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### Editor's Introduction: Historical Concreteness, or Speculative Abstraction?

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**Title** Editor's Introduction: Historical Concreteness, or Speculative Abstraction?

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**Abstract** Introduction to the current issue, including editor's picks. Peterson publishes his remarks given at a debate organized under the auspices of the Society of Evangelical Philosophers. Basically, he believes that the very choice of "theology" as a focus of the debate grants an importance to that particular area of intellectual activity that Latter-day Saints and early Christians do not share with more sophisticated critics. Organizations attempting a "ministry of reconciliation" instead appear to attack.

## Editor's Introduction

### HISTORICAL CONCRETENESS, OR SPECULATIVE ABSTRACTION?

The remarks below were originally presented on 17 November 2001 at a debate organized under the auspices of the Society of Evangelical Philosophers, who were gathered in Denver, Colorado, in conjunction with the joint annual national meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature (the AAR/SBL). On the evangelical side were Francis J. Beckwith (Trinity International University), Paul Copan (Ravi Zacharias International Ministries and Trinity International University), William Lane Craig (Talbot School of Theology, Biola University), Carl Mosser (University of St. Andrews), and Paul Owen (Montreat College). The Latter-day Saint participants were David L. Paulsen, Daniel C. Peterson, and Stephen D. Ricks (Brigham Young University), Blake T. Ostler (Salt Lake City), and Hollis T. Johnson (Indiana University). The moderator of the debate was Richard J. Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary, of Pasadena, California. The debate had been timed to coincide with the release of a new volume entitled *The New Mormon Challenge: Responding to the Latest Defenses of a Fast-Growing Movement*.<sup>1</sup> However, the book had not actually appeared by the time of the meeting.

The major point of my remarks was to indicate that, in my opinion, the very choice of "theology" as a focus of debate grants to that

1. Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen, eds., *The New Mormon Challenge: Responding to the Latest Defenses of a Fast-Growing Movement* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002).

particular area of intellectual activity an importance that it does not and should not enjoy among Latter-day Saints, and that it did not enjoy among early Christians, and that doing so, moreover, both distorts the biblical message and unduly privileges the position of some of our more sophisticated critics.

I have made only slight modifications for publication here, and have sought to retain the deliberately informal character of that oral presentation.



Carl Mosser's chapter in *The New Mormon Challenge* remarks, not unfairly, that "no Latter-day Saints have yet distinguished themselves as world-class biblical scholars, philosophers, or theologians."<sup>2</sup> One is tempted to reply that, for a relatively small movement that did not reach the million-member mark until 1953—preoccupied for its first century with fleeing persecution, establishing settlements throughout the West, and digging irrigation canals—we are not doing too badly. Or that, compared to the original Christian movement at A.D. 171, we have an acceptable number of tenured professors.

But there is a more fundamental reason, and it needs to be stated here.

I love philosophy. But philosophy is not a primary mode of religious reflection for Latter-day Saints. Nor is systematic theology. Not even a secondary mode. Nor a tertiary one.

We tell stories. "Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste brought death into the world."<sup>3</sup> Of Moses and the children of Israel and the migration of a small group of Hebrews to the New World. Of the incarnation and atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. Of the visit of Jesus Christ to a shattered but expectant people in the Americas. Of the appearance of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith. Of the pioneers, the modern Camp of

2. Carl Mosser, "And the Saints Go Marching On: The New Mormon Challenge for World Missions, Apologetics, and Theology," in *The New Mormon Challenge*, 84.

3. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, lines 1–3.

Israel under a Latter-day Moses, fleeing persecution and colonizing the Great Basin.

And at the first of each month, fasting—as well as many times in between—we tell one another of our own experiences with the grace of God and our faith in Jesus Christ.

Our chief intellectual accomplishments, as a religious culture, have come in the writing of history—journals, family and local histories, academic historiography.

The Bible, for us, is not a poorly organized systematic theology. It is a book of stories, a collection of testimonies.

There is a tangible quality to the witness of the Bible that is utterly different from the ontological speculations of the Hellenes and their imitators among the Christians. The authors of the New Testament did not offer syllogisms and metaphysics. They testified of “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life” (1 John 1:1).

The first few pages of the *Clementine Recognitions*, an early third-century Christian text, offer us a glimpse of a clash between Hellenized philosophical culture and a Christian witness that had not yet succumbed to its attractions. The first-person narrator, who identifies himself as Clement of Rome, tells of his youthful anxiety about the immortality of the human soul and his desperate search for proof of it. Clement joined the philosophical schools of his native city, but he was very disappointed and depressed to find no truly convincing arguments and to see that his teachers and fellow students were more interested in demonstrating their cleverness than in attaining to the truth. So desperate did he become that he even, for a time, considered taking up spiritualism.

But then rumors began to reach Rome of a great and powerful worker of miracles in the distant land of Palestine. And one day, while he was walking in the city, Clement encountered a Jewish Christian named Barnabas, who was proclaiming the coming of Christ to

the passersby. "When I heard these things," recalls Clement, "I began, with the rest of the multitude, to follow him, and to hear what he had to say. Truly I perceived that there was nothing of dialectic artifice in the man, but that he expounded with simplicity, and without any craft of speech, such things as he had heard from the Son of God, or had seen. For he did not confirm his assertions by the force of arguments, but produced, from the people who stood round about him, many witnesses of the sayings and marvels which he related."

Impressed, a number of those in the crowd began to give credence to what Barnabas and his fellow witnesses related. But then a group of philosophically minded onlookers challenged Barnabas. They "began to laugh at the man, and to flout him, and to throw out for him the grappling-hooks of syllogisms, like strong arms." They asked him, Why do tiny gnats have six legs and a pair of wings, while the much larger elephant has only four legs and no wings at all? But Barnabas declined to enter into their frivolous objections. "We have it in charge," he said, "to declare to you the words and the wondrous works of Him who hath sent us, and to confirm the truth of what we speak, not by artfully devised arguments, but by witnesses produced from amongst yourselves."<sup>4</sup>

I find that same spirit or sensibility in the modern Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Here is Hyrum Smith, one of the Eight Witnesses to the Book of Mormon, writing in December 1839 of his recent sufferings in Missouri, where he had come face to face with the prospect of martyrdom: "I had been abused and thrust into a dungeon . . . on account of my faith. . . . However, I thank God that I felt a determination to die, rather than deny the things which my eyes had seen, which my hands had handled, and which I had borne testimony to, wherever my lot had been cast; and I can assure my

4. The account occurs at *Clementine Recognitions* 1.1-9. Hugh Nibley summarizes it in *The World and the Prophets*, ed. John W. Welch, Gary P. Gillum, and Don E. Norton (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1987), 34-38. I use the translation of Thomas Smith, as featured in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (1885; reprint, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994), 8:77-79.

beloved brethren that I was enabled to bear as strong a testimony, when nothing but death presented itself, as ever I did in my life.”<sup>5</sup> Four and a half years later, Hyrum Smith, with his brother Joseph, did go willingly to his death as a martyr, a witness. (The Greek word *martyros*, of course, means “witness.”)

And what do we find in the Bible? Mark Smith’s new book, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, surveys the traits of deities in both Ugaritic and Israelite texts and identifies important commonalities:

1. Strength
2. Body and gender
3. Holiness
4. Immortality.<sup>6</sup>

Latter-day Saints affirm all of these attributes. We are, however, uncomfortable with attributes that we do *not* see clearly taught in the Bible or delivered via modern revelation. Robert Wilken remarks that it was only with the second-century apologists, who “began to offer a reasoned and philosophical presentation of Christianity to pagan intellectuals,” that Christian thinkers began to claim that

they worshipped the same God honored by the Greeks and Romans, in other words, the deity adored by other reasonable men and women. Indeed, Christians adopted precisely the same language to describe God as did pagan intellectuals. The Christian apologist Theophilus of Antioch described God as “ineffable . . . inexpressible . . . uncontainable . . . incomprehensible . . . inconceivable . . . incomparable . . . unteachable . . . immutable . . . inexpressible . . . without beginning because he was uncreated, immutable because he is immortal.” . . . This view, that God was an immaterial, timeless, and impassible divine being, who is known through the mind alone, became a

5. Cited at Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 148.

6. Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism: Israel’s Polytheistic Background and the Ugaritic Texts* (New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 2001), 83–102.

keystone of Christian apologetics, for it served to establish a decisive link to the Greek spiritual and intellectual tradition.<sup>7</sup>

That link has no particular appeal for us.<sup>8</sup>

The great church fathers Clement and Origen fought against “persistent anthropomorphic tendencies in early Christianity.”<sup>9</sup> We see no cause to join them.

We do not need God to be an *actus purus*, with all the negative baggage that carries for his role as an object of petitionary prayer. (“The God of the philosophers,” Alfred North Whitehead once observed, “is not available for religious purposes.”)<sup>10</sup>

We are not obliged to insist on the absolute transcendence of a God of whom Paul says that we all—including the apostle’s unregenerate, pagan, Athenian audience—are of his *genos* (Acts 17:28–29), his “family,” his “genus.” God, in the view of the Latter-day Saints, is not *ganz anders*.

We do not need to construct *ad hoc* explanations—periodic materializations, for example—for the theophanies recorded in such plainly anthropomorphic detail throughout the Bible. We can take the “image” and “likeness” of Genesis 1 at face value.

This delivers us from some knotty problems. For example: Marcel Sarot refers to the dilemma that faced St. Thomas Aquinas: “The denial of emotion in God seems to go against the witness of Scripture, whereas the affirmation of emotion in God seems to be incompatible with the divine incorporeality.”<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, observes Professor Sarot, Thomas opted for a denial of divine emotion.

7. Robert L. Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 151.

8. Nor, I hope and believe, for a small but growing number of Protestant theologians. A sparkling recent example of what I regard as a healthy trend is Clark H. Pinnock, *Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God’s Openness* (London: Paternoster, 2001).

9. Morris S. Seale, *Muslim Theology: A Study of Origins with Reference to the Church Fathers* (London: Luzac, 1964), 8–9.

10. Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Macmillan, 1927), 249.

11. Marcel Sarot, “God, Emotion, and Corporeality,” *The Thomist* 58/1 (1994): 77.



Sarot agrees, contending that the concept of bodiless emotion is meaningless. For this reason, he says, advocates of divine emotion must accept an embodied deity—or else, if they are unwilling to do so, they must forego divine emotion: “without corporeality, no emotion.”<sup>12</sup> Since, for Sarot, this disjunction constitutes a devastating *reductio ad absurdum*, the choice is obvious beyond dispute: Because God obviously has no body, he just as obviously cannot have emotions. Nicholas Wolterstorff and Alfred Freddoso have taken similar positions.<sup>13</sup>

Latter-day Saints accept the Bible’s witness to both God’s form and God’s emotions.

We accept, indeed devoutly affirm, the oneness, the inexpressibly rich unity, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We could even, I suppose, employ the words *Trinity* and *trinitarianism*—as Elder James E. Talmage’s hugely influential 1899 work on *The Articles of Faith* in fact does—though we typically do not.<sup>14</sup> The Bible *testifies* to this important truth; and so, even more explicitly, do the peculiarly Latter-day Saint scriptures. We do *not* (borrowing a description of polytheism that Paul Owen cites) “postulate different gods to account for different kinds of events.”<sup>15</sup> We simply feel no need to endorse the doctrine of ontological unity worked out, most prominently, at Nicea.

Latter-day Saints know nothing of an ontological “substance” to “divide”; we resolutely decline to “confound” the “persons.” We affirm that the Father and the Son are distinct personages of flesh and bone. The preincarnate Jesus was revealed to ancient Israel as the Yahweh of

12. *Ibid.*, 82. See his entire article, 61–92, for a very serious argument against unembodied passibility.

13. For a somewhat lengthier treatment of this issue, see now Daniel C. Peterson, “On the Motif of the Weeping God in Moses 7,” in *Revelation, Reason, and Faith: Essays in Honor of Truman G. Madsen*, ed. Donald W. Parry, Daniel C. Peterson, and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2002), 285–317.

14. For example, the second chapter of *The Articles of Faith* is entitled “God and the Holy Trinity.” Elder Talmage’s work has been published in numerous editions.

15. Paul Owen, “Monotheism, Mormonism, and the New Testament Witness,” in *The New Mormon Challenge*, 278.

the Hebrew Bible. Many biblical scholars now recognize that El (or El Elyon, “the Highest”) and Yahweh were originally distinct.<sup>16</sup> Even such mainstream reference works as the *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* and the *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (sponsored by the SBL) speak of the original distinction between Yahweh and El. It is striking that, in the New Testament, Jesus is “the Son of the Highest” (as, for example, at Luke 1:32).

The question is the nature of the needed oneness. Even in the famous *Shema* of Deuteronomy 6:4, the matter is unclear.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, in view of “the post-biblical importance of monotheism, the relative rarity of its expression in the Bible is quite striking.”<sup>18</sup> Was early Israel monotheistic in the sense under discussion here? Probably not.<sup>19</sup> Exodus 15:11 (“Who is like unto thee, O Lord [Yahweh], among the gods?”) seems to entail the existence of other gods, as do Psalm 82 and many other passages.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, did even the indisputably polytheistic Ugaritic pantheon exhibit a real oneness? Mark Smith argues convincingly that it did, through familial relationships and the concept of the divine council.<sup>21</sup> And the Mesopotamian pantheon may have been conceived almost as an ontological monotheism.<sup>22</sup>

Early biblical monotheism, if we choose to use the term, includes a divine council of gods.<sup>23</sup> It is only just prior to the exile that explicit monotheistic rhetoric in something like the modern sense appears in Israel.<sup>24</sup> (Later, as we all know, the seventy divine sons of El and Asherah become, in Jewish tradition, the angels of the seventy na-

16. See, for example, Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 140–47.

17. See *ibid.*, 153.

18. *Ibid.*, 154.

19. See *ibid.*, 11, 91, 149.

20. On this, see Daniel C. Peterson, “‘Ye are Gods’: Psalm 82 and John 10 as Witnesses to the Divine Nature of Humankind,” in *The Disciple as Scholar: Essays on Scripture and the Ancient World in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks, Donald W. Parry, and Andrew H. Hedges (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2000), 471–594.

21. Smith, *Origins of Biblical Monotheism*, 8, 52–55, 66, 78–79.

22. See *ibid.*, 95.

23. See *ibid.*, 149–50, 151, 155.

24. See *ibid.*, 151, 154, 163.

tions.)<sup>25</sup> *Elohim*, of course, is plural in form. And, sometimes, it is clearly plural in meaning. But even when it refers to a single divine person, it implies plurality.

Elohim includes all gods; the fulness of deity is comprehended in him. Thus the word is equivalent to “deity” or “Godhead.” In this sense it is used in the priestly account of Creation: “Then Elohim said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness’” (Gen. 1:26). The passage presupposes the conception of the heavenly council . . . ruled over by God. . . . Despite this court imagery, the priestly view is clearly monotheistic, for Elohim embraces the divine plurality in unity, and elsewhere in the priestly account [though not here] the divine name is accompanied by verbs in the singular.<sup>26</sup>

While oneness is demanded by the witness of the scriptures, the Nicene formulation is *not*. (Social trinitarianism seems a much more promising approach to many of us.) “To put it simply,” Professor Owen writes, “Christians believe that God is one, whereas the Latter-day Saints believe that God is more than one.”<sup>27</sup> But that distinction is far too simple. I can accept it no more easily than I can accept the implied dichotomy between “Christians” and “Latter-day Saints.”

We affirm that God is the creator. In reading *The New Mormon Challenge*, I have seen more clearly why *creatio ex nihilo* matters so much to our critics. I have still seen no reason to believe it.

He is, however, the sovereign of the universe.

From the very start, we have affirmed the deity of Jesus Christ. The title page of the Book of Mormon declares that its purpose is “the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God.” “Behold,” the Nephite king Benjamin told his people in the late second century before Christ, “the time cometh, and is not

25. See *ibid.*, 55, 135.

26. “God, names of,” in *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George A. Buttrick et al. (New York: Abingdon, 1962), 2:413.

27. Owen, “Monotheism, Mormonism, and the New Testament Witness,” 272.

far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay. . . . And . . . there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent” (Mosiah 3:5, 17).

The history of philosophy and philosophical theology is strewn with apodictic reasoning, with “demonstrative” arguments—what the Arab scholastics called *burhaan*—that no longer move us, that hold only antiquarian interest. Knowing this, William James remarked that

as a matter of history [philosophy] fails to prove its pretension to be “objectively” convincing. . . . It does not banish differences; it founds schools and sects just as feeling does. The logical reason of man operates, in short, in this field of divinity exactly as it has always operated in love, or in patriotism, or in politics, or in any other of the wider affairs of life, in which our passions or our mystical intuitions fix our beliefs beforehand. It finds arguments for our conviction, for indeed it *has* to find them. It amplifies and defines our faith, and dignifies it and lends it words and plausibility. It hardly ever engenders it; it cannot now secure it.<sup>28</sup>

Joseph Smith said that a man could learn more. “Could you gaze into heaven for five minutes,” he said, “you would know more than you would by reading all that was ever written on the subject.”<sup>29</sup>

Jacques Maritain tells a story about St. Thomas Aquinas, greatest of all systematic theologians: “One day, December 6, 1273, while he was celebrating Mass in the chapel of Saint Nicholas, a great change came over him. From that moment he ceased writing and dictating.”

28. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 344–45.

29. Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 324.

When his companion, Reginald of Piperno, complained that there remained much work to be done, Thomas replied, “I can do no more.” Still the other man insisted. “Reginald,” Thomas answered yet again, “I can do no more; such things have been revealed to me that all that I have written seems to me so much straw.” He died a few months later.<sup>30</sup>

This is the Thomas Aquinas from whom my youngest son takes his middle name.

### Postscript: Minirec

“Newspeak was the official language of Oceania.”<sup>31</sup>

Just hours before press time, the inimitable Robert Durocher, of southern California, called my attention to the fall 2002 newsletter of an operation in Mission Viejo, California, that calls itself “Concerned Christians & Former Mormons: A Ministry of Reconciliation.” The contents of this newsletter seem to me relevant to issues raised by David Paulsen in his response to *The New Mormon Challenge*, which is published in the present issue of the *Review*, pp. 99–111: What kind of “respectful dialogue” can we realistically expect to have with our evangelical and fundamentalist fellow Christians? How is *The New Mormon Challenge* being used by them, and what, perhaps, was its real intent? The answers suggested by the newsletter in question are not encouraging.

On the front page of the newsletter, a large headline reads: “The New Mormon Challenge: Conference on Cults and New Religions—January 24–25, 2003.” A relatively lengthy article follows, telling of a conference to be held on those dates at Biola University, in La Mirada, California, under the joint sponsorship of Biola, Concerned Christians & Former Mormons (CCFM), Standing Together, and another organization called Evangelical Ministries to New Religions (EMNR).

30. Jacques Maritain, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Joseph W. Evans and Peter O’Reilly (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1958), 54, 56.

31. George Orwell, “The Principles of Newspeak,” was written in 1948 and is often included as an appendix to *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

The keynote speaker of the conference will be the professional anti-Mormon Sandra Tanner of the Utah Lighthouse Ministry in Salt Lake City. Three other main speakers are highlighted: Luke Wilson, of the Institute for Religious Research (formerly Gospel Truths Ministries) in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the publisher of various books and newsletters critical of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and, most recently, producer of a slick and slickly marketed video attacking the Book of Abraham, will also address the group. So, too, will Craig Blomberg, of Denver Seminary. Professor Blomberg is the coauthor (with Stephen Robinson) of *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation*<sup>32</sup> and a contributor to *The New Mormon Challenge*.<sup>33</sup> (CCFM offers *The New Mormon Challenge* for a substantially discounted price of \$15.00, reduced from the normal retail price of \$21.99.) The fourth principal speaker, yet to be confirmed and publicly announced at the time the newsletter was published, is slated to speak on “Polygamy in Utah Today.”

CCFM plans to host a (free!) conference-luncheon for Protestant pastors on the first day of the meeting at the beautiful Atrium Hotel near the John Wayne Airport in Orange County. Pastor Craig Johnson, a participant in several recent meetings between Protestants and Latter-day Saints, leader of a Utah-based ministry titled “Standing Together,” will open the proceedings, whose “focus will be on how wide IS the divide!” “Pastors,” says the newsletter, “need to be better informed as well as to know where to find help in teaching their people the difference between Mormonism and Christianity. . . . [W]e want them to be aware of the threat of Mormonism to the Christian body and the tools that are available to them.” Since CCFM wants to issue personal invitations to as many as it can, the newsletter asks its readers to send in their pastors’ addresses.

32. Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997).

33. See the responses by Benjamin I. Huff and Kent P. Jackson to Professor Blomberg’s *New Mormon Challenge* essay on pp. 113–37 of the present issue of the *FARMS Review of Books*.

A prominent feature of the luncheon will be a panel discussion, devoted to “the unique approaches different ministries take in sharing Christ with the LDS people.” Another discussion, to be held later on the same day, will bring a panel of anti-Mormon ministries together to update those in the audience on the latest tools to “enable the Christian to be more effective” in persuading Latter-day Saints to abandon the Church of Jesus Christ. Donna Morley, for example, has evidently written a book entitled *A Christian Woman’s Guide to Understanding Mormonism*, which is designed to help housewives witness to Latter-day Saint missionaries knocking at their doors. Mrs. Morley will take part in the program. Jim and Judy Robertson, of Concerned Christians, in Mesa, Arizona, will also participate in the discussion.<sup>34</sup> Judy Robertson has recently published an anti-Mormon book for children, entitled *Understanding My Mormon Friend*.

It will be noted that, among all the activities of the two-day conference cosponsored by this “Ministry of Reconciliation,” not a single Latter-day Saint appears on the program. The clear posture is one of attack. It is also one of distortion. Additionally, on the second page of the newsletter, a brief article entitled “The Salt Lake Tribune” falsely states that “the independent morning newspaper has been bought by the church-owned Deseret News,” and observes, again falsely, that “the LDS Church now owns both daily newspapers.” The “Ministry of Reconciliation” loses no time in underlining the conclusion that its readers are to draw from the disinformation with which they’ve just been presented:

When people refer to Utah as being a different country, you can understand why when things like this take place. When the major religion controls the media as well as strong political influence it would seem to us that it is not so much another

34. Extraordinarily revealing glimpses into the workings and methods of the Robertsons’ organization can be found on the Web at [www.shields-research.org/Critics/CCoM.htm](http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/CCoM.htm) as of October 2002. That they are still engaged in the same problematic kind of behavior is evident from a telephone call that I received this very morning, by sheer coincidence, from a trusted acquaintance who teaches in Mesa, Arizona.

country as it is a “theocracy.” The way this buyout was manipulated again shows the power of the LDS Church.

In the wake of the events of September 11, massive news coverage of the Taliban theocracy in Afghanistan—building tensions in the Near East—and the similar, factually distorted depictions of Utah as a foreign theocracy scarcely seem conducive to “respectful dialogue.” Nor does the article on page three of the newsletter, the headline of which implores Latter-day Saints, “Why Not Just Be Honest?”

In George Orwell’s famous dystopia *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the invented language called Newspeak enforces the Party line by making clear thought impossible. Seemingly straightforward concepts are turned on their heads and twisted into their direct opposites: “War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength.”<sup>35</sup> The war department is the Ministry of Peace, or Minipax. The government office responsible for rationing is the Ministry of Plenty, or Miniplenty. The propaganda bureau is the Ministry of Truth, generally known as Minitrue. The secret police are headquartered at the Ministry of Love, called Miniluv:<sup>36</sup>

The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one. There were no windows in it at all. Winston had never been inside the Ministry of Love, nor within half a kilometer of it. It was a place impossible to enter except on official business, and then only by penetrating through a maze of barbed-wire entanglements, steel doors, and hidden machine-gun nests. Even the streets leading up to its outer barriers were roamed by gorilla-faced guards in black uniforms, armed with jointed truncheons. . . . One did not know what happened inside the Ministry of Love, but it was possible to guess: tortures, drugs, delicate instruments that registered your nervous reactions, gradual wearing-down by sleeplessness and solitude and persistent questioning.<sup>37</sup>

35. George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1949), 5.

36. See *ibid.*, 6.

37. *Ibid.*, 6, 167–68.



One of the most famous features of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the “two-minute hate,” a daily telescreen special in which various elements of “crimethink” are depicted by means of a series of horrific images and sounds, at which viewers are expected, even required, to hiss and curse. But there is also “hate week,” a regular week in which all Oceanian citizens attend rallies and parades designed to inflame their hostility toward enemies of the Party and to heighten their efforts in the perpetual warfare conducted against those enemies by the rulers of Oceania.

We don’t live in Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Direct frontal assault is not “reconciliation.”

### Editor’s Picks

And now, following an ancient and venerable precedent established several years ago, I announce the book recommendations for this issue of the *Review*. These recommendations have been established by the scientific procedure of looking at the books in question, reading the relevant reviews, and speaking with my various coeditors. The decision regarding what to recommend and what not to recommend has been, and typically is, easy and unanimous. The apparently precise ratings, however, are much more subjective, and they might have been different, say, had Brigham Young University’s football team enjoyed a better season this year. As in previous issues, the ratings are expressed according to the following scale:

- \*\*\*\* Outstanding, a seminal work of the kind that appears only rarely.
- \*\*\* Enthusiastically recommended.
- \*\* Warmly recommended.
- \* Recommended.

We commend to readers of this issue of the *Review* the following books:

- \*\*\* John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne, eds., *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon: The FARMS Updates of the 1990s*

- \*\* George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet*
- \*\* Richard R. Hopkins, *Biblical Mormonism: Responding to Evangelical Criticism of LDS Theology*
- \*\* Hugh W. Pinnock, *Finding Biblical Hebrew and Other Ancient Literary Forms in the Book of Mormon*
- \* K. Douglas Bassett, comp., *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Insights from Prophets, Church Leaders, and Scholars*
- \* Kenneth Lutes and Lyndell Lutes, *Words of Christ Restored for the Last Days*

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