc. An example of all these elements is President Joseph F. Smith's long memorandum of a 1918 discourse (Cook, pp. 48-51) postdating his in-depth 1878 diary (Cook, pp. 24-34) by some forty years. This 1918 recollection makes some minor mistakes in detail, using the 1878 diary as a base for comparison. Yet Joseph F. Smith recalls most details with accuracy, very conservatively adding some particulars that were undoubtedly part of the original experience. Although historiography lectures assure students that the psyche will naturally invent detail, the opposite is true here—Smith's retelling is explicit but in total gives less description than his original journal. A quality recollection needs testing but should not face an unreasonable burden of proof.

The impact of an overwhelming event may not fade with time, depending on the strength of the original impression and the frequency of honest rehearsal. David Whitmer told many details of the 1829 angelic revelation with clarity and consistency until his death nearly sixty years later. Perhaps the last survivor of those interviewing David Whitmer was James H. Moyle, lawyer-churchman-public servant who was physically and intellectually vigorous until his death. As mentioned, he interrogated Whitmer in 1885 and, in the subsequent sixty years, reviewed his visit in over a dozen published accounts. Moyle's full interview, recorded in his 1885 diary, has appeared in print only once, in a verbally smoothed-out version which he read in a 1945 sacrament meeting.⁵ This full 1885 diary outlines Moyle's line of questioning and

⁴ David H. Cannon, *Autobiography*, 13 March 1921, photocopy of holograph in my possession, courtesy of David's son, Earl Cannon, in 1968.

⁵ Sessions, *Mormon Democrat*, pp. 459-61.

summarizes a half-dozen subjects important to the aged but emphatic Whitmer. Moyle's 1945 sacrament meeting talk only occasionally shifts detail, but his memory rounds out the Whitmer dialogue within accurate areas, measured by the 1885 journal. Furthermore, a dozen of Moyle's later accounts do not evolve into exaggerated versions. Cook prints three of them (with some problems with dates) from the last two decades of Moyle's life, including a 1930 general conference address as mission president. All of Moyle's later recollections dovetail with the 1885 journal, including Gordon B. Hinckley's printing of a 1908 stake conference talk.⁶ In short, Moyle was consistent in giving the same physical descriptions, motivations, and conversational thrusts through six decades of retelling his interview.

David Whitmer Interviews is a substantial first step in accessing voluminous materials from this key participant in Mormon origins. Though incomplete, the book publishes the larger part of what came to be a major oral history project of the late nineteenth century, with abundant recollections generated afterward. These materials are uneven, since most interviewers were amateurs, though there are segments of merit. This is raw religious history, probing what can neither be explained fully nor explained away. In interpreting these challenging materials, it is hoped that historians will see the great weight of correlations as against relatively minor conflicts of memory and reporting. Behind all evidential rules is the single consideration of judgment in sources. The Whitmer materials contain test cases of reliable information recovered from late memoirs when the source links were careful and trustworthy. This lesson should not be lost in studying other interfacing documents on religious origins, whether the accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision or the Four Gospels.

RICHARD LLOYD ANDERSON is a Professor of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University, where he teaches a class on the Book of Mormon witnesses. He authored *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981).

Will Bagley, ed. *Frontiersman: Abner Blackburn's Narrative*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992; xxxi, 309 pp.; photographs, maps, appendices, index, \$27.50.

Reviewed by Andrea Gayle Radke and Fred R. Gowans

⁶ Hinckley, *James Henry Moyle*, 365-69, not in Cook's collection.

In the 1840s, the era of the greatest expansion of the Trans-Mississippi West, certain colorful individuals truly captured the transformative spirit of Manifest Destiny. Abner Blackburn not only witnessed but participated firsthand in the end of the fur trade era, the beginnings of mass westward movement, the Mexican War, Indian conflict on the frontier, Mormon settlement in the Great Basin, and the gold rushes in California and Nevada.

Will Bagley has successfully edited, researched, and indexed this narrative through a complicated manuscript process. Bagley's chief sources were a typescript and a photocopy of a photostat of Blackburn's handwritten memoirs, both at the Nevada Historical Society, and made verifications and corrections based upon other sources. The original manuscript is apparently no longer extant; but part of it, which Bagley includes, is "Lou Devon's Narrative," Blackburn's version of a tale by a young French Canadian trapper.

Abner's story begins when the Blackburn family joined the Mormon Church in Richland County, Ohio, in the 1830s. Blackburn followed his parents into Missouri, where they met much conflict. Bagley attributes this conflict to slavery, religious persecutions, and the violent fervor surrounding the Danites, who preached that the evil Gentiles would be destroyed by a joint uprising of Mormons and Indians. (Blackburn's parents left the Church for a while because of this disagreeable "doctrine.") Violence ensued, and Blackburn gives an excellent description of the Haun's Mill massacre, also explaining why the eighteen fatalities were put in a well instead of buried. The ground was frozen (p. 17).

Following the Mormons' expulsion from Nauvoo, Abner Blackburn worked first as a teamster for Brigham Young in Iowa and then, at age twenty-one, joined the Mormon Battalion. While he does not include certain historical events and details of the battalion that are included in other sources, his candid portrayal of the Mormon soldiers as hard-drinking, demoralized, and poorly led again alters the traditional perception of a proud, orderly, and dutiful group. Blackburn finally reached Salt Lake City as a member of the sick detachment that branched off from the battalion and wintered at Pueblo, Colorado. He immediately continued on to California from Salt Lake City with Captain James Brown to procure payment for the discharged battalion veterans. From 1848 to 1850, Blackburn made a trip back to Missouri and repeated trips to California to participate, probably against the will of the Church leaders, in the California gold rush.

Blackburn's life was filled with incident, much of it poignant, most of it fascinating. He narrowly escaped during Indian skirmishes along the California Trail. He was probably the first to discover gold in Nevada although, humble and unassuming, he never clamored for a place in history. He was excommunicated in either 1849 or 1851 for obscure causes; but he was probably associated with the "indecent" practice by himself and other battalion veterans of riding on a horse with a girl sitting

in front. He moved at once to California, and there learned that his father had been killed by Klamath Indians in Oregon. Here the narrative breaks off. Bagley pieces together the rest of Blackburn's life in California through letters, financial and legal documents, family legends, oral histories, and obituaries.

A major contribution of this reminiscence is Bagley's effort to place it in the context of the history of the Trans-Mississippi West. He provides each chapter with an introduction explaining the historical context. The notes, which he requests the reader to ignore altogether, are remarkably detailed: bibliographic references, dates, statistical clarifications, and biographical sketches of even the most briefly mentioned individuals. He uses other studies and journals to compare and validate Blackburn's information—for example, journals of other battalion members, and much of *Frontiersman's* success stems from Bagley's ability to integrate Blackburn's experiences within the context of Mormon history and Western expansion.

The division of information is not always helpful. Some background information is in each chapter introduction and some in the notes. For example, in the introduction to Chapter 6, Bagley introduces Lansford W. Hastings; the Donner-Reed Party was attempting to follow his cut-off in 1846 when they fell into disaster. In a footnote twenty pages later, however, Bagley mentions the material connection between Hastings and the Donner-Reed Party. They had attempted to follow Hastings's "worthless book called an *Emigrant's Guide*" (p. 114). If Bagley had used more of this type of information in each chapter introduction, the story would have achieved greater continuity.

Bagley provides three maps (the Great Plains crossings, Great Basin crossings, and Central California) which identify geographical locations, routes, trails, and Indians sites. However, given Blackburn's mobility, perhaps smaller, topic-specific, and more numerous maps would have made for easier reference.

These minor criticisms aside, however, Bagley is brilliantly successful in his presentation of Abner Blackburn's reminiscences. Dale Morgan once commented that no other Mormon journal had "the élan and the humor of Abner's story. It [is] just what Mormon literature needs by way of antidote to all the righteous solemnity" (p. 4). Bagley himself stated appropriately that "although ultimately [Blackburn] was unable to accept the spiritual and temporal claims of the Mormon church, his involvement gave him an insider's sympathy" and he wrote with a "singular objectivity, humor, and skepticism, but without the typical zealot sanctimoniousness or apostate bitterness" (p. 4). While indubitably a worthy historical and autobiographical contribution, Blackburn's story reads like a mesmerizing campfire tale. Despite its sometimes almost unbelievable events, Bagley found Blackburn a reliable narrator: "I often learned that he was in fact telling—and sometimes understating—the unvarnished truth." Candid and marked by dry wit, Blackburn's vivid anecdotes range

from ventures into wine cellars and disagreements with Brigham Young to decapitating sixty dead Indians for a medical investigation, a job he performed, like so many other duties, without complaint or ceremony.

Not only does Blackburn's narrative stand out among the chronicles of Western adventures, but Bagley has proven his ability to research meticulously, provide well-founded interpretations, and present candid and objective syntheses of Mormon and western history. The University of Utah Press is to be complimented for an excellent contribution to the field of Western American history.

ANDREA GAYLE RADKE is completing a master's degree in Western American History at BYU, with an emphasis on the fur trade of the North and Central Rockies. FRED R. GOWANS has written several books and articles on the American West. He is director of the Native American Studies program at BYU and has served as a consultant for many private, state, and federal agencies.



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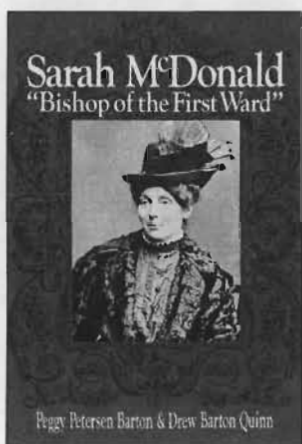
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