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INVOLVING READERS THE LATTER-DAY SAINT ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE



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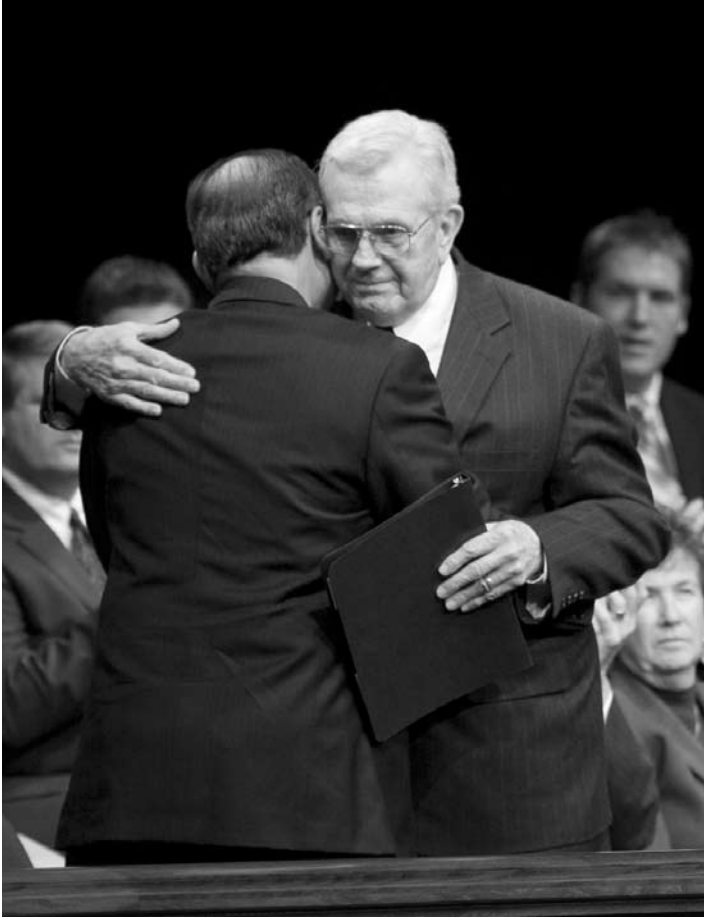
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Dr. Alwi Shihab, Presidential Advisor and Special Envoy to the Middle East, and Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, meet in a gesture of their friendship and mutual respect. Brigham Young University Marriott Center, October 10, 2006. Courtesy Mark Philbrick and Brigham Young University.

Building Bridges of Understanding

The Church and the World of Islam

Introduction of Dr. Alwi Shihab

Boyd K. Packer

President Boyd K. Packer, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, gave this introduction of Dr. Alwi Shihab prior to Dr. Shihab's forum address given at Brigham Young University on October 10, 2006.

Dr. Alwi Abdurrahman Shihab was born in 1946 in Sulawesi, Indonesia. He and his wife, Ashraf, who is here on the stand today, are the parents of three children. Their son, Sammy, is here. He is eleven years old.

Dr. Shihab's significant governmental experience includes service in Indonesia's Parliament, as Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs (equivalent to our U.S. Secretary of State), and as a key leader of Indonesia's emergence from dictatorship to democracy.

Dr. Shihab is now Presidential Advisor and Special Envoy to the Middle East. This places him squarely in a region amid all the problems and struggles of the world.

Dr. Shihab is exceptionally accomplished. He holds five degrees (including two PhDs and a post-doctorate degree) from five universities in Egypt and the United States. He has taught or been a professor at seven universities in Indonesia and the United States. The first time I met him, he was a professor of Islamic Studies at Harvard University.

He is a world authority on Islamic law and has published widely on Islam and inter-religious harmony, including several books. A recent book was translated into English here at Brigham Young University. In that book he has a chapter on the Latter-day Saints. It is a very accurate and honest portrayal of who we are.

Ahead of us, indeed already all around us, is the world of Islam. Christianity and Islam will clasp hands in cooperation and understanding or clench fists in confrontation and prejudice.

A year or two ago, Brother Alwi and I met in San Diego. For a morning we sat, he with his Quran and I with my Book of Mormon, and compared and discussed the many things we have in common.

We have witnessed two watershed events: September 11, 2001, the World Trade Center terrorist attack brought Christians and Muslims into confrontation. The December 27, 2004, tsunami opened opportunity for Christians and Muslims to cooperate. The first was a wake-up call; the other pushed us out of bed.

The December 2004 tsunami, which devastated the Indian Ocean region, struck Indonesia particularly hard. Two days after the tsunami, I called Brother Alwi on his cell phone. He said, “I am standing at Banda Aceh, next to President Yudhoyono. You cannot believe what we see.” I told him we would help.

They first asked for 20,000 body bags. We located them in China and had them air-freighted to Jakarta. Not long after that, they asked for 30,000 more.

Dr. Alwi Shihab’s forum address was a historic occasion. It was unprecedented for a member of the Quorum of the Twelve to introduce a guest speaker—not just with a few words but with a significant message. President Packer manifested his love and respect for Dr. Shihab not just in his words, but also in the time and effort he put forth in traveling to Provo and spending the day with Dr. Shihab. These are clearly two men who not only respect each other but also have much of import to discuss.

September 11, 2001, alerted us that the U.S. has joined the rest of the world in being threatened by tactics of terror and force. The relation of Islam and the West is most often discussed as a clash of civilizations rather than a meeting of equals.

President Packer described the religion of Islam as a force for “decency, temperance, and morality,” not a danger to us. However, we have a choice in how to respond: “Ahead of us, indeed already all around us, is the world of Islam. Christianity and Islam will clasp hands in cooperation and understanding or clench fists in confrontation and prejudice.” In their addresses, President Packer and Dr. Shihab emphasized that radical interpretations threaten all—Christians, Muslims, and those of other faiths. They stressed that we can and must work together in harmony, not in conflict.

—Donna Lee Bowen, Professor
Middle Eastern Studies, BYU

Shortly thereafter, Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve, Dr. Gerrit Gong of Brigham Young University, and I traveled to Jakarta and then on to Banda Aceh which is on the north end of the island of Sumatra, vulnerable to the open ocean. We witnessed scenes words cannot describe. Over 200,000 were dead, families broken and dislocated, homes washed away. We saw one cemetery where 40,000 bodies had been buried.

The Doctrine and Covenants has this very interesting prophecy: “For after your testimony cometh the testimony of earthquakes, that shall cause groanings in the midst of her, and men shall fall upon the ground and shall not be able to stand.

“And also cometh the testimony of the voice of thunderings, and the voice of lightnings, and the voice of tempests, *and the voice of the waves of the sea heaving themselves beyond their bounds*” (D&C 88:89–90; italics added).

The First Presidency called a special fast for funds to aid the victims of the tsunami. The money flowed in—several million dollars.

Part of our purpose in traveling to Indonesia was to review the significant Church humanitarian relief to those hardest hit. The assistance began flowing immediately, and it continues today.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints expresses “special love and concern for the eternal welfare of all men and women, regardless of religious belief, race, or nationality, knowing that we are truly brothers and sisters because we are sons and daughters of the same Eternal Father.”¹

We believe that “the great religious leaders of the world such as Mohammed, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God’s light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals.”²

It is not a coincidence that the world’s great religions come together at Temple Hill in modern-day Jerusalem. Known now as the Place of the Rock, it is a religious shrine for Islam, for Christianity, and for Judaism. All three great religions hold ties to this place. All three, likewise, have a common thread in a tradition that Elijah the prophet would return.³

Knit together by world history and by Old Testament history and doctrine, the Church and the Islamic world can see each other as People of the Book, indeed Family of the Book.

Church members and Muslims share similar high standards of decency, temperance, and morality. We have so much in common. As societal morality and behavior decline in an increasingly permissive world, the Church and many within Islam increasingly share natural affinities.

Muslim scholars point out that the Quran does not restrict Paradise to Muslims. The Quran rewards all those of faith who perform righteousness

and believe in the afterlife. The Book calls Jesus Christ Messiah, Son of Mary, and by the names Messenger, Prophet, Servant, Word, and Spirit of God.⁴

It is important that we in the West understand there is a battle for the heart, soul, and direction of Islam and that not all Islam espouses violent jihad, as some Western media portray.

It is as well important that friends in the Islamic world understand there is a battle for the heart, soul, and direction of the Western world and that not all the West is morally decadent, as some Islamic media portray.

Several years ago, I was invited to speak at a convention of insurance executives in Vail, Colorado. On the way, we crossed the Colorado River.

We could see a new bridge in process of construction. It was an engineering marvel. Anchored to the sheer stone walls on both sides was an abutment for the bridge. Launching out into space from that abutment, reaching out for the other side, were sections of steel girders. When they met and were locked together in the middle, one thousand feet above the Colorado River, each would give strength to the other, and that bridge would be locked together over which traffic of all kinds could flow back and forth safely and conveniently.

Alwi, a devout Muslim of Arabic ancestry, and I, a Christian and devout Mormon, have agreed to symbolically walk arm in arm into the future. Together we hope to build a bridge. Except what that symbolizes is accomplished, all of us face a very dark and very dangerous future.

Now I introduce Dr. Alwi Shihab with a title which I borrow from another venerable Islamic leader and cleric (whom we both know and love), Abdurrahman Wahid, former president of Indonesia—Gus Dur. I apply that title to you, Alwi. You know that by interpretation it means “Dear Friend.”

Building Bridges to Harmony through Understanding

Alwi Shihab

It is indeed a great honor for me to address this forum, where academicians, scholars, and religious leaders are present to explore ways and means to foster global cooperation in building an ecumenical and harmonious interfaith community.

It is hardly necessary for me to remind you that Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world today. Indonesia also is the largest archipelagic state in the world, spread around some 17,000 islands that stretch along the equator from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific and cover a distance of 5,100 kilometers between its farthest points east and west. This is comparable to the distance between Los Angeles and New York.

It may, however, be important for me to stress two vital facts. First, Indonesia was not conquered by Muslim armies for Islam; rather, it was won by the piety and good examples of immigrant scholars, traders, and Sufi masters. Second, in Indonesia, communities of faith representing many if not most world religions live side by side in amity and peace most of the time.

It is worth noting that the Muslim world is too large and too diverse to march to the beat of a single drummer. Many people of the West mistakenly assume that the Muslim world is equivalent to the Middle East. The fact is that the Muslim world extends from Morocco to Merauke, Indonesia, and from Uzbekistan to Cape Town, South Africa. In addition, more Muslims live in China than in the Arabian Peninsula, and more Muslims live in Indonesia than in the entire Arab world combined.

Although Indonesia is more than 85 percent Muslim, it is neither an Islamic state nor a secular one. *Pancasila*, which literally means “five principles,” is the ideology of the nation and the state. These five principles are (1) belief in the One Supreme God, (2) humanitarianism, (3) Indonesia’s national unity, (4) democracy led by the wisdom of deliberations in representative bodies, and (5) social justice for all people.

Because the term *pancasila* is a human invention derived from Sanskrit and not from religious vocabularies, some observers argue that



Dr. Alwi Shihab, Brigham Young University Marriott Center, October 10, 2006. Courtesy Mark Philbrick and BYU.

Indonesia is a secular state. Such an observation is incorrect. Indonesia is not a secular state in the true meaning of complete separation between state and religion. In other words, Indonesian nations do not separate themselves from religious life and values.

Despite a greater presence of Islamic values and symbols in the contemporary Indonesian public and social space, the Indonesian people are far from rigid in their understanding of Islam. Among Indonesians the moderate understanding of Islamic teachings prevails. The peaceful manner by which the five major religions—namely, Hinduism,

Buddhism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism—were introduced to Indonesia has left a long-lasting positive influence on the promotion of mutual trust and tolerance among the communities of faith.

Unfortunately, the moral, spiritual, and social values that made Indonesia a model of religious pluralism and harmony are being challenged every day by religious, ideological, and political radicalism. It is a sad reality that even international efforts to counter radicalism and terrorism often themselves become radical—and, hence, counterproductive. We must, therefore, deal with religious radicalism and intolerance not with brute force but with wisdom and the willingness to address the root causes of these problems.

We have been driven by misfortune to the need for a mission of peace through inter-religious harmony. World spiritual leaders from all faiths should lead the world in this mission of respect, harmony, and cooperation among all believers and all races. Only in this way can we dissolve hatred and live in peace and security. It will not happen through force alone.

No one denies that Muslims are hurt and affected more than anyone else in relation to the several tragic events of late because the terrorists claimed an Islamic affiliation and justification—even though Islam never

condones, let alone endorses, any act of terror. This forum, I believe, can motivate and stimulate concerted efforts to bring together a wide range of perspectives, opinions, and backgrounds for the purpose of furthering constructive dialogue in mobilizing the force of moderation.

Through this academic gathering I want to invite us all to try to reflect with a clear mind and objectivity the root cause of such a dangerous phenomenon—namely, the religious radicalism encountered by humanity today. Indeed, our world has been thrust into a crisis of significant proportion. People are dying, hearts are breaking, and enmity is evident.

No one denies the rivalry between the world of Islam and the West. It has lasted more than fourteen centuries. Almost one hundred years after the birth of Islam, the Muslims managed to establish an empire that extended across North Africa, the Middle East, Iberia, Persia, and North India. Yet at the end of the eleventh century, after two centuries of stability, tensions began with the First Crusade in 1095. The long period of continuous encounter since then has demonstrated more of enmity, hostility, and prejudice than friendliness and understanding.

It goes without saying that the interaction between the world of Islam and the West is an important part of the structure of contemporary global affairs. Without positive relations between Islam and the West, a constructive global network of people and societies will not be possible. For almost a millennium and a half, Islam and the West have been viewed as two civilizations interacting in conflicting dialogue. To reach constructive dialogue and find solutions to the obstacles, it is important to think in terms of actual existing conditions in today's world of the twenty-first century and not impose concepts and programs from an earlier age.

The central reality of the twenty-first-century world with its spreading terrorism demonstrates that our era is globally interdependent but far from integrated. According to Norman Daniel, in his book *Islam and the West*, “Up to the present time, the mentality of the Middle Ages Christian (viewing Islam and Muslims as a real threat and the worst enemy) still lingers in the mind of many Westerners.”

With the same spirit and emphasis, Dr. Barbara Brown Zikmund, former president of the Hartford Seminary—home to the Duncan Black Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations—stated: “I deplore the lack of knowledge about Islam and other religious traditions that continues to characterize the contemporary Christian community.”

Indeed, one cannot deny that throughout the Western world there is tension between Westerners and Muslims. In many European countries Muslims are seen not only as outsiders but also as a menace, a threat, to

Building Bridges the Right Way

Dr. Shihab and President Packer certainly practice what they preach. They go beyond mere tolerance and reach out in understanding, cooperation, and love. In February 2005, when he traveled to Indonesia to monitor tsunami relief, President Packer took time to visit Jakarta's white-domed Istiqlal Mosque. Following a tour of the mosque with the head cleric, President Packer asked if they might pray together. The cleric agreed. President Packer "blessed the mosque, the cleric and all who attend to pray and worship." Following the prayer, the tearful cleric thanked President Packer for "his faith and prayers on their behalf."¹

For many years, all relief was given by the Church in Indonesia under the name of LDS Charities, with no mention of the Church's full name. In late November 2004, a devastating earthquake hit the island of Alor in southeastern Indonesia. The Church quickly responded with aid that was channeled through Dr. Shihab's ministry. Dr. Shihab was impressed that the Church was the first Christian church to respond to help the Muslims of Alor. With Dr. Shihab's blessing, all aid now sent to Indonesia is labeled with the full name of the Church.² Shortly after the Alor relief effort, the Church once again quickly responded with aid for tsunami-ravaged Aceh. The Achenese noticed "Church of Jesus Christ" on the boxes and pallets, and so when later shipments were unloaded, leaders from the mosques announced "that another donation from the Jesus church had arrived."³

—Chad F. Emmett, Associate Professor
Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian Studies, BYU

1. Dean C. Jensen, President of the Indonesia, Jakarta Mission, email message, March 1, 2005.

2. Elder Tom Palmer, humanitarian missionary directly involved with tsunami relief, email report, January 9, 2005.

3. H. David Burton, "Tender Hearts and Helping Hands," *Ensign* 36 (April 2006): 8.

European values and cultures. In many countries this tension is palpable; in some countries it remains subdued. But the West has never been very comfortable with Islam and Muslims.

With all frankness, Muslims should admit that they themselves have not always been able to present their case in a manner that is both understandable and acceptable to Western society. Sometimes Islam has been presented in a complicated way that the minds of common people hardly can absorb. And oftentimes Islam has been introduced in such a simplified way that it cannot reach the hearts of people. Such phenomena have created an unnecessary misunderstanding that can bring about mistrust between Muslims and Westerners and often lead to a bitter feeling.

We all are aware that the West accommodates many faiths, including Islam. It is, therefore, essential that both Muslims and Westerners realize the urgent need to overcome the history of hostility between them in order to clear up the existing prejudices against Islam. In addition, we must always bear in mind that religion is not just an abstract doctrine or simple belief. It has been and continues to be the significant factor that shapes people's identities as individual persons and as groups. It is again our duty to find the way to harness the potential of religions to motivate their adherents to strive for peace, justice, and tolerance in everyday life and in all walks of life.

Unfortunately, for a long time many Westerners have believed that Islam is threatening their way of life. Likewise, many Muslims believe that the West is the source of the problem. I think one of the biggest challenges of our time is to comprehend and appreciate the values of Islam as well as the way of life and the mind of the West. No one denies that it has not been easy for the West to understand the spirit of Islam, nor for Muslims to accept the mind of the West; but, in the end, I believe, the West, if it is to understand Islam and the Muslims, has to adopt the faith and teachings of the *prophets of power or firm resolve*, as have been described by the Quran—namely, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad.

We all must strive to correct the erroneous perception in the mind of any Western intellectual who puts Islam today where communism was yesterday—against the West—and hence believes that dialogue between Islam and the West is a waste of time; that, therefore, the only way for the West to deal with Islam and Muslims is the argument of force, not the force of argument.

On the other hand, there are people in the Muslim countries who believe that the West is an old enemy of Islam, citing the history of past conflict. Accordingly, they believe that Muslims should fight the West.

They believe that there is no room for dialogue. There can be only dialectical opposition between the two.

Our problem in encountering the above radical views lies in the fact that those who promote the idea of religious and cultural conflict take Islam as their starting point for the idea of clashing civilizations. They ignore the fact that Islam is not communism. In fact, Islam is far removed from communist values.

Islam is the very way of a life that is compatible with common reason and human decency—and, thus, democratic values, freedom, and human rights. In addition, the Muslim world is a great diversity of nations and cultures united by the idea of human goodwill, respect, love, and justice among all nations.

Islam has never been the reason for the suspension of freedom. On the contrary, Islam has taught humanity that there shall be no compulsion in religion. There shall be freedom in religion because the lie cannot be imposed and the truth needs no force.

Islam, as vividly presented by the Quran, is a universal teaching that does not limit itself to geographical boundaries or ethnic and racial backgrounds. Indeed, it is beyond the East and the West. The Quranic verse says:

You should know by now that it is not the Right Way only to face your faces towards East and West. But the Right Way is for you to have trust in God, and in the Day of accountability, and in Angels, and in the Book, and in the God's Messengers. It is the Right Way also that you spend your property for your kin in need, for orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the freedom of slaves. Also, the Right Way is to hold fast to prayer, to observe prescribed charity, to honor the contracts which you have made, to be firm and patient in hardship, and to overcome times of fear. Such people are on the Right Way to the truth and they are close to God. (Quran 2:177)

Islam, indeed, is beyond the East and the West because Jews, Christians, and Muslims share the belief in one God who created us all from a single soul and then scattered us like seeds into countless human beings. They share the same father, Adam, and mother, Eve. They share Noah's ark for salvation and Abraham's faith, they share respect for Moses and love for the virgin Mary and admiration for her son Jesus, and they share the clear word of the Quran of promoting good and preventing evil.

It is, therefore, important to remember the major elements the three Abrahamic religions have in common to enable each of the respective adherents to feel close affinity to one another. In fact, Islam describes Judaism and Christianity as People of the Book, indicating that all the three religions are of one and the same family.

They all come from the same Hebraic roots and claim Abraham as their originating ancestor. All three traditions are religions of ethical monotheism; that is, they all claim there is one, loving, just, creator God and that God expects all human beings to live in love and justice. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are all religions of revelation. In all three religions this revelation has two special vehicles: prophets and scriptures.

The relation between the Quran and the Bible is repeatedly mentioned in the Quran. The Quran expressly claims this relationship and calls the attention of the Prophet Muhammad himself to this relationship. Here is, among others, a verse that especially acknowledges this relationship: “And this Quran is not such as could be forged by those besides Allah, but it is a verification of that which is before it and a clear explanation of the Book, there is no doubt in it, from the Lord of the worlds” (Quran 10:37).

It is, therefore, imperative that Jews, Christians, and Muslims learn how to share their common spiritual roots and their common futuristic hopes without prejudice in order to avoid discrimination and religious and racial hatred so that they all can raise their children in peace and security on the basis of “Ethics of Sharing.”

In other words, we must create in ourselves the sense that there are many paths to God, that the people of each path are held in special relationship to God; each chosen, not only for a mission but also for a special love. The three religions are like siblings in a healthy family; we may have great differences and competition, but in the end we must try to protect each other from danger and ill fate. We must try to pull together to mend the world around us in some small way.

Let me suggest, dear brothers and sisters, that religious tolerance is not enough. We have often seen—particularly after the tragic events of 9/11 and, most recently, the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad—that tolerance does not always lead to true social peace and harmony. To tolerate something is to learn to live with it, even when you think it is wrong and downright evil. Often tolerance is a tolerance of indifference, which is at best a grudging willingness to put up with something or someone you hate and wish would go away. We must go, I believe, beyond tolerance if we are to achieve harmony in our world. We must move the adherents of different faiths from a position of strife and tension to one of harmony and understanding by promoting a multifaith and pluralistic society. We must strive for acceptance of the other based on understanding and respect. Nor should we stop even at mere acceptance of the other; rather, we must accept the other as one of us in humanity and, above all, in dignity.



Dr. Alwi Shihab and President Packer visit with family and associates in the Marriott Center prior to the forum address. Courtesy Mark Philbrick and BYU.

The Quran tells us, “We have honored the children of Adam, have carried them on land and sea, provided them with good and wholesome things and have preferred them over many of Our creations” (Quran 17:70).

We must respect this God-given dignity in every human being, even in our enemies. For the goal of all human relations—whether they are religious, social, political, or economic—ought to be cooperation and mutual respect.

This goal can only be achieved through meaningful and constructive dialogue among the people of faith in every religious tradition. Nor should dialogue be limited to interfaith dialogue; it should touch on human rights and political and economic issues, as well as issues of social justice and the right of all people everywhere to live in security, prosperity, and peace.

We must not try to reduce our social, racial, and religious diversity to global uniformity or make it the cause of conflict and strife; rather, we must celebrate it as a manifestation of divine wisdom and mercy.

The Quran says, “Surely, the most honored of you in the sight of God is he/she who is most righteous” (Quran 49:13).

Indeed, we are living in a difficult time, and we have to realize that the best way to begin working for peace is to build it up from within.

It depends on us. The solution to the ignorance, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness that lead to hatred is within ourselves, within our communities.

It is our burden and our challenge to find solutions to these global problems. The solutions, as Shakespeare would have said, lie in ourselves, not in the stars under which we were born (*Julius Caesar*, 1.2.140–41), which is precisely what the Quran states: “We can only change our human condition if there is a change in our individual makeup and outlooks as well as our soul and mind” (Quran 13:11).

The greatest lesson from any conflict that touches upon religious sensibility is that the global community cannot allow such conflict in any part of the world to fester because it will, sooner or later, generate dangerous complications elsewhere. It is, therefore, important to establish interaction and understanding across cultures as the best safeguard against acts of terror. We have to maintain an uncompromising stance towards those who would utilize terror to achieve their goals.

The unity of the civilized world in fighting the horror of radicalism against both sides (Western and Islamic) is absolutely indispensable. Educating the next generation and preventing them from brainwashing with hatred and ignorance are our shared moral duties.

I strongly believe that true harmony comes from resolving historical hatred and increasing mutual care and love. The only sure path to peace requires that we work to end the misunderstanding and resentment that afflicts individuals, communities, and nations. Religious leaders, in particular, must reflect if they have preached God’s love for all people universally—beyond nation, religion, and race.

It is our collective responsibility through this forum to find ways and means to overcome the tragic barriers that divide religious believers—not only those of different religions but also believers of the same religion. Religious leaders should seek valid theological foundations abundant in different religious texts on which to build religious tolerance and a culture of respect and acceptance.

With all honesty and sincerity we should confess that nobody knows where the dialogue between us will lead. But what we all ought to believe is that there must be an alternative to so much global violence and hatred. Therefore, in closing, let me invite you all to respond to the crisis of values that pervades so many regions of our world. Let us together try to reach out to the hearts and minds of our communities, strengthen the voice of moderation, and isolate the force of extremism and radicalism. May the fruits of this academic forum be a positive step forward on the long and difficult road to harmony among all of God’s children.

God bless us all.

Boyd K. Packer is Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Dr. Alwi Shihab is the former Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Presidential Advisor and Special Envoy to the Middle East from the Republic of Indonesia.

1. "Statement of the First Presidency regarding God's Love for All Mankind," February 15, 1978.
2. "Statement of the First Presidency," February 15, 1978.
3. See Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980), 117.
4. See Alwi Shihab, "Jesus in the Quran," Inter-Religious Dialogue Seminar, Spring 1992; Alwi Shihab, "Christian-Muslim Relations in the Twenty-first Century," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 15, no. 1 (January 2004): 65-77.

Alhamdulillah: The Apparently Accidental Establishment of the Church in Guinea

Kendall Moss

As I neared completion of my first assignment with the U.S. State Department, a two-year tour in Rio de Janeiro, the department's personnel officers determined that my two years in Rio would be best balanced by an equal amount of time in Conakry, Guinea. Although I had some interest in Africa, I had never given much thought to doing a tour in Guinea. Like a newly called missionary, I quickly began to study about a country I would later come to love.

A former French colony in West Africa, Guinea is about the size of Oregon. Since achieving independence in 1958, it has had only two presidents. The current president, Lansana Conte, has been in power since 1984. Fortunately for the Guineans, their country has remained an oasis of stability in a very troubled region. Four of the six bordering countries—Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and Côte d'Ivoire—have experienced civil wars in the past decade. At times over the past five years Guinea has hosted as many as five hundred thousand refugees, a significant burden for a country with a population of only eight million. Poverty is severe. Per capita gross national income was \$430 in 2003.¹ The government does not allow Guineans all the freedoms we enjoy in the United States, but the authorities generally do not obstruct the practice of religion. Eighty-five percent of the country's population is Muslim.

Prior to beginning my African tour, I knew little about Islam. But after arriving in Conakry, I was soon immersed in Muslim culture. I found most of the people to be very devout. Almost all of my Guinean friends prayed five times a day, fasted each day from sunrise to sunset during the holy month of Ramadan, went to mosque every Friday, and abstained from alcohol. Beyond the routines of devotion, I noted that my Muslim friends

were much more cognizant of the role of God in their lives, or at least much more overt than my Christian friends in acknowledging it. Two Arabic phrases—*Alhamdulillah* (thanks be to God) and *Inshallah* (God willing)—were the salt and pepper of their conversations. Among the Guinean Muslims, there was clearly a great emphasis on the role of God in life, perhaps because of the fragility of their very existence.² Life expectancy in Guinea is only 46.2 years, and the mortality rate for children under five years old is 16.5 percent.³ “Inshallah” and “Alhamdulillah” were not merely thoughtlessly offered idiomatic expressions. On many occasions, whether the outcome was deemed positive or negative, my Muslim friends would express their willingness to submit to God’s will.

The Prophet Joseph Smith, like the Prophet Mohammed, clearly taught that the Lord’s hand directs events on earth (see D&C 59:21). If there was any doubt as to who was directing the work of the Restoration, the Lord clarified the matter for the Prophet in an 1830 revelation: “And I have given unto [my servant Joseph] the keys of the mystery of those things which have been sealed, even things which were from the foundation of the world, and the things which shall come from this time until the time of my coming, if he abide in me, *and if not, another will I plant in his stead*” (D&C 35:18; emphasis added).

In the Wentworth letter, the Prophet Joseph wrote that unhallowed hands could not stop the gospel’s march to every country:

Our missionaries are going forth to different nations, and in Germany, Palestine, New Holland, Australia, the East Indies, and other places, the Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear; till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done.⁴

I learned before arriving in Guinea that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was not organized or officially recognized in the country. Guinea was included in the West Africa Area, with headquarters in Accra, Ghana. I did not come across any members of the Church and did not feel at home at the interdenominational religious services held at a downtown hotel. So I developed my own Sunday routine, which consisted primarily of watching general conference videos in my living room. I could roll out of bed, lounge on the couch, pop in a video, and watch a conference tape ordered over the Internet and delivered by diplomatic pouch.

I followed this pattern for about fifteen months, accompanied for part of that period by Ron Adams, an American pilot on a short-term contract in Guinea, and by a Guinean Muslim friend, Sheik Oumar Kaba. Then one day, I was talking to one of the embassy guards, a young Liberian named James. James was a refugee who had survived some terrible hardships. His education was limited, but he was a very wise and profoundly spiritual man with a love of Jesus and the Bible. I mentioned to him that I was a Latter-day Saint, and he told me he knew another Liberian refugee named Opy, who was also a member of the LDS Church. He explained that Opy used to meet with a group of Church members in the Petit Simbaya neighborhood of Conakry. I asked whether he could introduce me to Opy. He informed me that Opy had been resettled to Australia. I asked whether he thought the LDS group might still be meeting. He said he was not sure, but we could look.

I was driven primarily by my curiosity. I thought it would be interesting to find this group. My overactive imagination saw members praying to a picture of Ezra Taft Benson or mixing ritual circumcision with ordination to the priesthood. Maybe Primary graduation was accompanied by tribal scarring ceremonies. Maybe they practiced polygamy (which is legal and widely practiced in Guinea). I was fascinated by the thought that some LDS group might be meeting without the knowledge or approval of the Church.

So one Saturday morning James accompanied me to Petit Simbaya, a neighborhood with a large population of Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees. We simply started asking people in the area whether they had heard of a group of Latter-day Saints or Mormons. We went to a couple of churches and inquired. I left my name and phone number with one family in the neighborhood and asked them to call me if they ever heard of this group. We spent an hour or two asking but found nobody who knew anything about the Church.

We were standing by a little electronics repair booth by a main road, ready to get in my pickup and go home, when I asked a worker there whether he had heard about a group of Mormons in the area. He had not. But a woman standing beside the booth overheard me and said, in English, "Oh, there's no branch here." Of course the word "branch" was a clear signal to me that she knew something about the Church. She explained that her brother, Oscar Quiah, was a returned missionary and former branch president in Liberia who was living as a refugee in Conakry. That evening, James and I attended a Liberian wedding at which Oscar was present. Oscar told us he knew of another former branch president and returned missionary, a Sierra Leonean refugee named Abu-Hassan Conteh, who

was also living in Conakry. When I asked Oscar about Opy, he said, “I know Opy. He was resettled to Australia. But he’s not LDS.” Thus my whole premise for going on the LDS search was a false one. Abu-Hassan knew other members in the city, including a former Relief Society president from Sierra Leone. About fifteen members of the Church knew each other, but they had never felt authorized to meet and worship as a group. Many of them were regularly attending other Christian churches.

I invited Oscar and his friends to watch conference videos with me at my house that Sunday. Within six weeks, fifteen to twenty people were showing up at my house on Sunday mornings. We started having lessons based on the Gospel Essentials manual. A short time later, I received an email from the Area President’s office informing me that a Guinean who had lived in France for many years and who had been a branch president there was moving back to Guinea with his family. We welcomed Edouard



A remarkable series of apparently accidental circumstances brought this group of Latter-day Saints in Guinea together. Photo courtesy of Kendall Moss.

and Blandine Kpogomou and their children to our group a short time later and learned that Edouard was following his patriarchal blessing's admonition to return to his homeland to build the Kingdom. We developed a regular Sunday program with hymns, a Primary class, talks, and lessons. Sheik and another Muslim friend, Ibrahima Dioubate, served as translators at many of our meetings.

To borrow a phrase from Oliver Cowdery, "These were days never to be forgotten."⁵ It was, frankly, the most fun I have ever had in the Church. It was a pleasure to see members excited about attending church meetings. They wanted to take the sacrament, and the Area President authorized us to administer it. We broke, blessed, and shared *tapalapa*, a traditional bread of the Fullah ethnic group, in what was perhaps the first administration of the sacrament in Guinea. The refugees' membership in the Church was clearly a key element of their identity, as it is of mine. One refugee, who had moved from his native Congo to Côte d'Ivoire and then to Guinea, with wars pushing him around the continent, showed me his missionary nametag, which he had somehow managed to salvage. Another refugee had miraculously arrived in Guinea with a framed Mormon Ad.

My tour in Guinea ended about eight months after I found the African Mormons. The members continue to meet each Sunday. I stay in touch with the group by email and occasional phone calls.

I have reflected on my experience in Guinea and the "coincidences" involved: that the State Department sent me to Guinea, that James thought he knew a Mormon named Opy, that Oscar's sister happened to overhear me mention the Church, that Oscar—the hub of the Mormon community in Conakry—was still in Guinea when I set out to find the lost Mormons (he was resettled as a refugee to Australia a few weeks after I met him), that at least three returned missionaries were living in the country, and that the Kpogomou family decided to return to Guinea at the same time as the Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugee saints began coming to my home for Sunday services.

A traditional Christian view might be that we all performed a good work and deserve some reward in heaven for our service. But I know that the truth in this case is closer to the view I learned to appreciate in Guinea, the view the Prophet Joseph and the Prophet Mohammed taught. God's will was done. God knew that the hodgepodge of members living in Guinea was imperfect and lacking in experience. But he also knew—even before he directed the creation of the earth—that I would be in Guinea in January 2003, that I would have a VCR and a living room large enough for twenty people, and that I would be naturally curious about other members in the country. He knew that Edouard Kpogomou, like a modern Lehi,

would be moved by the Spirit to take his family out of the comforts of life in the developed world to establish the Church in another land. He knew that the wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia would drive Abu-Hassan and other faithful members to Conakry. He knew that James, a diligent seeker of truth, would be working as a guard at the U.S. Embassy in Conakry.

But in carrying out his plan to take the gospel to every nation, God did not manipulate us as an imperfect human might manipulate another. He used us to accomplish his purposes—that the standard of truth would be erected in every country. But God loves us, and he knew that by using us we would become better people. In my own case, I appreciate the Church structure and the sacrament more, and my awe of God’s knowledge and power has increased. And so the Church has a toehold in Guinea, and I have a small group of LDS friends in Africa that I think of daily and love as brothers and sisters. Alhamdulillah. Thanks be to God.

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1. The World Bank Group, *2005 World Development Indicators* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank Publications, 2005), 22.
2. I am reminded of the handcart survivor’s testimony: “Every one of us came through with the absolute knowledge that God lives for we became acquainted with him in our extremities.” Francis Webster, quoted in Gordon B. Hinckley, “Our Mission of Saving,” *Ensign* 21 (November 1991): 54.
3. World Bank Group, *2005 World Development Indicators*, 120.
4. Joseph Smith Jr., as quoted in “Gospel Classics: The Wentworth Letter,” *Ensign* 32 (July 2002): 31.
5. Oliver Cowdery, “O. Cowdery to W. W. Phelps,” *Messenger and Advocate* 1 (October 1834): 14–16.

“Strangers in a Strange Land”

Assessing the Experience of Latter-day Saint Expatriate Families

James A. Toronto

The word *expatriate* is derived from Latin *ex*, meaning out, and *patria*, meaning fatherland. In a broad sense, an expatriate is defined as anyone living outside his or her native land. Prominent scriptural expatriates include Adam and Eve, Abraham, Moses,¹ Lehi and his family, the Apostle Paul, and Moroni. In a sense, all of us are spiritual expatriates with plans and hopes of ultimately returning to our home of origin.

For the purposes of this article, I define expatriates as those who retain citizenship in their home country and normally maintain family, social, financial, and professional ties there, but who move their domicile to another country, intending to pursue their career and live their life abroad indefinitely. These long-term, “perennial expatriate” families are committed to living, working, and raising their children in a foreign setting. The following discussion will focus on long-term expatriate Latter-day Saint families who live primarily in developing countries, mostly because my frame of reference and circle of expatriate associations are grounded in my family’s ten-year experience living in the developing world.

The Impact of the Expatriate Experience

The American novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864) offered this reflection on the impact of expatriate life after a six-year sojourn in England and Italy:

The years, after all, have a kind of emptiness when we spend too many of them on a foreign shore. We defer the reality of life, in such cases, until a future moment, when we shall again breathe our native air; but, by and by, there are no future moments; or, if we do return, we find that the native air has lost its invigorating quality, and that life has shifted

its reality to the spot where we have deemed ourselves only temporary residents. Thus, between two countries, we have none at all, or only that little space of either in which we lay down our discontented bones.²

Now, more than a century later, a discussion of the importance and impact of expatriate life remains timely and relevant. Rapid advances in telecommunications and transportation are bringing the world community closer and closer together. Interaction between individuals and institutions of diverse national, racial, and ethnic origin has increased dramatically, and global competitiveness and cooperation have emerged as vital issues for governments, businesses, universities, and churches. While virtually no literature about specifically LDS expatriates yet exists, a survey of scholarly literature yields numerous articles, books, and dissertations exploring how a burgeoning number of individuals and families are coping with the psychological, social, and emotional challenges of expatriate life. An empirical study published in 1996 estimates that 2,586,955 U.S. citizens (approximately 1 percent of the total population) were residing in sixty-five foreign countries. The majority of them opt to live in countries that are rich and close to home rather than in countries that are poor and far away.³ Another study indicates that U.S. companies are losing their competitive edge in the global marketplace because so many American expatriate families have problems adjusting to new countries and cultures. This study also estimates that 40 percent of all expatriate families will fail to deal successfully with the stress of living abroad.⁴ Much research has been published exploring the difficulties of repatriation and “reverse culture shock” as expatriates return to their native land after extended periods living abroad. It is estimated that approximately four million Americans now living in the U.S. fall in this category. In fact, the effects of expatriation and repatriation are so great on children that sociologists have coined terms such as Global Nomads or Third Culture Kids (TCKs) to describe children who spend a major portion of their formative years outside their parents’ native culture.⁵ Such children may successfully navigate both cultures but feel completely at home in neither; thus they are raised in a nebulous “third culture.” The website tckworld.com defines a TCK as follows:

A TCK is an individual who, having spent a significant part of the developmental years in a culture other than that of their parents, develops a sense of relationship to both. These children of business executives, soldiers and sailors, diplomats, and missionaries who live abroad, become “culture-blended” persons who often contribute in unique and creative ways to society as a whole.

The individual blend will vary, depending on such factors as the intensity of exposure to a second or third culture, at what age a child comes into contact with a culture other than that of the parents, and the

amount of time a young person spends within a second or third culture. The TCK's roots are not embedded in a place, but in people, with a sense of belonging growing out of relationships to others of similar experience.⁶

One research project examined the experiences of repatriated TCKs—a “large hidden dimension of American life” who represent “an untapped national resource”—and the positive contributions they continue to make to their families, communities, workplaces, and to “the interdependent and conflictive world scene.” On the downside, the majority of TCKs experience “mild to severe difficulties with what has been called ‘re-entry problems’ or ‘reverse culture shock’” and never fully adjust. Following are some of the key findings gleaned from this study:⁷

- They fail and pick themselves up again. They succeed in jobs they have created to fit their particular talents. . . . They adapt, they find niches, they take risks, they locate friends with whom they can share some of their interests, but they resist being encapsulated. Their camouflaged exteriors and understated ways of presenting themselves hide their rich inner lives, remarkable talents, and often strongly held contradictory opinions on the world at large and the world at hand.⁸
- Only one out of every ten of our nearly 700 adult TCKs . . . say that they feel completely attuned to everyday life in the U.S. The other 90 percent say they are more or less “out of synch” with their age group throughout their lifetimes. Being out of step with those around them is especially noticeable (and painful) in the late teens and twenties, when choice of mate, occupation, and life style are being worked out. Some young adult TCKs strike their close peers, parents, and counselors as being self-centered adolescents, as having champagne tastes on beer incomes (or no incomes), as not being able to make up their minds about what they want to do with their lives, where they want to live, and whether or not they want to “settle down, get married, and have children.” They have what some call “prolonged adolescence.”⁹
- One characteristic of these adult TCKs which stands out is that the overwhelming majority of them are committed to continuing their education beyond high school graduation. Only 21 percent of the American population (24 percent of men and 18 percent of women) have graduated from a four-year college. In sharp contrast, 81 percent of the adult TCKs have earned at least a bachelor's degree (87 percent of the men, 76 percent of the women). Half of this number have gone on to earn master's degrees and doctorates.¹⁰
- Whether or not they have occupations or professions with an international dimension, in their daily lives they do reach out to foreigners, exchange students, and non-English-speaking minorities. As

one adult TCK put it, “We know what it is like to be confused in a country where we cannot speak the language well.”¹¹

- Most of those who marry (80 percent) have children and typically report that their child-rearing is in some way influenced by having lived abroad. . . . Rather than stress a national or ethnic identity, these adult TCKs seek ways to introduce their offspring to the diversity of the world’s people and cultures. Their message, overwhelmingly, is one of accepting, respecting, and treasuring differences.¹²
- Adult TCKs are helpers and problem solvers. Drawing on their own experiences in new situations, [they] reach out to help those who appear unsure and play the role of mediator when conflicts arise. Nearly 90 percent say they can usually figure out a way to handle unexpected or difficult situations.¹³
- TCKs are adaptable and relate easily to a diversity of people. . . . They feel at home everywhere (and nowhere). More than eight of ten report that they can relate to anyone, regardless of differences such as race, ethnicity, religion, or nationality.¹⁴
- This relatively small number of people, about 2 percent of the American population, has been a rich resource. They relate Americans to the rest of the world and interpret the outside world to the immediate world in which they live.¹⁵

Challenges and Benefits of Expatriate Life: The Perspective of LDS Parents and Children

I was unable to locate any published literature examining the experience of LDS expatriate families *per se*. But given the steady growth of the Church worldwide and the increasing number of Church members from many countries who live and work abroad, it is important to begin to understand the issues, themes, and challenges of LDS expatriate life.

A few caveats are in order. Broadly speaking, I would say that the experience of LDS expatriate families reflects many of the common themes and characteristics of expatriate life in general, regardless of religious affiliation, national origin, or geographic location—that is, many dimensions of LDS expatriate experience are not unique. I want to emphasize also that some features of LDS expatriate life discussed here are characteristic of the experience of many LDS parents and youth who live in any large urban area where Church members are a small minority and where social, political, and religious diversity abounds. The tremendous diversity in cultures, families, personalities, and church conditions makes it extremely risky to



The 2001 senior class of Cairo American College holding graduation ceremonies, according to school tradition, at the site of the Pyramids and Sphinx in Giza, Egypt.

generalize about LDS expatriate family life. In fact, I know of exceptions to nearly every assertion and observation I make below.

In attempting to assess the challenges and opportunities of the expatriate lifestyle for LDS families, I decided to distinguish between perennial expatriate families who have spent at least five to ten years abroad and those expatriate families who live abroad temporarily for a few months or years. I realized that the nature and impact of living abroad differs significantly depending on the duration of the stay and whether the family is among the majority of expats who choose to live in countries “that are rich and close to home rather than in countries that are poor and far away,” as stated above. The following analysis is based on personal experience and observation and on data from interviews with twelve perennial expatriate LDS families, all from the U.S., who have spent much of their careers in areas that are “poor and far away,” that is, economically depressed countries in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. I also cite the findings of an unpublished research project conducted by Hannah Pritchett, an undergraduate TCK student who surveyed other perennial TCK students at BYU about their experiences. The focus of this article, then, is on the

issues, themes, patterns, and challenges that characterize the experience of perennial expatriate LDS families from industrialized nations who raise their families in the developing world.

Moving to a new country and a foreign environment almost universally results in intense feelings of anxiety, alienation, and ambiguity during each new period of adjustment. The instability inherent in relocation creates pressures that can erode family unity and undermine marital relations, widening emotional fault lines that may already exist in sibling and spouse relationships. It is often the case in perennial expatriate life that a father's job is completed at the end of a two- to five-year contract or posting. Those who work on a contractual basis are obliged to be constantly on the lookout for the next job opportunity, and the family is frequently required to move to another overseas location and undergo a new set of adjustments. A major point of family stress is that each new relocation requires working wives to give up a current job and face again the painful prospect of unemployment or menial entry-level work. Another stressor is that many expatriate fathers stay in-country to work while the wife and children return to the home country for an annual summer leave. In families with small children especially, this period of separation is not only a lonely one for the dad who must stay behind, but a tremendous burden for the mom who must handle all the stress of traveling with and caring for the family on her own. This perpetual state of insecurity and instability is one of the main challenges facing LDS parents raising families overseas.

As a result of their experience abroad, LDS expatriate youth frequently lack a clear sense of religious and national identity, thus joining the so-called "third culture" of individuals worldwide whose conduct, thinking, and values vacillate between the norms of their native culture and the local foreign culture. Over time they frequently develop a sense of being spiritually, culturally, and socially rootless. When young people raised in the third culture return to their first, native culture, they often feel as if they are on the margins of society, on the outside looking in. One possible explanation for this sense of detachment and anxiety is the continual necessity in the expatriate environment of breaking emotional ties and building new relationships:

One of the major areas in working with TCKs is that of dealing with the issue of unresolved grief. They are always leaving or being left. Relationships are short-lived. At the end of each school year, a certain number of the student body leaves, not just for the summer, but for good. It has to be up to the parent to provide a framework of support and careful understanding as the child learns to deal with this repetitive grief. Most TCKs go through more grief experiences by the time they are 20 than monocultural individuals do in a lifetime.¹⁶

LDS parents give high praise to the Church, whose organization and teachings help attenuate this problem by providing children with a built-in social network with local members, grounding them in core values, and imbuing them with a sense of who they are.

Expatriate LDS parents and children gain exposure to greater diversity of thought and behavior and, in the process, develop tolerance and sensitivity for differences in religious belief, political orientation, and personal lifestyle. I have noted during my time overseas and as a faculty member of Brigham Young University working with students from expatriate families, that LDS expatriates, young and old alike, who come to the heartlands of Mormonism after extended time abroad, often are confused by the lack of diversity in interpreting and applying gospel principles. They become disillusioned, even angered, by the perceived negative judgments that are passed on those who deviate from what is believed to be the gospel norm. To expatriates, such judgment appears to be an American LDS cultural trapping that is foreign to their gospel experience overseas. Many young expatriate Church members who attend Especially for Youth or BYU for the first time are surprised at the uniformity of thinking, dress, and behavior. They often speak of being put off by religious attitudes and ethnocentric political views of some Church members that seem rigid, narrow, ultra-conservative, and unable to accommodate a more open-minded perspective or divergent interpretation. The emphasis on not dating or associating with nonmembers, young men wearing only white shirts to church, not drinking Coca-Cola, keeping hair cut short, and “America first” nationalism are examples often cited. Over time, however, many expatriate children and parents find equilibrium and reconciliation by gravitating gradually toward people and organizations on campus or in their community who share similar perspectives and experiences.

Research data compiled by Hannah Pritchett during her undergraduate studies at BYU provides further evidence of the difficulty TCKs encounter in relating to their home culture peers after a long period in the third culture milieu. Her interviews with fellow TCK students reveal the anxieties induced by trying to fit in, to establish a sense of identity, and to define just what “home” means in their peripatetic lives:

TCKs find that when they move back there is a barrier, psychological, emotional, or even cultural, between themselves and their American peers, because of their very different experiences. Many stated this idea straight out: they “couldn’t really connect,” they “were completely different,” and “I felt that I couldn’t relate to my peers” are typical comments about trying to make friends in America. Repatriates notice that their American peers are different from them, and this lack of shared experience often works to create a barrier between them and their peers. . . .

Teen slang, styles, and music can also be unfamiliar to an expatriate, since these expressions of popular culture change rapidly. Says one, "Everyone was saying words I didn't understand," and another, "I just never knew what the right clothes were." Although these elements of popular culture may seem trivial, they are important to adolescents, and similar interests of this type help form bonds between teenagers. Expatriates may be surprised or frustrated by the reality of American life, but they always encounter a barrier between themselves and their peers when they return to their country because of the different experiences and perceptions their lives abroad have given them.

Most, however, found the most frustrating thing about the barrier was the lack of interest and questioning on the part of their peers. Often, says one, when she said where she moved from, "people don't even know where that is" and so they don't question. Others found that "people didn't really care, and that was really hard to deal with, because I wanted to talk about it." This complaint appeared over and over during the course of these interviews. For whatever reason, people are rarely genuinely interested in an expatriate's experiences in another culture, and this is frustrating to the expatriate for whom those experiences are life. Repatriates quickly discover this, and most stop talking about it. When they do, others may say, "It sounds like you're snobby and braggy," as if by relating their experiences they are showing off. Most avoid this by trying to deny their membership in the expatriate group, and blend in. One said that she "quickly adopted a Utah accent and limited [her] discussions of personal experiences to non-country-specific tales." Others simply choose a place in America and say they come from there, because it is easier than trying to explain living abroad. Expatriates, then, generally find that in addition to being different or "foreign" to their peers, their American peers are not even interested in their former lives, and this only increases the difficulty of repatriation.

However, the most important characteristic of a true TCK comes through as they tell these stories of returning "home": they really have no home in the standard interpretation. To most, home is a place. To expatriates who spend their time moving frequently, or in places they don't belong, home is defined by family and friends, and the relationships they have with others. They are trapped between worlds; one girl explained her life, saying, "I've spent most of my life in the Middle East, but I don't feel like my culture is Middle Eastern culture." Yet she doesn't feel like American culture is hers either. Another girl expressed this same feeling, explaining that, having grown up in Latin America, "I felt like I was Latina," but that true Latin Americans saw her as American. They don't have "a place to call home," and they "don't really feel like [they are] from anywhere," so they associate deeply with people instead of places. Most expatriates, when asked where they are from, name the place their family lives. For some, this connection is even more explicit. One says, "My sense of home and belonging comes from people . . . really the only people I feel 'home' with is family." Another says, "I always viewed my home as wherever my family was." Expatriates define

“belonging” as the people, not the scenery, surrounding them. In this way, they have no firm roots, since people can always change and move, and they may struggle to define coming “home.” Many, throughout their lives, feel “a lack of sense of belonging or loyalty to one’s place,” which they may even pass to their children. This lack of place is really what defines expatriates.¹⁷

The following anecdote reported by an LDS expatriate mother provides a parent’s perspective on the stresses and painful adjustments that expatriate LDS children often face when returning to the “center stakes”:

My husband and I have spent 14 years living in Asia. I had thought that growing up overseas had been completely positive, teaching our children to be more tolerant, exposing them to other peoples and cultures. That was until our children went to college in the States. Our daughter experienced “reverse culture shock” in adjusting to Utah culture. It was a typical pattern of expat re-adjustment: others weren’t interested in her experiences or background. She had to walk a fine line to avoid offending people who often considered her conceited when discussing her life overseas. Once she worked through this, she was OK and gained perspective about the whole experience of her expat life. She took six years to graduate because of an “adjustment period.” Adjusting to peculiar language and slang terms was difficult at first. They didn’t know what “the mish” was, for example. Our daughter hadn’t been to girls camp, and our son hadn’t experienced scout camp. Comments like “You’re not an eagle scout?” were painful. They were frustrated by political narrow mindedness and ignorance of world geography and international affairs exhibited by other students. Our daughter put up a picture of her boyfriend—a non-member, dark-skinned Indian from the Brahmin caste who was a wonderful young man with high moral standards, an outstanding student, thoughtful, kind, a hard worker. My husband and I were proud of her for making a good choice of friends with similar values. The reaction of her roommates was different. Some of them ridiculed her for this relationship; there were anonymous letters questioning her worthiness, encouraging her to repent. Finally, we had to help her deal with this by reminding her to be just as tolerant going back to U.S./Utah culture as an American going to Indonesian or Indian culture.¹⁸

Most LDS expatriates view the Church experience as one of the most rewarding aspects of their time abroad. Overseas wards and branches tend to be small and close-knit, offering many opportunities to serve and grow spiritually. Many LDS families and individuals become active for the first time in isolated, expatriate settings because they come to realize their need for spiritual renewal and wholesome social relationships. One expatriate noted that “there is no fence sitting” in expatriate LDS groups: you are forced to examine your testimony and allegiance and decide whether you



The membership of the Istanbul Turkey Branch, hailing from Nigeria, Ghana, Turkey, and the United States, after holding Church services with two visiting LDS expatriate families.

believe the Church is true. Nearly all expatriate families speak of growing closer during their time overseas, spending more time together and relying more on each other to learn basic gospel values without the “cultural veneer” that comes from being in a more homogeneous religious society. A branch president in Africa observed that living overseas had given his family a chance “to look beyond the Utah traditions to the heart of the gospel—to fall back to the basics. In big wards in Texas or California it is easy to skate by. But over here we’re forced to be contributing and serving all the time.”

Small, close-knit branches in developing countries have drawbacks, too. The language barrier can be frustrating as family members listen to talks and sing songs in a language they cannot comprehend. Although parents can compensate for this by providing family gospel instruction, children can grow impatient at being with their parents all the time. It is often the case that local and expatriate Church members come from sharply different socioeconomic backgrounds. The relative prosperity of expatriate families often means that local members depend on them to

assume the lion's share of welfare and transportation responsibilities in the branch. Moreover, in developing countries, it is normally the case that local members have no experience with participatory government or religion, and consequently the brunt of Church work falls squarely on the shoulders of a few expatriate members. LDS expatriates who work at American embassies in developing countries tell of the stressful experience of being regularly pressured by Church members from the host country or surrounding countries to intervene in their behalf to obtain visas to the U.S., and then—after explaining that this is not possible—being thought of as “not a true brother.”

While LDS expatriate parents were grateful for the Church's influence while living abroad, many of them expressed ambivalent feelings about raising teenagers overseas because of the difficulty of instilling gospel values and identity without the availability of fully developed Church youth programs. Several families pointed out the lack of programs and activities for teenagers as a major challenge of expatriate life: “I have learned I cannot depend on the church [in small groups and branches] to help raise my family, especially high school age children. For my teenagers, lack of church group experiences is a problem. I have no way of creating that LDS group social program of activities that youth need. They miss out on that teenage church experience—it's gone forever, and I regret that they'll never have it.”

Despite these problems of language and low membership numbers, LDS expatriates generally view gospel teachings and Church organization as crucial for making a success of overseas life. They thrive on the challenges of sustaining small Church units overseas, and typically sense something of a letdown spiritually when they return to large wards and stakes where the Church organization runs smoothly and the pool of Church experience and knowledge is deep.

LDS expatriate families from industrialized nations who live in developing countries face some unique problems associated with the affluent lifestyle that expatriates in these countries generally enjoy. Expatriate teenagers tend to have abundant amounts of money and leisure time and a scarcity of productive, organized activities on which to spend their money and time. To fill the void and cope with boredom, many teens easily fall into habits of smoking, drinking, drug abuse, partying, gambling, and premarital sex. To compound the problem, law enforcement officials in many developing countries (which normally have stricter laws governing these activities than Western countries) often turn a blind eye to illicit behavior of expatriate teenagers because they want to avoid belligerent confrontations and messy diplomatic entanglements. The stage is thus set for young expatriates to engage in destructive, illegal behavior with virtual

impunity. Unfortunately, a good many LDS youth ignore the guidance provided at home and at school and succumb to the harmful enticements of this extraordinarily permissive expatriate environment.

LDS expatriate parents almost unanimously cite a daunting challenge also related to the affluence of expatriate life: instilling in children traditional LDS values of work, thrift, self-reliance, and responsibility. Because expatriate families in developing countries frequently have a cook to prepare meals and do the dishes, a maid to clean the house, and a gardener to take care of the yard work, and because most expatriate teens are not allowed to work in the local economy, there are few avenues available to parents to teach young people the law of the harvest: working for and earning what you get. One parent described this dilemma as follows:

The most distressing problem we face is how to teach our children the importance of work and personal responsibility. This is the single greatest difference of living overseas. There are very few opportunities for work, and lack of positive peer pressure to go out and start finding a summer job in April and May as happens in high schools in the States. Our nieces and nephews here in Utah know how to work; our own children who have grown up overseas have no desire to do manual labor.



Amman Jordan branch members from Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, the Philippines, the U.S., China, and Chile on a branch outing visiting ruins of the ancient Roman city of Jarash.

Most parents are able to find a few household chores for children to do, and some parents manage to find part-time jobs for their teenagers at their company offices or their embassy. But for most LDS families in developing countries, the problem remains a pervasive and persistent one.

The expatriate setting in developing countries impacts the work environment and the ecclesiastical service of LDS professionals in positive and negative ways. The environment at work during the week and at Church on weekends usually provides rich and rewarding opportunities to associate with people from many different walks of life and backgrounds. But sometimes one's LDS religious affiliation becomes an issue and a source of controversy in the office. For example, one father explained that colleagues at work have grown to resent his Church identity due to his receiving a larger overseas compensation package (which includes housing and food allowances based on number of children) than they do because he has a large family. Since they assume he has a large family because he is LDS, they resent that the company is, in effect, paying extra for his religious beliefs. Sometimes company officials are concerned that LDS expatriates have little chance for relaxation on the weekends (with meetings and church duties on the Sabbath, which is often the only day off), and thus come to the office at the beginning of the week not refreshed and ready to go back to work.

On balance, perennial expatriate families speak in glowing terms of their time overseas and of the ways in which their experiences continue to shape their worldview, enrich their relationships with other people, and deepen their spirituality. Following are statements and anecdotes from my interviews with various perennial expats that illustrate the profound impact of their life abroad.



I gained a much greater appreciation and bond of love with my wife as I watched her overcome the challenges and discomforts of overseas life and the extra efforts to move a family of five kids across the ocean once or twice a year. She faced down many social discomforts with non-LDS wives and clearly grew from the experience. We experienced so many adventures, challenges, and ups and downs that I just feel a friendship with her. It was impressive to see how she matured through the experiences and adversity. It made me realize that as a daughter of Heavenly Father her eternal potential is limitless. Shortly after we returned from living overseas, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. The doctor counseled us that our marriage might be challenged by this ordeal. I survived the cancer threat and we found only strength in the adversity and a greater bond of love. I think our time together living abroad had something to do with that strength.



The importance of service became a more central part of my life while living in poor countries. The desperation of the African refugees touched my heart deeply. I have to admit I was a little frightened when I saw how many were gathering at our branch for humanitarian assistance. I just had to take the first step and wade into the sea of black faces to know each one personally. I knew I could not just send them on their way, but rather it was up to me and the other expat members to help this group of people one by one with their situations. There were no Church manuals or direction on how to do this. Members of the branch did this on their own, with their own money or through very generous fast offering donations. There are too many stories to tell, but they include helping these people with food, clothing, medical, dental, rent, schooling for the children, English lessons for the adults, visa renewal, and prison visits. After this experience, service no longer seems a burden, but a privilege, an honor, a blessing to be sought after.



Hamad, our *bawwab*, left a marked impression on us, especially our children. They all commented on his kindness and cheerfulness. Hamad was paid by all the tenants in the apartment to watch the door, wash the cars, and keep the street clean in front of the building. He lived in the garage under the building with his wife and two young children, to whom he was very loving and dedicated. When we first got there I think everybody was a little concerned about having a guy in a robe as our permanent handyman, but we hit it off right away. He would always show interest in how we were doing and was happy to see us come home after traveling. He did not speak English but communicated with us through his eyes, gestures, and good deeds. Our daughter Emily remembers him because he would walk her part way to school past the roundabout where the stray dogs lived. Emily was terrified of the dogs, and Hamad would carefully walk her through them scaring away any dog that came close. On one occasion Hamad came into our home to help move furniture. We had many nice things in the house, but his attention was drawn to our family picture. He quietly walked up to it, turned and said, “Kwayyis awi!” [“Very good!”] Nothing seemed of more value to Hamad than family and friends. He was the most loved *bawwab* in the neighborhood, and our children learned that even if you live in the poorest circumstances you can still be kind to others and find great happiness. In Hamad I saw the icon of meekness, love, and kindness. When I think of the meek who will inherit the Earth, I think of Hamad. Just little things like that and the relationship and spirit that developed was a surprising awakening from our preconceived notions of Islamic-Christian relations.



While driving through a remote desert region, I ran over a large rock and the rear trailer wheel blew out immediately. I stepped out of the jeep to look at the damage. A Muslim boy of about twelve wearing

ragged clothes and no shoes came right over and said he was sorry for my trouble but could help. As I tried to get the spare out from storage, the boy was already removing the flat. I was reluctant to let him help, but I could see he knew how to handle the tools and was quick about his work. I was impressed and let him continue. He took the spare and put it on with skill. I just watched in amazement and handed him tools. He then said he knew a place to get the flat fixed. Again I was reluctant but took a leap of faith because he seemed to have a good spirit about him. We drove the jeep and canoes through the narrow back streets of the nearby village, which is not a good place for an American to be, but he reassured me everything would be fine. We stopped at a small dirty tire shop no bigger than a bedroom. He took the flat and told me to wait by the jeep. In about 15 minutes he returned with the tire repaired and said it would cost about \$1.50 (a fair deal by local standards). I was expecting to get gouged (as foreigners usually are) for about 10 times that amount, but again the boy radiated honesty. We then drove back to the parking lot and dropped him off. I offered him \$5.00 for his help, but he smiled and said, "No. You were a stranger in trouble, and it's my duty to help you. It's what Allah would want me to do." I was so struck with the goodness of this young man I did not know what to say and just gave him a tear-filled pat on the shoulder to express my gratitude. I thought about him the entire drive home. It made a profound impression on me to be reminded that there are many individuals not of our faith who are Christlike and charitable.



I coached my ten-year-old son's coed basketball team. This was a stretch for me as I really don't play basketball and didn't think I could pull it off. When I met the team and their parents, I realized my lack of basketball skills would be the least of my challenges. Our team was made up of French, British, Norwegian, American, Egyptian, Palestinian, and Israeli children. I immediately had visions of a Middle East conflict and the ever-present French, British, and American ego clash among competitive parents and kids who didn't know anything about the game. I figured I could count on the Norwegians to bring peace to the table. What followed was nothing less than a Cinderella story and a community behavior that the UN could only hope for. All of the parents were the kind of people you'd like to be friends with for life. They were genuine, gracious, appreciative, and the best fans you could ask for. They never missed a game and bonded together like they had been friends for years. Many commented that it was the best social event on their calendar and they wish it could go on forever. I even saw the Israeli and Palestinian parents sitting together and engaged in laughter.

The team was even more amazing. My star player was an Egyptian girl named Fatima who moved the ball like no other kid on the court. Many players were there for the first time but learned quickly. The British girl was slow and awkward, but her teammates made sure she got her fair share of play even if she missed the basket. As a result of the kids'

teamwork, some coaching help, and the parents' support, we finished the season in first place. I found out later that the other expat coaches took advantage of my ignorance of the draft and left me with players they thought were the least competent. The experience for my son Taylor was priceless. He had many friends from many different backgrounds uniting to achieve a common goal. To this day he holds no prejudice toward any race, culture, or religion. A friend is a friend. My learning from this was on many levels, but perhaps the most important was a new hope, faith, or awareness that if a small population of "enemies" can bond with each other to build a winning team from "leftovers," perhaps it can be done on a larger scale one person at a time, just as we work in the Church to reach and change one individual soul at a time.



My experience growing up in developing countries has helped me learn to adjust more quickly to different and often challenging new environments. When I entered the MTC to begin my mission, my teachers kept telling us that we would pass through several phases of culture shock once we arrived in Italy and that there would be a long, hard period of adjustment. Once I arrived in the mission field, though, I kept waiting for the culture shock to set in, but it never did. I realized that my previous experiences in leaving my comfort zone, adapting to strange cultures, and making new friends had instilled in me a kind of cultural flexibility, allowing me to adapt to changing circumstances more quickly and with less trauma than other people experience.



Living in a developing country was my refiner's fire on many levels and matured my relationship with the Lord and testimony of the gospel. The hardships of a Third-World country, together with a difficult assignment at work, a challenging Church calling, and a large family, brought me to earnest prayer far more frequently than ever before.



I think the biggest benefit of living overseas is the respect you gain for people in general. It's difficult at first, especially when you first leave your home country. I remember arriving in country and looking at the architecture thinking, "How could people live in these homes?" After making friends and going into their homes I realized the emphasis they put on "coziness" was actually more to my liking than the architecture I was used to at home. There are tons of examples like this. The simplicity of the grocery stores (they only sell what you need), the style of fishing they do, the candy they eat, their opinions of money and happiness. I liken living overseas in a foreign culture to trading within an economy; when members of the respective culture bring their specialized culture and "trade" (combine) with their new culture, the result is a position beyond what they could have achieved alone in their original culture.

Being a teenager overseas was a challenge. The freedoms presented me were more of a temptation than I had found at home. Having been exposed to that atmosphere, I gained an appreciation for the law and order that we have in the U.S. Truly the freedoms we have in the U.S. encompass more than many Americans realize. That is not to say other cultures don't have freedom. Most countries in the world do; however, I have noticed that there is almost an element of chaos found in the world that separates our way of life from that of most developing countries.

The greatest "Aha!" moment for me while living overseas was the realization that most people around the world share similar values of kindness to others, concerns about supporting their family and raising their children, and desires to live peacefully in the world. I grew up in a small Mormon town in Idaho, and even though I was taught to respect and care about other people, I had concluded that there was much to teach those outside the LDS faith and little to learn from them. After living for more than ten years in three developing countries and forming deep friendships and relationships with people of many different faiths, nationalities, and social backgrounds, I came to see the spirit of goodness and compassion—the common humanity—that characterized the vast majority of people with whom I interacted daily. I learned that if I withheld quick judgments, listened carefully, and observed others with an open mind, I was constantly taught and nurtured by the good example of those who were very different from me. This experience has continued to influence how I view and deal with others: I have learned to look beyond the surface differences and see the inner virtues that allow for warm, fulfilling relationships with people from many walks of life.

An unexpected but beneficial outcome of open-minded interaction with friends of other faiths is greater awareness of what is truly unique in one's own tradition. While we have learned to look for and appreciate the common ground of shared morals, ethics, and beliefs, we have also learned to appreciate how differences define us and help us understand more fully what it means to be a Latter-day Saint and what sets the restored gospel apart in the religious economy. The process of examining our similarities and differences with non-LDS friends has deepened our testimony of unique LDS doctrines—the nature of God, eternal progression, continuing revelation, temple work, and priesthood authority—that are problematic for nonmembers but form, we have concluded, the foundation of the gospel's power, beauty, and appeal throughout the world.¹⁹

Reconciling the Spirit of Elijah and the Spirit of Ephraim

I have noticed over the past twenty years that LDS expatriates frequently encounter a fascinating though frustrating dilemma stemming from a tension between two gospel-centered principles. On the one hand, LDS families have a deeply ingrained nesting instinct—a righteous desire to put family first and to strengthen bonds with members of their extended family. I refer to this instinct as the spirit of Elijah. On the other hand, LDS families, particularly the perennial expatriate variety, also have a profoundly felt impulse to venture beyond the nest—a genuine desire to leave the comforts of familiar surroundings and close association with extended family in order to experience new cultures and strengthen the Church throughout the world. I refer to this impulse as the spirit of Ephraim. The inherent tension between Elijah and Ephraim creates psychological and emotional stress for many LDS expatriate families who find themselves trying to balance their desire to be close to extended family and their commitment to live most of the year in a place that seems (to their extended family) light years away and extremely perilous.

The irony of the Elijah/Ephraim clash became painfully apparent to me during our first few years overseas. At first, our family and friends were generally supportive and understanding of our decision to live abroad. Each summer when we came back to the States, they were curious to learn about our experience and expressed admiration for our courage, sense of adventure, and desire to serve the Lord in the uttermost parts of the vineyard. But when it became apparent to family members that our commitment to expatriate life was more than just a temporary case of wanderlust to work out of our system (as my father put it), the attitude of some of them changed: instead of support and admiration, we often heard heartfelt pleas to return home so our children could get to know their cousins and grandparents better. There were comments expressing concern about raising our family in dangerous regions of the world, and backhanded compliments like, “Sounds like you’re having a great experience. I’m glad you’re willing to live and serve the Church in those areas, because I certainly wouldn’t ever want to.” Eventually we learned to ignore those pressures, and our friends and extended family learned to reconcile Elijah’s spirit of family togetherness with Ephraim’s spirit of international outreach. I long for the day when LDS families throughout the Church will be encouraged to heed the spirit of Ephraim as willingly as they are taught to honor the spirit of Elijah. It would be a great blessing to individual families and to the Church as a whole if more and more LDS parents would respond to the need to

take their professional skills and church experience to the frontiers of the Lord's kingdom.

Some Concluding Thoughts on LDS Expatriate Family Life

In sum, I would say that LDS expatriate families generally cope with the pressures and challenges of overseas life better than most other families who do not have the Church and gospel to buttress them. The majority of LDS expatriates highly recommend the experience to others, citing the high quality of education, the chance to get ahead financially, the rich environment for learning and personal growth, the enjoyment of social and professional associations with people from many nations, the opportunity to grow closer together as a family, and the blessings of serving in the front-line trenches of the Church. But the challenges and pressures inherent in expatriate life—including feelings of insecurity and alienation, the continual necessity of leaving one's comfort zone and facing new adjustments, and the pitfalls of the affluent expatriate culture for LDS teenagers—require that those considering this lifestyle do so only after carefully weighing both the benefits and costs of living overseas.

Expatriate families are, in my opinion, a valuable but overlooked resource in the Church and in society at large. They bring unique expertise, fresh perspective, and firsthand understanding of peoples and cultures that are in short supply. They are a vital leavening influence in the Church and abroad. Building on Elder Bruce Porter's metaphor of the beehive,²⁰ expatriates are a unique group of bees who can pollinate the far corners of the vineyard where missionary bees cannot yet reach. In our efforts to maintain and strengthen the family (as stated in the Proclamation on the Family), we can learn much from the experience of our expatriate brothers and sisters. For my part, I dream about the day when the bishop will stand to read an official letter over the pulpit in sacrament meeting that encourages all families to consider living overseas for a few years. I look forward to a time when LDS families throughout the Church will heed Ephraim's spirit of international outreach as willingly as they honor Elijah's spirit of family togetherness. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught that "a man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world, anxious to bless the whole human race."²¹ I am convinced that individual members, the family as a unit, and the Church as a whole would be greatly blessed if every family could experience firsthand the blessings and challenges of being "strangers in a strange land."

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1. Moses' expatriate experience produced a unique filial name. While living as an expatriate in the land of Midian, he named his first son Gershom, meaning "a stranger here," because he explained, "I have been a stranger in a strange land" (Ex. 2:22).

2. Nathaniel Hawthorne in Luigi Barzini, *The Italians* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1964), 8.

3. Bernt Bratsberg and Dek Terrell, "Where Do Americans Live Abroad?" *International Migration Review* 30 (Autumn 1996): 788–90. Another estimate puts the number of American expatriates at 3.2 million in 1998. David Holmstrom, "Strangers in Their Own Land," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 10, 1998, 14. As mentioned later in my article, other studies place the number at about 4 million, 2 percent of the total U.S. population.

4. Phyllis Mather, abstract to "An Investigation into Factors that Enhance or Detract from the Expatriate Family's Ability to Build and Maintain Family Cohesiveness and Stability in an Overseas, Foreign Environment" (PhD diss., Walden University, 1996).

5. The term "third culture" was coined by sociologist Ruth Hill Useem based on her decades-long study of expatriate adults and children who feel alien in both their home culture and the foreign culture in which they live. See Ruth Hill Useem, "Third Culture Kids: Focus of Major Study," *NewsLinks: The Newspaper of International Schools Services* 12 (January 1993), available online at www.tckworld.com.

6. <http://www.tckworld.com> (accessed on December 8, 2006).

7. These findings are reported in a series of five articles by Ruth Hill Useem, John Useem, Ann Baker Cottrell, and Kathleen A. Finn Jordan published in *NewsLinks: The Newspaper of International Schools Services* in 1993 (January, May, September, and November) and 1994 (March). These articles can also be found at www.tckworld.com. They were later combined and published in Carolyn D. Smith, ed., *Strangers at Home: Essays on the Effects of Living Overseas and Coming "Home" to a Strange Land* (Bayside, N. Y.: Aletheia Publications, 1996). For further reading on expatriate issues see the following publications: Linda Bell, *Hidden Immigrants: Legacies of Growing Up Abroad* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Crossroads, 1997); Faith Eidse and Nina Sichel, *Unrooted Childhoods: Memoirs of Growing Up Global* (London: Nicholas Brealey, 2004); Melissa Brayer Hess and Patricia Linderman, *Expert Expatriate: Your Guide to Successful Relocation Abroad—Moving, Living, Thriving* (Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural Press, 2002); Robert L. Kohls, *Survival Kit for Overseas Living: For Americans Planning to Live and Work Abroad* (Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural Press, 1996); Karen C. McCluskey, *Notes from a Traveling Childhood: Readings for Internationally Mobile Parents and Children* (Washington, D.C.: Foreign Service Youth Foundation, 1994); William Melton, *The New American Expat: Thriving and Surviving Overseas in the Post-9/11 World* (Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural Press, 2005); Robin Pascoe, *Homeward Bound: A Spouse's Guide to Repatriation* (North Vancouver, B.C.: Expatriate Press, 2000); David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken, *Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up among Worlds* (London: Nicholas Brealey, 2001); Craig Storti, *The Art of Coming Home* (Yarmouth, Me.: Intercultural Press, 2001); Craig Storti, *The Art of Crossing*

Cultures (London: Nicholas Brealey, 2001); Sara M. Taber, *Of Many Lands: Journal of a Traveling Childhood* (Washington, D.C.: Foreign Service Youth Foundation, 1994); Ruth Hill Useem, *A Third Culture Kid Bibliography*. Second edition, available online at www.tckworld.com; and Ruth E. Van Reken, *Letters Never Sent: One Woman's Journey from Hurt to Wholeness* (Elgin, Ill.: LifeJourney Books, 1988). See also the following websites: www.expatechange.com; www.transitionsabroad.com; www.thirdculturekids.com; www.expatexpert.com

8. Ruth Hill Useem, "TCKs Four Times More Likely to Earn Bachelor's Degrees," <http://tckworld.com> (accessed January 20, 2007).

9. Ruth Hill Useem, "TCKs Experience Prolonged Adolescence," <http://tckworld.com> (accessed January 20, 2007).

10. Useem, "TCKs Four Times More Likely to Earn Bachelor's Degrees."

11. Useem, "TCKs Four Times More Likely to Earn Bachelor's Degrees."

12. Ruth Hill Useem, "ATCKs Maintain Global Dimensions Throughout Their Lives," <http://tckworld.com> (accessed January 20, 2007).

13. Ruth Hill Useem, "ATCKs Have Problems Relating to Their Own Ethnic Groups," <http://tckworld.com> (accessed January 20, 2007).

14. Useem, "ATCKs Have Problems Relating to Their Own Ethnic Groups."

15. Useem, "TCKs Four Times More Likely to Earn Bachelor's Degrees."

16. David Pollock, cited in Kay Branaman Eakin, *According to My Passport, I'm Coming Home* (n.p., 1998), 17. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/2065.pdf>.

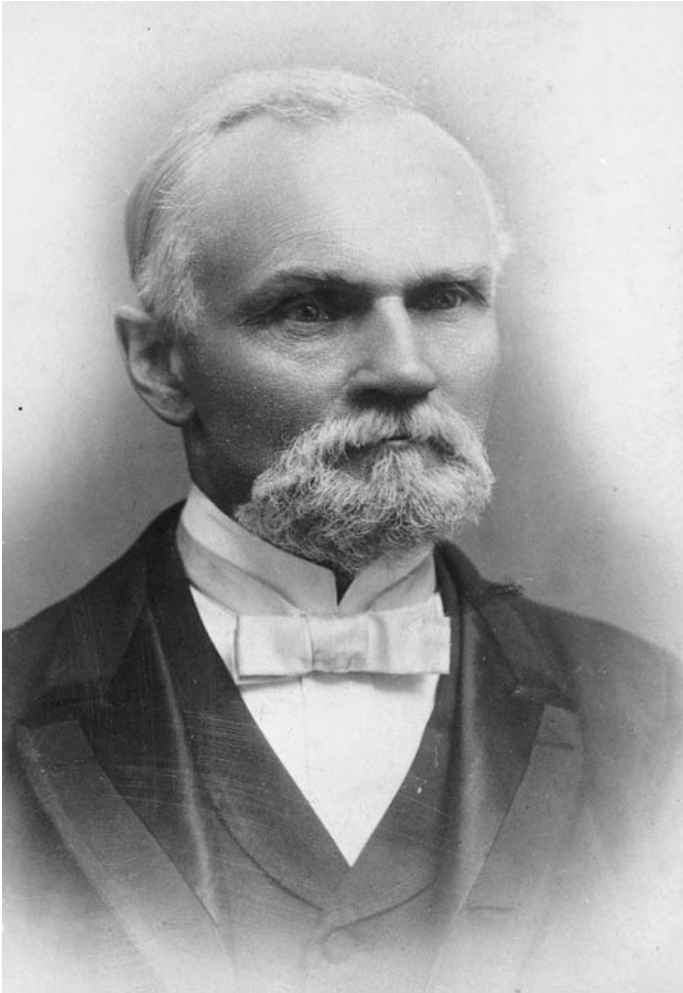
17. Hannah Pritchett, "An Alien People: Repatriation Narratives of Third-Culture Kids," unpublished paper in author's possession.

18. Anecdote drawn from personal communication with the author. Interview notes in author's possession.

19. All anecdotes were drawn from personal communications with the author. Interview notes in author's possession.

20. Bruce Porter, "Family and the Global Church: Cultural and Political Challenges," in *Proceedings of the International Society Annual Conference* (Provo, Utah: BYU David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, 1998), 5.

21. Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 4:227.



Karl G. Maeser, ca. 1876. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

Moritz Busch's *Die Mormonen* and the Conversion of Karl G. Maeser

A. LeGrand Richards

Karl G. Maeser's contributions to the education of nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints had a profound impact on the history of Mormonism, an impact that has reverberated to today. The narrative surrounding Maeser's conversion has been told and retold for over a century now in the enculturation of students into Brigham Young University's heritage. This essay seeks to better understand and contextualize the events surrounding Maeser's conversion and, more specifically, to discuss the text that was most influential in his conversion—the less-than-friendly *Die Mormonen* by Moritz Busch (1821–99).¹

Background

Karl Gottfried Maeser was born January 16, 1828, to Johann Gottfried and Hanna Christiana Zocher Maeser in Meissen, Germany, where Johann was a master painter in the famous Meissen porcelain factory. Johann and Hanna had high hopes for their son Karl, so they sent him to the prestigious Kreuzschule Gymnasium in Dresden, where he was one of the 5 percent of Germans who made the transition from formal schooling to the gymnasium.² The Kreuzschule was founded around 1300, and by Maeser's time had developed one of the highest reputations. Karl wanted to become a teacher, and although he was an excellent student and may have attended a university, he chose instead to enroll at the less prestigious but far more progressive Friedrichstadt Schullehrerseminar (teacher preparation college).

In Maeser's day, German schools were considered by many to be the best in the world, and with good reason. Horace Mann, the founder

of the American public school system, for example, spent six months touring European schools in 1843, the year that Karl was enrolled at the Kreuzschule. Mann returned praising the Prussian and Saxon schools as the best he had observed.³ The teachers were “as dignified, intelligent, benevolent-looking a company of men as could be collected from the same amount of population in any country.”⁴ He was moved by their love, dedication, lack of corporal punishment, and ability to captivate their students’ attention without harshness, coercion, or dependence on textbooks. He returned convinced that the reason for their success was the schools that Germany had instituted for the preparation of teachers. He also

A. LeGrand Richards

My interest in Karl G. Maeser has been both personal and professional. As I was investigating the history of grading in education, I sought to understand BYU’s place in this history. After reading faculty minutes and investigating original documents, I felt great affinity for Maeser and his dedication to teaching. I then began a serious study of his philosophy and training, which convinced me that modern LDS educators could learn much from this master teacher.



Before coming to BYU, I had taught and researched for two years at the University of Würzburg in Germany and knew that I might bring an important perspective to this study.

A few years ago, Maeser Elementary School in Provo was sold by the school district; it has now been remodeled into senior housing. Before it was sold, I was given the opportunity to remove some of the chalkboards from the school. Karl G. Maeser had written four sayings on these boards and had signed and dated them several months before he died. Three of these original chalkboards were still in the school, and I was able to procure them for Brigham Young University.

Finally, as a great-great grandson of Franklin D. Richards, who baptized Maeser in Dresden, Germany, I feel a familial tie to the man he baptized and continued to call “my dear son Karl.”

prophesied that such progressive views of education and “that quiet, noiseless development of the mind” fostered in Prussia would inevitably mean “that the time is not far distant when the people will assert their right to a participation in their own government.”⁵

He was right; in 1848, the year Karl graduated from his teacher preparation program, numerous pockets of political unrest in Europe boiled over into revolution. Karl was serving in his apprenticeship out of the city when Dresden exploded in revolt. The revolution, however, was crushed, and King Wilhelm IV blamed the schools. Oppressive regulations were imposed so that when Karl returned to teach school in Dresden he found that he had been prepared to teach in a system that no longer existed. As a teacher prepared in Pestalozzian freedom, democratic thinking, and a belief in self-directed learning, Maeser must have found these regulations particularly disturbing.

Die Mormonen and Maeser's Introduction to Mormonism

Maeser accepted the appointment as assistant director of the Budich Institute in 1852, a private school on the outskirts of Dresden. While in this position, he met and pursued the director's daughter Anna Mieth. They married on June 11, 1854, and in the next year their first child, Reinhard, was born. These were politically oppressive times in Saxony; preaching any other religion than the state religion, Lutheranism, was illegal. And Maeser's training had left him unsatisfied and distressed. Of these times he later wrote, “Skepticism had undermined the religious impressions of my childhood days, and . . . infidelity, now known by its modern name as agnosticism, was exercising its disintegrating influence upon me.”⁶

In 1853 Maeser met Edward Schoenfeld at the school where they were teaching, and Schoenfeld married Maeser's sister-in-law, Ottilie. This marriage strengthened the friendship between Schoenfeld and Maeser that would continue throughout their lives. Although life seemed happy enough to them, Maeser and Schoenfeld both struggled with existential and religious questions. Schoenfeld later wrote,

In those days we were what you might call young, fairly well educated boys, like thousands of others anywhere. We knew nothing of the gospel; but one fact was clear to us, that what the world called “religion” was not the truth; and as there was nothing better to our knowledge, we both were what thousands of others are under like conditions, skeptics, and we thought that science, and especially natural philosophy, was the only thing that might in some way fill the longing of the soul.⁷

Young Karl called himself an agnostic, but as an *Oberlehrer* (assistant master teacher), he was legally required to teach six hours of religion per

week. Douglas Tobler argues that it was because of this assignment to teach a religion course “that Maeser confronted directly the spiritual crisis which had been building in him.”⁸ It was in this atmosphere of skepticism that Maeser would be introduced to Mormonism. He later wrote,

In that dark period of my life, when I was searching for a foothold among the political, social, philosophical, and religious opinions of the world, my attention was called to a pamphlet on the “Mormons,” written by a man named Busch. The author wrote in a spirit of opposition to that strange people, but his very illogical deductions and sarcastic invectives aroused my curiosity, and an irresistible desire to know more about the subject of the author’s animadversion caused me to make persistent inquiries concerning it.⁹

A later, secondhand account relates the following:

I was a teacher at a Volk school in Neustadt-Dresden and belonged to an association in whose circle regular lectures on popular academic topics were sponsored. My turn came, and attracted through my readings in the book by Moritz Busch, I chose the theme “Mormon doctrine.” But I wanted to obtain a more independent view of my own, a more grounded understanding of the matter, so I wrote a friend who lived in Copenhagen, because I knew that missionaries in the Mormon Church were maintained, particularly in Scandinavian countries. Some time passed without my obtaining an answer.¹⁰

The work that Maeser was referring to is *Die Mormonen: Ihr Prophet, ihr Staat, ihr Glaube* (*The Mormons: Their Prophet, their State, their Faith*). Perhaps few researchers have examined *Die Mormonen* closely because Maeser sometimes referred to it as a pamphlet, not a book, in the telling of his conversion. No record of a pamphlet by Busch exists, but because the 158-page book was small and had a soft cover, it might have been thought of as a pamphlet.¹¹

Moritz Busch

Not much older than Maeser, Moritz Busch was also from Saxony, born February 13, 1821, in Dresden to a military petty officer and the daughter of a teacher at a school for the poor.¹² Upon graduating from the gymnasium, he selected a prestigious track at the University of Leipzig, receiving a doctorate in theology and philosophy. He participated in the revolt of 1849 in Dresden.¹³ In 1851, Busch joined the thousands who emigrated to the United States and there began a career as a journalist. Suppressed Germans craved knowledge about the new world, and it was obvious that Busch never intended to stay in America. He kept copious notes and careful descriptions of his travels for two years, then returned

and published *Wanderungen zwischen Hudson und Mississippi 1851 und 1852* (*Travels between the Hudson and the Mississippi 1851 and 1852*).¹⁴ As a part of his travels, he visited the nearly vacated remains of Nauvoo and began to ask what had happened. In chapter 10 of the book, Busch examines the history and development of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, though he does little to develop the doctrine. He does, however, expose his sarcastic style by characterizing Mormonism as “the most monstrous anomaly of our age.” Showing a strange ambivalence, he called it a product of Yankeeism with all of its dark sides and some of the virtues of a paternal nature: “The observer can determine whether he has a right to laugh or the duty to cry and whether he could be considered truly lucky to be born in the century of light or whether this light, believed to be so universally distributed, isn’t much rather always limited by the fates to a few privileged.”¹⁵

Busch adopted the Solomon Spalding thesis for the origin of the Book of Mormon but sympathized with Mormons for the abusive treatment they received in Missouri. About his book of travels in America, the *New York Times* later wrote that it “occasioned much remark on account of its caustic criticisms of Americans and American institutions.”¹⁶ Busch later wrote other critical travelogues about Palestine, Egypt, and Greece. Then he accepted a post at the *Grenzboten*, an influential German periodical, where he became its editor. He became best known for his biography and publications about Otto von Bismarck, first chancellor of the German Empire, with whom he traveled for many years as a press secretary.

Die Mormonen

In his 1855 book about Mormonism, Busch argued that Mormons were a ridiculously superstitious people, duped by a charismatic leader, but at the same time remarkably hard-working and energetic. He introduced the book with a severe critique of how corrupt religion had become in the United States and how vulnerable the American psyche was to religious frenzy:

We have perfect chaos before us, in which the subject ferments in the wildest manner; science has not seen a similar period in church history or such a decay of Christianity. The stupidest reliance on the letter of the law mixes itself with the most lunatic excess of fantasy. The most conspicuous delusion finds thousands upon thousands of men, who otherwise enjoy the sharpest sense in worldly things, now have eyes that consider black to be white, ears that listen to lies as revelation from above, and knees that bow before charlatans as the ambassadors of God.

The queer becomes miraculous, and caricatures are transformed into heroes. . . . Nothing is so full of contradiction, nothing departs so far from manners and customs, that there isn't a circle of believers who will gather themselves, if an eloquent mouth presents it, a crafty understanding justifies it from the Bible, and an organized talent gives it a form of a church. Indeed, it is the baroque and bizarre that seems to exercise the greatest power to attract, if only it is regularly exchanged with an even stranger falsehood.¹⁷

He then turned to the development of Mormonism:

Mormonism is unique in its type. It could be sown only in the soil of the new world, thrive only under the American sun, and if a miracle consists of some thoroughly outrageous phenomenon that contradicts the normal course of events, then, for the time being, we stand here before one of the greatest miracles of our century. . . . The history of the Mormons or the Latter-day Saints, as they call themselves, is the history of a hollow nut planted in the humus of the transatlantic world, which at first glance seems to have miraculously grown into a giant tree and produced fruits that are not entirely all rotten.¹⁸

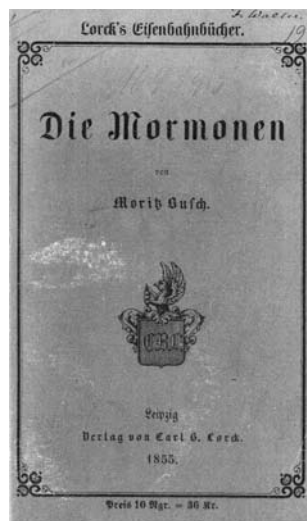
In an unusual combination of sarcastic derision with journalistic respect for detail, Busch describes the history, doctrine, and accomplishments of this muddled mishmash of gullible people. He described Joseph Smith as a naïve but ambitious and charismatic leader who found a remarkably fresh way to persuade people to follow him in spite of the obvious perversions he introduced. "While some may compare him in character to Mohammed and others with Cromwell, in very many expressions of his character we are reminded of Barnum, the 'Napoleon of irresponsibility,' and though he was undeniably an exceptional man, we might even describe him as the personified genius of Yankeeism."

Joseph was capable of taking advantage of the unique conditions in America that

made it possible for a sect consisting only of the founder's family and two friends, in the course of twenty years, in spite of cruel persecution and in spite of numerous occasions to expose the lies at its core, to become a well-ordered church whose hundred thousand members are strewn across the whole earth: for our century and particularly for America these strange conditions are as shameful as they are comforting. They show that in our time the light of culture still does not shine as far as we generally assume and that particularly the United States and England have less cause to carry the title of enlightened nations that they so eagerly adopt. They also show, however, that there, where free institutions reign and where the noble characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon race penetrate the whole, is a side where fraud can take on a form that deserves at least recognition and perhaps even admiration.¹⁹

Busch then described Joseph Smith's history and summarized the Book of Mormon. He reviewed the persecutions the Saints had suffered, their diligence in establishing the beautiful city of Nauvoo, the Martyrdom, their exodus across the Great Plains, their participation in the Mormon Battalion, and their settlement in the Salt Lake Valley. With astounding detail, he described the State of Deseret from "Box Elder Creek on the North" to the settlements of Parowan, Manti, and Tooele, to the settlement in San Diego with the Pony Express stations in between. He even described a tidy little town at the base of the "Timpanoga Mountain." He explained the climate and topography, the industry and politics, and predicted how the nation would deal with the Mormon theocracy.

Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 8 introduced Maeser to the basic doctrines of the Church. Busch described standard works of scripture, the Church's major publications, the Articles of Faith, and Mormon views on the Creation, the Fall, the nature of man, the spirit world, and the Resurrection. He explained the distinction between the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods, described the basic ordinances, and explained the importance to Mormons of temples and baptism for the dead. Relying heavily on the theological treatises of Parley P. Pratt and Orson Hyde, Busch spoke of premortal life and the War in Heaven, the gathering of the house of Israel, and the concept of eternal marriage. He translated section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants and expounded on the doctrine and practice of plural marriage—all in the context that "the following communications are a harvest of flowers from this garden of caprice and nonsense."²⁰



Moritz Busch, *Die Mormonen: Ihr Prophet, ihr Staat und ihr Glaube* (1855). Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

Maeser's Reaction to *Die Mormonen*

As imbalanced and prejudicial as Busch's review of Mormon doctrine may have been, the Lindeman account of Maeser's conversion suggests that it was sufficient to answer some of Maeser's deepest questions before he made formal contact with Church representatives.

I often thought about Mormon doctrine, because I had to admit that many of the doubts, contradictions, and uncertainties that had remained

in me from my previous religious instruction regarding important points were solved for me in Mormon doctrine in the simplest and most appealing manner. But to convert me took something of an extraordinary experience.²¹

Busch reviewed the missionary work of the Church with the same kind of ambivalence:

Undeterred and undaunted by harsh rejection, by ridicule and scorn, they wander from town to town, discussing in individual houses, conversing with people in the streets, now and then working as a craftsman in the workshop, and in this way they bring to people that which is on their minds. Most of them are quite uneducated, nevertheless nearly all possess great practice in sophisticated questions and conclusions and no small knowledge of the Bible. Whoever admits the slightest truth from them will inevitably be caught in their nets and can be freed only through a forceful breach.²²

He warned that they “attempt to plunder hearts” by claiming ancient Christian gifts like “healing by the laying on of hands, prophecy, casting out devils, and speaking in tongues.” Of course “no man of means belongs to their adherents,” and they “protect themselves from speaking to people of superior education,” but the superstitious and the poor seeking a way to the New World are seduced by the thousands. They offer a “Perpetual Welfare Fund” to entice the poor to their “New Jerusalem.”²³ Scoffing at the stupidity of the people in England, Busch described how effective the missionaries had been at attracting “the lowest strata of society” with promises of land and adventure. In Sweden “Apostle Forsden” had had some success in 1851 until “the authorities arrested him and issued him a reprimand.” Of course, he then used this experience as a “cheap martyrdom” to affirm his dedication to the work.

Possessed by unbelievable industry, these street preachers literally follow the words “cry loudly and spare not” and by the dozens baptize all who manifest their willingness “to bow their knee to this name.” Many return home with fatigued lungs and broken health from such exertion, but then they are compensated with the glory of special devoutness and the honor that comes to them when the brethren refer to them, “Look, this is the holy man who has won so many souls through tireless preaching in the streets of London.”²⁴

While success had been great in England and in the islands of the Pacific, Switzerland, France, and Italy had not been very receptive. In Germany

the Mormon emissaries have been heard. But their hopes were very soon thwarted by the intervention of the police. In 1851 Taylor came to Hamburg in order to establish a magazine that carried the name of

“Zions Panier” [Zion’s Ensign], but after the fourth issue appeared, it died because of a lack of interest. Following him in 1852 came another *Sendling* from the Salt Lake, Daniel Cairn, only to be ejected from the city in his first attempt to appear publicly. No better results were reached by the Mormons who appeared in Southern or Western Germany, and the Indian Bible, that in the meantime has been translated, can barely recover its costs.²⁵

The most ironic part of Busch’s book for Karl Maeser was the description of Mormon educational ambitions. “The leaders of the community are contemplating wonderful plans for the future to beautify their city.”²⁶ This uneducated people believed they could establish a university. The state set aside \$5,000 annually for a university, and land was dedicated with “springs for watering the groves, flowerbeds, and botanical gardens and by filling the pools.” Lots had been set apart for beautiful buildings on the bench east of the city, where they planned to place the instruments they had already gathered for a planetarium and in the name of a university education to provide training in such ridiculous topics as engineering, mining, and even farming.²⁷

As one classically trained in the finest German university tradition, Busch condemned the practical orientation of this new “university” and its ambitious desire to

“completely revolutionize the kingdom of the sciences and condemn the greatest scholars, particularly in mathematics and in the physical sciences, of error. From them, the geologist and the chemist will receive the deepest and strangest knowledge of the wonders of the deep, the botanist and zoologist will receive from them teachings in the principles of life in animals and plants.” For after they have sought first the kingdom of God, they expect the fulfillment of the promise, that all other knowledge shall come naturally to them; indeed, they add very sensibly that the Lord helps those who help themselves and that through strict diligence the spirit will become capable of receiving wisdom from on high.²⁸

This strange, ambitious people planned to revolutionize astronomy by overthrowing Newtonian theories of gravity through their “Book of Abraham” and replacing them with the “intelligence of matter” or an “outpouring and presence of the Holy Ghost in atomic mass.”²⁹ They planned to teach the old Saxon and Celtic classics alongside the Greek and Roman—who knows, they “could be as authentic as the Book of Mormon.”

Without mentioning the source, Busch translated a statement made by W. W. Phelps, “apostle” and regent of the university, at the celebration on July 24, 1851, in which he besought the board,

the Lord’s anointed, the elders of Israel, and the whole church, with one consent, to pray the Lord, our heavenly Father, to send down some of

the regents from the great University of Perfection, as he did to Noah, Moses, and others, to unfold unto his servants the principles of wisdom, philosophy and science, . . . [to send down] the angels, from the grand library of Zion above, with a copy of the history of eternal lives; the records of worlds; the genealogy of the Gods; the philosophy of truth; the names of our spirits from the Lamb's Book of life, and the songs of the sanctified.³⁰

Mockingly, Busch teased that someday they may have those heavenly messengers and manuscripts, but for now they are content to gather as many human books as possible. He reported about Dr. Bernhisel's efforts to establish a library and Brigham Young's proclamation to secure

a copy of every valuable treatise on education—every book, map, chart, or diagram that may contain interesting, useful, and attractive matter, to gain the attention of children, and cause them to love to learn to read; and, also every historical, mathematical, philosophical, geographical, geological, astronomical scientific, practical, and all other variety of useful and interesting writings, maps, &c., . . . for the benefit of the rising generation.³¹

Busch misinterpreted the term "Parent School" as it was used to refer to the University of Deseret and assumed it intended to educate the heads of families. Brigham Young did not see himself as too good to attend such a school. Even though the leaders had no clear understanding of what education would do to their own power, Busch praised their "particular respect for education" but warned sarcastically: "If they wanted to develop a ruling priestcraft that holds its subjects in darkness and ignorance, they should pursue entirely different politics."

They admitted readily that the wisest among them were at best "amateurishly self-educated" and had no clear concept of a true education. They thought they could "drag the sciences into the country as one might call upon the services of a competent potter, metal worker, or clock maker."³²

Busch seemed to believe that true education would be the greatest enemy to Mormonism. The leaders were naïve and uneducated and, therefore, did not realize they were playing with fire by seeking an institution of higher learning. "Out of confidence in their previous success, they seem to have no idea that they will be educating an enemy that sooner or later will overthrow their entire house of cards."³³

In spite of the extraordinary detail in his description, Busch relied exclusively on the writings of others, from whom he borrowed liberally without acknowledging the source. He seemed to delight in the fine detail of anecdotal descriptions without testing the breadth or accuracy of his stories.

In summary, then, Moritz Busch introduced Karl G. Maeser to the basic doctrines of the Church Maeser would dedicate his life to serving, the stories and origin of the Book of Mormon of which he would one day testify, the history and persecutions of the people he would join, the challenges he would face traveling across the American frontier, a remarkably detailed description of his future home—including a “tidy town” in which he would be called to serve. He also learned of the potential difficulties representatives of the Church would face in missionary activities in Germany. Busch introduced Maeser to personalities who would become his dearest friends and central to his future—Brigham Young, John Taylor, and Franklin D. Richards.³⁴ He learned of the prophecies Church leaders had given regarding their vision of a great university to be established in the Rocky Mountains—all from a writer who sought to mock and deride the Church and its people.

This ambivalent mix of mocking sarcasm and journalistic respect for facts while describing these pioneers intensely “aroused” Karl’s curiosity with “an irresistible desire” to know more about them.³⁵ In Heber J. Grant’s words: “When Brother Maeser read this article—that the ‘Mormon’ people were industrious, that they were frugal, that they took care of their poor, better than any other people, that they were honest and temperate, and yet that they were wicked and vile and corrupt—‘why,’ he said, ‘the man who wrote this article is a liar.’”³⁶

In Talmage’s account, the writer, while intending

to be calumnious and derogatory, told also of the wonderful growth and development of these strange people in the valleys of the Rocky Mountains, of the growing commonwealth they had planted in the desert, of their achievements in agriculture and the industrial arts. With the analytical vision of a trained reasoner, and, moreover, with the open and unbiased mind of an honest man, a lover of the truth, Karl G. Maeser saw the inconsistency of these contradictory assertions. “I knew” he has said to me many times, that no people could develop and thrive as the facts showed the Latter-day Saints “to have done, and at the same time be of degraded nature and base ideals.”³⁷

Maeser’s Conversion

His interest ignited, Maeser sought a way to contact an official representative of these strange people that he might hear the other side of the story and know for himself. With no Mormons to contact in the country, he “accidentally found” that they had a mission in Denmark and obtained the address of John Van Cott, president of the Scandinavian Mission.

Van Cott told him to write Daniel Tyler in Switzerland, who was assigned to teach German investigators and “would give me all information I should desire on the subject of ‘Mormonism.’”³⁸

Maeser’s first letter to Tyler on July 4 must have seemed unbelievable, and it was returned without answer. Tyler thought it was a ploy by the German police, an understandable response by a protective mission president whose missionaries had been persecuted and banished. After all, there were no members in that part of Germany, and it was illegal to preach there. Undaunted by what appeared to be an insult, Maeser forwarded his original letter with a new letter to Van Cott asking for an explanation. On July 29 Van Cott wrote in his journal, “Received 2 letters from Dresden, making enquiries concerning the way and manner by which they could be adopted into the kingdom of God.”³⁹ No wonder Tyler found it hard to believe. Van Cott quickly wrote to Tyler assuring him that he believed Maeser was sincere and wrote to Maeser requesting him to give Tyler another chance.

On August 5, 1855, Tyler wrote, “I read a letter from Elder John Van Cott from Copenhagen with Mr. Maeser’s letter returned stating that he had been in correspondence with him and directed him to me as the proper person for him to correspond with.”⁴⁰ On August 13 Tyler recorded, “I wrote Mr. Maeser in answer to his first (of July 4th).”⁴¹ Two days later he received another request from Maeser, “On the 15th I received a second letter from [him] ordering books etc. which I sent him on the 17th.”⁴² Thus, Maeser’s first contact with Church materials, at the earliest, came in the latter part of August 1855. In writing of this time, Edward Schoenfeld later said, “Bro. Tyler did send us a few pamphlets (miserably translated) by somebody who did not belong to the Church, no doubt.”⁴³

Mabel Maeser Tanner, Maeser’s granddaughter, suggested: “The poor translation of the tract was a source of much laughter and merriment among the young students, but as Karl caught the message hidden in the faulty words, he became intensely interested.”⁴⁴

According to Tyler, Maeser

believed them all and said during an approaching vacation he would come to Geneva, a distance of about six hundred miles, and be baptized.

Thinking this might be an opening to establish the gospel in the heart of Germany, where it had not been preached for about eighteen hundred years, I wrote and told the professor that if there was free toleration of religion perhaps I might send an Elder to preach the gospel to others as well as to instruct him further in its principles. He wrote, in answer, that no religion, except the Lutheran, was allowed to be taught, and that was the national religion.⁴⁵

At this point, Maeser's letters could not be answered quickly enough. Tyler's journal records, "On the 18th I answered his letter bearing [the] date of August 12th."⁴⁶ On August 25, we read,

I received a letter from Mr. Maeser in Dresden in answer to one I wrote him on the 14th stating his anxiety with his brother in law and family also his own family to enter the church by baptism, etc. He said an elder must not come as a missionary but he could be known as a teacher in his family. Same date I wrote President Richards requesting him to send Elder Budge who was still under my presidency he having been sent to England until his services should be needed in this land.⁴⁷

Knowing the potential dangers a missionary to Germany might face, Elder Franklin D. Richards of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who presided over the European Mission, sought a safe means of sending Elder Budge. He later recalled:

While I was meditating the Spirit said to me: Select a brother from the English mission who would like to finish his education in Germany and send him there, if peradventure Professor Maeser should take him in as a private boarder, and thus he could teach the German while the Elder could teach the English and the gospel. I found Elder Budge, and I called him to this duty.⁴⁸

On September 5, Tyler wrote, "Received a letter from President Richards informing me that Elder Budge was instructed to make ready for Dresden and await instructions from me."⁴⁹ On September 7, he "posted two letters one to President Richards with a note to Elder Budge to get ready and leave for Dresden soon as consistent and one to Mr. Maeser in Dresden informing him that Elder Budge would leave Eng. for Dresden in a few days."⁵⁰

Requesting William Budge to travel to Germany during these troubled times was not a simple transfer to a new area. It was a dangerous request and both the brethren knew it.⁵¹ It was strictly illegal to preach in Saxony, and Elder Budge might be arrested for any attempt. He had spent nearly seven months in Switzerland under Daniel Tyler,⁵² but after numerous arrests, beatings, and banishments he was reassigned April 20 to the British Isles. William took a steamer on September 20 and reached Hamburg after facing a severe storm on the North Sea. He arrived in Dresden on September 28.⁵³

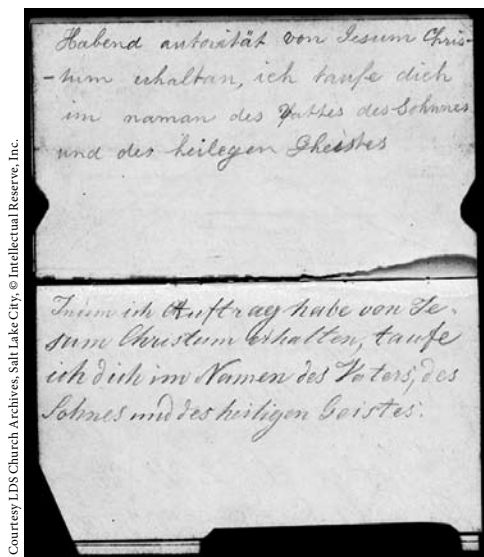
While it is apparent that William Budge played an important role in Maeser's conversion, it is also apparent that Maeser was prepared well in advance of Budge's arrival. Budge's contribution lay primarily in who he was and not merely what he tried to teach. Of Budge, Maeser wrote: "It was providential that such a man was the first 'Mormon' I ever beheld, for, although

scarcely able to make himself understood in German, he, by his winning and yet dignified personality, created an impression upon me and my family which was the keynote to an indispensable influence that hallowed the principles he advocated.”⁵⁴

Using a Bible with German in one column and English in the other and making rapid progress in his ability to speak, William Budge engaged in a very intense and condensed few days of teaching. President Richards reported that he received “a communication . . . at Liverpool stating that Brother Maeser and some friends, if I would come to Germany, were about ready to be baptized.”⁵⁵ Richards arrived on October 11, and the baptism was held on October 14 in the Elbe River, a couple of miles outside the city. In order to avoid the attention of the civil authorities, Karl G. Maeser, Edward Schoenfeld, and Edward Martin, the first converts from Saxony, Germany, were baptized under the cloak of night by Franklin D. Richards and William Budge. Five days later, five new members joined them, including Karl’s wife, Anna, and Schoenfeld’s wife, Otilie.

In spiritual affirmation that his decision to be baptized was proper, Karl described that he was given the gift of tongues on the return walk home:

We walked home together, President Richards and Elder Budge at the right and the left of me, while the other three men walked some distance behind us, so as to attract no notice. . . . Our conversation was on the subject of the authority of the Priesthood, Elder Budge acting as interpreter. Suddenly I stopped Elder Budge from interpreting President



Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Pages from Franklin D. Richards pocket planner of October 1855 showing an attempt to translate the baptismal prayer into German. From the grammar and spelling, it is obvious that the writer (perhaps Elder William Budge) was not highly experienced in German. The adjacent page shows a corrected version of the translation (and the “G” looks identical to the “G” in Karl G. Maeser’s signature). It appears someone attempted a translation and then Karl wrote the baptismal prayer for his own baptism in proper German. It should be noted that both are slightly different from the German baptismal prayer used today.

Richards' remarks, as I understood them, and replied to him in German, when again the interpretation was not needed as President Richards understood me also.⁵⁶

This experience is a part of every account of Maeser's conversion. President Richards freely admitted, "Brother Maeser did not know English and I did not know German, but I could speak with him and he with me."⁵⁷

In Edward Schoenfeld's words, "Did I not hear him and Elder Franklin D. Richards converse together in the dark night . . . ? What they said I do not know, but I knew they had a good conversation together, and when we waited, to let them come up, the gift was gone."⁵⁸

Maeser's Response to Busch

It did not take long for Schoenfeld and Maeser to realize that the decision to become Mormon meant the decision to leave their beloved homeland. Schoenfeld described that they "gave up" their situations in Dresden voluntarily. Lindeman records that Maeser said it was "against all attempts of my friends to restrain me."⁵⁹ This could only mean that they voluntarily remained members of the LDS Church and, therefore, willingly suffered the consequences. After the 1854 regulation, school inspectors, mostly clergy and not educators, were employed to guarantee orthodox belief among teachers. Franklin D. Richards remembered another side of Maeser's "voluntary" decision. Officers took him in for questioning. "He submitted to three or four investigations and they did not want him to stay among them; they sent him out to the line of Saxony, where another escort conveyed him down to Hamburg and thus he came over to England to see if he could find me."⁶⁰ On the back of Maeser's birth certificate is written: *Ausgehändigt nach Liverpool* (handed over to Liverpool) and stamped by the Dresden police on July 2, 1856.

Called to serve missions twice on their journey to Zion, the Maesers did not arrive in Salt Lake City until September 1, 1860. Then, barely settled in this desert city, Karl was called once more to serve, this time to return to Germany and Switzerland for three more years, 1867–70. This allowed one more twist of irony. As requested by Brigham Young, Maeser published the first edition of the German *Der Stern* (*The Star*) on January 1, 1869. This gave him an opportunity to respond directly to Moritz Busch and those like him. As a theme for that edition he selected a Latin phrase, *Audiatur et altera pars* (Listen to the other side).

We have written this sentence of ancient Roman law on the frontispiece of our monthly magazine as a motto, . . . to call attention to a fact that has played a particularly prevalent role in the judging of our people, their

origin, their history, their faith and their efforts: the rejection of our doctrine, the derision of our elders, and the persecution of our people by the current generation without examination or investigation of the one-sided testimony of our enemies. . . . Supported by our already-mentioned motto, we turn to those who hold themselves to be honest and sincere people, as the true representatives of this nation, . . . so that we can appeal to their sense of justice and call for a correct and fair judgment.⁶¹

Challenging the contradictions and absurdities attributed to the Church through publications and lectures, Maeser asked where these writers got their information.

Did these scoffers discover the hollowness and absurdity of our doctrine and testimony through careful examination? . . . Did those journalists, clergymen, and officers, after testing our principles with arduous diligence and praiseworthy exertion for the good of mankind, and recognizing the foundation to be false, consider themselves called to condemn those who hold them? Have they meticulously weighed the evidence of our enemies against our own principles and actions and found the latter to be too lacking?

Reader! You know that it is not so, not even in one single case.⁶²

In the next edition, he continued with a similar theme. Not only do we believe that “the blood of the prophets are the seeds of the Church,” but as Brigham Young put it, “Do you want to know what we want? We want to conquer the world if you will let us; however, if you persecute us we will do it even faster!”⁶³

Moritz Busch was precisely the type of journalist, scholar, and politician Maeser was trying to challenge, but with all his commitment to journalistic detail, Busch refused to seek firsthand evidence from the believers. Interestingly, in 1869, the year Maeser published the first edition of *Der Stern*, Busch published a history of the Mormons updating and extending the work that introduced Brother Maeser to the Church in 1855. Once again Busch relied only on his previous work or strictly non-Mormon sources, (though he was slightly better at providing references than in his previous book). Without noting the hundreds of Germans who had joined the Church since his first book, the publication of *Der Darsteller* in Switzerland, or the presence of Maeser as president of the Swiss-German Mission, Busch repeated his summary of missionary activities in various countries almost word for word. Then toward the end of chapter 9 concluded, “The Mormon endeavors for German souls has nearly completely failed.” Only a poet, a city engineer, a barber, and a few other isolated individuals had found their way into Latter-day Saint congregations—including “a school teacher in Dresden, who suddenly had strong desires to go to Zion.”⁶⁴

Karl G. Maeser's Legacy

What Brigham Young did for the settlement of the West, Karl Maeser did for the education of the West. His influence was profound and pervasive, touching a myriad of educators for generations. He has rightly been called the spiritual architect of Brigham Young University and the entire Church Educational System. As the first Superintendent of Church Education he assisted in the founding of forty-three academies, from Canada on the north to Mexico on the south (several of which have become institutions of higher education), hundreds of religion classes, and the development of the seminary and institute system. But his greatest achievements were personal; he won the love and devotion of a large family



Karl G. Maeser Family in front of the family home, Provo, Utah, May 1898. *Back row, left to right:* Mabel Maeser Tanner, Otilie Maeser Phelps, Emil Maeser, George S. McAllister, Anna Maeser (the only daughter of the professor's second wife, Emilie Damke Maeser). *Middle row:* Sarah S. Maeser and daughter Camille, Lillian Maeser, Karl G. Maeser, Georgia Maeser, Nettie M. McAllister and Theresa, Emilie Damke Maeser (Karl's second wife, whom he married in 1875; Anna, his first wife, died in 1896). *First row:* Russ (son of Lillian by a previous marriage), Gilbert Maeser, Sherwin Maeser, Beatrice Maeser Mitchell, Therese Maeser Larsen. Courtesy L. Tom Perry Special Collections.

and thousands of grateful students. He was central in the preparation of teachers in the Church and public schools. Among his immediate students were teachers who would serve throughout the territory, future U.S. senators and congressmen, university presidents, judges (including George Sutherland, who never joined the Church but became a U.S. Supreme Court justice), future General Authorities of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and even prophets, seers, and revelators.

As benefactors of Brother Maeser's legacy, it would be appropriate to express gratitude to John Van Cott, who encouraged him to continue in his investigation; to Daniel Tyler,⁶⁵ for responding to Karl's enquiries and sending him Church materials; to William Budge, who courageously entered dangerous territory and faced possible persecution to teach him; and to Franklin D. Richards,⁶⁶ who traveled from Liverpool to baptize him. Such expressions would be incomplete, however, if we did not also thank Moritz Busch, who, despite his best efforts to dissuade his readers from entertaining a serious thought about Mormonism, despite his sarcastic condemnation (or maybe because of it), provided sufficient information and doctrinal detail to ignite Karl G. Maeser's curiosity and serious investigation of the Church.

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1. Moritz Busch, *Die Mormonen: Ihr Prophet, ihr Staat und ihr Glaube* (Leipzig: Verlag von Carl B. Lorck, 1855). Busch later wrote other books about Mormonism, including *Geschichte der Mormonen: Nebst einer Darstellung ihres Glaubens und ihrer gegenwärtigen sozialen und politischen Verhältnisse* (Leipzig: Verlag von Ambrosius Abel, 1869); "Aus der Geschichte und dem Katechismus der Mormonen," *Daheim* 6, no. 35 (May 28, 1870): 553–72; "Die Mormonen-Bibel," *Die Gartenlaube* 37 (1877): 616–18; and "Brigham Young, der Mormonenprophet," *Daheim* 14, no. 52 (September 22, 1877): 855–56.

2. Douglas R. Skopp, "The Elementary School Teachers in 'Revolt': Reform Proposals for Germany's Volksschulen in 1848 and 1849," *History of Education Quarterly* 22 (Autumn 1982): 345.

3. More than one hundred pages of Horace Mann's *Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Education* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1844) describe his experience in Germany. His praise of the German schools was so strong that it brought a dramatic rejoinder from a group of principals in Boston.

4. Mann, *Seventh Annual Report*, 127.

5. Mann, *Seventh Annual Report*, 159.

6. Karl G. Maeser, "How I Became a 'Mormon,'" *Improvement Era* 3 (November 1899): 23–24.

7. Edward Schoenfeld, *Liahona: The Elders' Journal* 9 (August 1, 1911): 81.

8. Douglas F. Tobler, "Karl G. Maeser's German Background, 1828–1856: The Making of Zion's Teacher," *BYU Studies* 17, no. 2 (1977): 170.

9. Maeser, "How I Became a 'Mormon,'" 24.

10. M. Lindeman, "Ein sächsischer Schulmeister im Mormonenlande," *Die Gartenlaube*, no. 48 (1873): 795. Lindeman is quoting Maeser from memory. (Throughout this paper I am responsible for the translation of the German documents and citations, including this reference and those of Moritz Busch.)

11. I am suggesting that Maeser's investigation was far more condensed than most authors have believed and far less influenced by direct contact with the Church, its literature, or its missionaries. James Talmage said a newspaper article converted Maeser; Edward Schoenfeld told many versions of the story and referred to a "tract." Theodore Schreiber, "Pioneer Educator in Utah: The Story of Karl Gottfried Maeser," *American-German Review*, April 1942, 15, called it a "booklet." Mabel Maeser Tanner, a granddaughter, argued it was a "Mormon tract." Wilkinson suggests that he read a book by Busch but leaves it unclear when Maeser began his serious investigation of the Church. Ernest L. Wilkinson, *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years*, 4 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 1:84–87. It is very likely that as a boy he had seen an article about the persecution of the Mormons and this name had remained in his memory, but it was Moritz Busch who ignited Maeser's passion to know for himself and who first introduced Karl G. Maeser to the central doctrines of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Dr. Busch, however, did not intend to be a missionary for the Church—quite the contrary. Consequently, the irony of this book about the Mormons in foreshadowing Karl G. Maeser's future is extraordinary.

12. *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 3 (Berlin: published by the historical commission of the Bavarian Academy of the Sciences, Duncker & Humboldt, 1957), 63–64.

13. One wonders whether Maeser ever met or knew Busch, but no evidence yet directly confirms it.

14. Moritz Busch, *Wanderungen zwischen Hudson und Mississippi 1851 und 1852*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: C. Arnold, 1854).

15. Busch, *Wanderungen*, 81. This book was partially translated (Moritz Busch, *Travels between the Hudson and the Mississippi 1851 and 1852*, translated and edited by Norman H. Binger [Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1971]), but the chapter referring to Mormonism was not included.

16. "Moritz Busch Is Dead," *New York Times*, November 17, 1899, 6. Busch died November 16 in Leipzig.

17. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 1–2.

18. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 4–5.

19. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 5–6.

20. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 73.

21. Lindeman, "Ein sächsischer Schulmeister im Mormonenlande," 795. He then continues with Maeser's later attempts to make contact with the Church.

22. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 60.

23. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 60–61.

24. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 62.

25. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 63–64.

26. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 66.
27. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 66.
28. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 67.
29. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 67–68.
30. W. W. Phelps, “The Celebration of the Twenty-Fourth of July, *Deseret News*, July 26, 1851, 298.
31. *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 1833–1964*, comp. James R. Clark, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 1:331, December 23, 1847. Busch also translated this citation without including the reference.
32. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 70.
33. Busch, *Die Mormonen*, 69.
34. Busch referred to Franklin D. Richards as “Francis Richards.”
35. Maeser, “How I Became a ‘Mormon,’” 24.
36. Heber J. Grant, in *Official Report of the Eighty-First Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1911), 22.
37. James E. Talmage, “In Worthy Remembrance,” *Millennial Star* 88 (December 9, 1926): 772.
38. Maeser, “How I Became a ‘Mormon,’” 24.
39. John Van Cott, “Journal Transcript,” Special Collections MSS 1035, 112.
40. Daniel Tyler, “Daniel Tyler’s Journal Continued from *Diary*,” *The Journals of Daniel Tyler* (June 22, 1853, to November 17, 1855), photocopied holograph, 52, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Perry Special Collections).
41. Tyler, “Journal,” 52.
42. Tyler, “Journal,” 52.
43. Edward Schoenfeld to Andrew Jenson, January 11, 1914, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, a copy is found in “Ancestors of Anna Heneritta Therese Mieth,” Perry Special Collections, also cited in Alma P. Burton, “Karl Maeser, Mormon Educator” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1950), 11.
44. Mabel Maeser Tanner, “My Grandfather Karl G. Maeser,” 4–5, Perry Special Collections.
45. Daniel Tyler, “Incidents of Experience,” in *Faith-Promoting Series*, vol. 10 (Salt Lake City, Juvenile Instructor Office, 1882), 44.
46. Tyler, “Journal,” 52.
47. Tyler, “Journal,” 54–55.
48. “Dr. K. G. Maeser,” *Deseret Weekly News*, March 12, 1892, 377. Franklin D. Richards was one of the speakers at a banquet held in honor of Maeser when he left his position of principal at Brigham Young Academy to serve as general superintendent of the Church school system. The addresses at the banquet were reported in the *Deseret Weekly News*.
49. Tyler, “Journal,” 57.
50. Tyler, “Journal,” 52.
51. Budge’s journal recorded that in a period of three months he was arrested or forced to appear thirteen times. Jesse R. S. Budge, *The Life of William Budge* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1915), 57.

52. William Budge served from October 1854 to April 20, 1855, in Switzerland. Upon his arrival, he wrote: "How strange it seems when a person cannot make known their thoughts neither understand people when they talk. The very sound of German is harsh but I suppose I shall get accustomed to it after a time." William Budge, "Diary," October 6, 1854, Perry Special Collections. Budge had served as a missionary in the British Isles, then was assigned to the Swiss and Italian mission with Daniel Tyler. In seven months he was beaten, imprisoned, persecuted, and banished from numerous cities in Switzerland. Budge, "Diary," October 4, 1854; November 23, 1854; December 17, 1854. He records in detail a mob that attacked the house he was in, the interrogation he endured and documented his unsuccessful attempts to obtain governmental support. Despite Schoenfeld's claim that he couldn't speak a word of German upon his arrival in Dresden, he had made some progress with the German language. Upon his reassignment to England, Tyler wrote, "I will here add that Elder Budge was ever humble and obedient to counsel and was much blessed with wisdom." Tyler, "Journal," 39. He then lamented that there were no German-speaking foreign elders left to carry the work forward and that the local missionaries lacked sufficient Church experience (none had been members for more than a year).

53. Budge, *Life of William Budge*, 64–65.

54. Maeser, "How I Became a 'Mormon,'" 25.

55. "Dr. K. G. Maeser," 377. It should also be noted that it was reported by one author that President Richards attended because he sent word that he was coming through the area on his way south, and it was decided to postpone the baptism until his arrival. Budge, *Life of William Budge*, 67. This report is likely not accurate, however, because Richards has just returned to Liverpool from France and Italy and would hardly have had time to change his clothes before he left again for Dresden.

56. Maeser, "How I Became a 'Mormon,'" 25–26.

57. "Dr. K. G. Maeser," 377.

58. Edward Schoenfeld, "A Character Sketch of Dr. Karl G. Maeser," *Juvenile Instructor* 36 (March 15, 1901): 181.

59. Lindeman, "Ein sächsischer Schulmeister," 795.

60. "Dr. K. G. Maeser," 377.

61. Karl Maeser, "Audiatur et altera pars," *Der Stern* 1 (January 1, 1869): 9.

62. Maeser, "Audiatur et altera pars," 10.

63. Karl G. Maeser, "Unser Zeugnis," *Der Stern* 1 (February 1869): 24.

64. Moritz Busch, *Geschichte der Mormonen: Nebst einer Darstellung ihres Glaubens und ihrer gegenwärtigen socialen und politischen Verhältnisse* (Leipzig: Abel, 1869), 326.

65. Maeser dedicated a poem to Elder Tyler upon his release from the Swiss-Italian Mission. "Lebewohl an Herrn Daniel Tyler, bei seinem Abgange von Genf" (Farewell to Mr. Daniel Tyler, on his departure from Geneva), *Der Darsteller der Heiligen der Letzten Tage* 1, no. 8 (1856): 128.

66. Franklin D. Richards's impact on Maeser must have been great. Maeser also dedicated a poem to him. "Franklin Richards," *Der Darsteller der Heiligen der Letzten Tage* 2, no. 4 (1856): 63–64. Maeser even named his next son after Franklin D. Richards.



Franklin S. Harris, 1925. Harris's legacy can be seen today as thousands of students are taught to excel in hundreds of disciplines all across campus. BYU would not be the strong educational institution it is if Franklin S. Harris had not believed in the possibilities of a small parochial school and worked to improve it. Courtesy University Archives, Brigham Young University.

Charting the Future of Brigham Young University

Franklin S. Harris and the Changing Landscape of the Church's Educational Network, 1921–1926

J. Gordon Daines III

Education is deeply embedded in the theology and religion of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Formal educational systems began to develop soon after the establishment of the Church in 1830. The first of these formal systems was the School of the Prophets, established in Kirtland, Ohio, in December 1832 to prepare selected members for missionary work.¹ Nearly a decade later an attempt was made to establish a university in Nauvoo, Illinois. After the move to Utah, the Church continued its involvement in formal education with the establishment of “common schools, stake academies, and colleges and universities.”² The curriculum of these early frontier schools was heavily influenced by Church attitudes and teachings. To the growing non-LDS population in Utah this intermixing of religion and education was offensive, and Utah education became a source of conflict as each group sought to influence the educational curriculum.³ This conflict influenced Church leaders to “organize experimental church schools” to educate the youth of the Church.⁴ This experiment assumed more urgency with the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Act in 1887. The Edmunds-Tucker Act accelerated the growing “secularization of the public schools.”⁵ This, in turn, led the Church to expand its network of stake academies and colleges and begin investigating the need for a vehicle to deliver religious education to those LDS children attending public schools.⁶

By 1911 the Church had established a network of twenty-two high-school level academies.⁷ Although not formally accredited as colleges, three of these academies were authorized to conduct college work: Brigham Young University in Provo, Brigham Young College in Logan, and Latter-day Saints University in Salt Lake City.⁸ Eight years later the appointment

J. Gordon Daines III

This article started out as an investigation of the early history of the library at Brigham Young University. I was curious as to when the first library building was constructed and why—a story that still interests me. I quickly realized, however, that the story of the Heber J. Grant Library was at the heart of a much richer story about the survival of Brigham Young University during a time of immense turmoil in the Church's educational programs.



Franklin S. Harris arrived at BYU at a critical juncture in its history. He was young, idealistic, and full of enthusiasm for the future. He also had his doubts about the venture he was about to embark on: it didn't seem possible to make a university out of the small parochial school located in Provo, Utah, but he was willing to give it a shot. He drew confidence from a mentor who believed in him and encouraged him every step of the way—John A. Widtsoe.

One of the hallmarks of BYU today is the mentoring programs that it has established to help students reach their full potential. We tend to think of mentoring as a relationship that benefits one student, and yet it very often can impact untold numbers of people. Everyone who has attended or worked at BYU has been impacted by Widtsoe's influence on Harris. Widtsoe taught at Brigham Young University for just one year, but during that year he became Harris's mentor. Providing students with opportunities to interact with knowledgeable faculty became one of the cornerstones of Harris's vision of leadership. By actively encouraging and fostering mentoring on its campus, Brigham Young University continues to realize the expansive vision of leadership that Harris had in mind for the university.

of Elder David O. McKay of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles as Church Commissioner of Education (1919–1922) set in motion the first of a series of reviews of this educational network. These reviews were conducted through most of the 1920s and resulted in important policy changes that dramatically remade the Church’s educational network. The most pronounced policy change was a shift away from the academy network and toward the growing seminary program. By the end of these reviews, nineteen of the Church’s twenty-two academies had been either closed or transferred to the states of Arizona or Utah.⁹

Brigham Young University was fortunate to have Franklin S. Harris at the helm during this turbulent time. He successfully envisioned a new mission for BYU and changed the university’s focus from solely producing teachers for the Church’s educational network to enabling students to become leaders in the arts and sciences, government, and academia. His vision and effective advocacy for this new mission enabled the university to retain its place as the flagship of Church education at the end of the 1920s.¹⁰ Franklin S. Harris played a critical role in establishing a solid foundation that enabled BYU to survive the changing landscape of the Church’s educational network in the 1920s. This paper will examine the structures Harris put into place between 1921 and 1926 that enabled BYU to broaden its programs from teacher training to include all the disciplines associated with a first-rate university.

Changes in the Church’s Educational Policy

The new shape of the Church’s educational network began to emerge with the appointment of Elder McKay as Church Commissioner and his selection of Elder Stephen L. Richards as his first counselor and Elder Richard R. Lyman as his second counselor. They recommended that outgoing Superintendent of Church Schools Horace H. Cummings be replaced by Adam S. Bennion.¹¹ The new Commission of Education operated under the direction of Church President Heber J. Grant.¹² It promptly set about evaluating the Church’s educational network. A number of concerns prompted the Commission to submit a letter to the General Church Board of Education on March 3, 1920, outlining its recommendations on the direction that Church education should take. A major concern was financial—the educational programs of the Church were becoming an increasing drain on the Church’s budget. The Commission said, “The problem of maintaining the present number of schools is a most difficult one, especially so in the light of the absolute necessity of increasing teachers’ salaries in much greater proportion than either the Church or

the State has hitherto done.”¹³ Another major concern was the sense of duplication between academies and state-sponsored high schools.¹⁴ The steadily improving state-sponsored high schools were gaining favor with many Church members, and attendance was declining at the Church academies.

To answer those concerns, the Commission proposed that the focus of Church education shift away from the academy network in favor of the developing seminary program and that the Church close several of their academies or transfer them to the state.¹⁵ The Commission further recommended that two-year teacher training programs be established at Brigham Young University, Brigham Young College, Weber Normal College, Snow Normal College, Ricks Normal College, and Dixie Normal College. This recommendation recognized that two-year teacher training programs were already in place at some of these institutions and authorized the others to begin programs. Finally, the Commission recommended that “there should be one institution in the system at which a complete college course leading to a degree is offered and we recommend that this be the BYU at Provo. For this school, all the other normal colleges should be feeders.”¹⁶ The General Church Board of Education adopted these recommendations as policy on March 15, 1920, and began the slow process of implementing them.¹⁷

News of the policy change was upsetting to members of the communities where the academies were located. Although many of the community leaders understood the financial reasons for wanting to close selected academies, they were convinced that the academy in their community should not be closed. Superintendent Bennion worked tirelessly over the next year to convince communities that the policy was a necessary change and that the seminary program would benefit their communities even more than the academies had. He met with little initial success and had managed to convert only three academies to state-run high schools by the end of 1921.¹⁸

One community that did not need much convincing that the new policy was a good idea was Provo, home of BYU. The university had achieved the status of flagship of Church education in the late 1880s, and the new policy further solidified its position. Former BYU Presidents Cluff and Brimhall had long labored to have BYU named as the Church’s teachers’ college, and their efforts were rewarded in 1909 when the General Church Board of Education announced that “there be no college work done in the Church Schools, except what is necessary to prepare teachers, and this be done in the Brigham Young University, also that the Church Teacher’s College be established at the Brigham Young University.”¹⁹ Franklin S. Harris’s



Brigham Young Academy Building, ca. 1897, from the northwest. At this time the Academy was primarily a high school. Events occurred between 1897 and 1926 that prepared the way for the Academy to become a university in both name and deed. One of the most important events was the appointment of Franklin S. Harris as BYU's fifth president. Courtesy University Archives, BYU.

1921 appointment as university president further bolstered confidence in BYU's future.

A New President for BYU

The search for a new Brigham Young University president had begun in 1920 when George H. Brimhall was released. President Brimhall wanted to dedicate more time to the growing seminary program and felt he couldn't do that and continue to serve as president of BYU.²⁰ In early March 1920, Commissioner McKay recommended that Dr. Milton R. Bennion, then dean of the School of Education at the University of Utah, be appointed president of BYU.²¹ He received permission to contact Dr. John A. Widtsoe, president of the University of Utah, about procuring Dr. Bennion's services. Later that same month Commissioner McKay reported to the General Church Board of Education that he had spoken with Dr. Widtsoe and that Dr. Widtsoe had "abstained from making any



College Building and Academy Building, ca. 1898, from the south. Brigham Young Academy had been offering college courses since the early 1890s, and the new College Building offered a home for many of those courses—particularly those dealing with teacher training. Courtesy University Archives, BYU.

definite answer as to whether he would feel all right about letting Brother Bennion go from the University, further than to say that if the brethren thought that Brother Bennion could do better work in another position he would not stand in the way.”²² In the discussion following Commissioner McKay’s report, several members of the General Church Board of Education questioned the propriety of taking Dr. Bennion away from the University of Utah. They decided to table the issue for the time being and authorized Commissioner McKay to “make further investigation to see if some other suitable man could be secured.”²³

The Commission of Education was forced to find that “other suitable man” without Elder McKay’s participation in the process because Elder McKay had left on a world tour as part of his responsibilities as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.²⁴ The Commission of Education presented their recommendations regarding the leadership of BYU to the General Church Board of Education in mid-April. Speaking on behalf of the Commission, Elder Stephen L Richards recommended that George H. Brimhall be granted the status of president-emeritus and that Franklin S.

Harris of the Utah State Agricultural College be offered the presidency of the university.²⁵

Franklin S. Harris's Preparation for the Presidency

Franklin S. Harris began his academic career in earnest in 1903 at the age of nineteen when he commenced high school work at Brigham Young University. He completed his high school diploma in 1904 and returned home to Colonia Juarez, Mexico, where he taught school for a year. In September 1905 his passion for learning led him back to BYU, where he commenced his college studies under the tutelage of Dr. John A. Widtsoe. His association with Dr. Widtsoe would mark the trajectory of his academic career.²⁶ He completed his college studies at BYU in 1907 and followed Dr. Widtsoe to the Utah State Agricultural College. After teaching at the Agricultural College for one year, Harris took his new bride, Estelle Spilsbury, and moved to Ithaca, New York, to pursue graduate work in agronomy at Cornell University. Upon completion of his degree, he returned to the Utah State Agricultural College as a professor of agronomy and an agronomist on the staff of the Experiment Station. He quickly rose through the academic ranks and eventually served as director of both the School of Agricultural Engineering and the Experiment Station. He was considered

Three-year college graduates of Brigham Young University's class of 1907: standing are Hans C. Peterson, George R. Hill, Harvey Fletcher; sitting are Robert H. Sainsbury, Georgia Hoagland, Franklin S. Harris. Franklin S. Harris developed a deep love of learning at BYU and formed friendships that would impact the future of the university. Among those friends were Professor John A. Widtsoe and classmate Harvey Fletcher. Courtesy University Archives, BYU.



for the presidency of the Agricultural College in 1916. His administrative skills and close association with Widtsoe were among the factors the General Church Board of Education considered when offering him the presidency of BYU.²⁷

Accepting the BYU presidency was not an easy decision for Harris. He enjoyed his agricultural work at the Utah State Agricultural College and was comfortable with the career path he was following at an institution that cared as deeply about agriculture as he did. He still hoped to be president of the Agricultural College at some day in the near future.²⁸ Moreover, he was concerned about the nature of BYU—particularly its composition of high school students mixed in with college students.²⁹ Harris consulted with Widtsoe and other trusted advisors until he was comfortable that BYU had the potential to be a fine university. He considered the decision for a week after it was first offered to him by President Heber J. Grant, and accepted on April 22, 1921.³⁰ The BYU Board of Trustees unanimously approved the appointment of Franklin S. Harris as university president on April 26, 1921, and set July 1, 1921, as the date that the appointment would take effect. They felt strongly that they had “the right man in the right place.”³¹ It was a fortunate choice for BYU. Harris gained a compelling vision of the university’s potential and was able to persuade others to believe in that vision. He was also able to begin implementing pieces of that vision in a manner that demonstrated its practicality and achievability.

Harris’s Vision for BYU’s Future

On his first visit to campus, shortly after accepting the presidency, Harris stated, “The President of the Church Commission of Education, and all who have anything to do with Church schools are determined to make this ‘the great Church University.’”³² President Harris’s vision of what was meant by “the great Church University” differed from that of his predecessors. From its inception in 1875, BYU had focused on training teachers for the Church’s educational network. While Presidents Cluff and Brimhall and the BYU Board of Trustees had envisioned the university as the primary institution of teacher training for the Church, President Harris had another purpose in mind—a purpose that would give BYU a much more stable position in the Church’s educational network.

He outlined what that purpose was during that first visit to campus in April 1921. He told the assembled student body, “All Mormondom cannot be educated here but I hope to see the time when two of a city and two of a county will come here to become leaders.”³³ The purpose of the “great Church University” was to equip students with the skills necessary to be

leaders in whatever discipline or field they chose to study. Harris had an expansive view of leadership. In his inaugural address he stated, “It is our purpose therefore not only to train our students in the useful arts and sciences of the day, but also to fit them to lead in various civic, religious, and industrial problems that arise out of the complex conditions of modern life.”³⁴ He wanted BYU to produce students capable of excelling in whatever field or discipline they chose to study. These students would make the world a better place to live and would spread the ideals of the Church worldwide.

President Harris recognized that if the university were to produce students capable of standing at the front of their chosen disciplines and become “the great Church University,” several things had to occur. “We are expected to render service and our people are destined to lead the world in all things good,” he said. “We want to make this institution the greatest on earth, as it is now in many respects. It doesn’t take a big plant to be great. We want more buildings, more equipment and a greater faculty; but first of all, we want to establish pre-eminent scholarship and



Franklin S. Harris at his desk in Logan, 1920. While at the Utah State Agricultural College, Harris was still developing his concept of leadership that would so deeply influence the future of BYU. Courtesy University Archives, BYU.

leadership.”³⁵ He encouraged the faculty and the student body to join with him in a cooperative effort to make BYU truly great.

President Harris recognized immediately that he needed a plan to achieve his goals. Harris’s broad concept of leadership as encompassing excellence in a chosen discipline or field had been developing since his early experiences at BYU under the mentorship of John A. Widtsoe.³⁶ It continued to evolve at Cornell University and the Utah State Agricultural College, where he observed the workings of Farm and Home Weeks designed to give farmers information that would allow them to improve their crop yields.³⁷ By the time he was appointed president of BYU, Harris had come to the conclusion that leadership involved enabling individuals to reach their full potential in whatever they chose to do in life. Leadership involved teaching but was much more than that. He explained, “I believe that a person should do all he can to spread education and promote industries and occupations that will tend to make humanity more free, and give them a desire to live properly. I believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ embraces

all of these principles and is a perfect code of life.”³⁸ This progressive view of education resonated strongly with Elder McKay.³⁹ Shortly before Elder McKay became the ninth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he summed up his lifelong view of education: “Without further comment, I give you this definition: The aim of education is to develop resources in the child that will contribute to his well-being as long as life endures.”⁴⁰

Harris recognized that his vision of leadership complemented and augmented that of President McKay and spent the twenty-four years of his presidency working to enable BYU to produce students capable of being leaders in all disciplines.

Harris’s vision of the university’s potential and his



Franklin S. Harris (*left*) and John A. Widtsoe, 1914. Harris met Widtsoe at BYU in 1905 and formed a strong friendship with him. Widtsoe would be a constant advisor throughout Harris’s twenty-four year tenure as president of BYU. Courtesy University Archives, BYU.

desire to increase its ability to enable students to become part of the solutions to the world's problems found support with other Church leaders as well. Soon after President Harris began articulating his new mission for the university, Elder James E. Talmage, after expressing ideas for improving the university, wrote:

I shall be glad to know as to whether the foregoing suggestions are in accord with your plan and purpose; and I assure you again that the rendering of any assistance within my power to give will be a matter of real joy as it is one of actual duty. I am sure I may say of myself and my colleagues that we, your brethren, desire to uphold your hands and sustain you in every way in the high and very important position to which you have been called.⁴¹

Harris's first efforts were to get Brigham Young University accredited—a process that involved restructuring the academic system of the university and improving the physical plant. The support of Elder Talmage as well as President Grant, Elder Widtsoe (newly installed as Church Commissioner of Education), and others⁴² allowed Harris to forge ahead with his new vision for the university; their support would prove crucial to BYU's ability to survive the changing face of Church education in the mid-1920s.

During May and June 1921, President Harris focused considerable attention on the refinement and implementation of his plan for BYU. He consulted prominent Latter-day Saint scholars about how to improve scholarship on campus and how to implement an academic structure that would meet the needs of a growing



Left to right: Anthony W. Ivins, Franklin S. Harris, and Heber J. Grant, January 26, 1923. The support of these and other Church leaders enabled Harris to successfully reorganize the academic structure of BYU and revitalize its place in the Church's educational network. Courtesy University Archives, BYU.

university.⁴³ Toward the end of May, Harris began publicizing his plan with an article in the student newspaper, *White and Blue*. He explained the core of his vision for the university:

It is impossible in a single institution to educate all the people of the Church; other agencies are available for training the great masses. What this particular university must aim to do is to train for leadership in its highest forms: leadership in the Church itself, leadership in social affairs, leadership in business, leadership in art, leadership in citizenship, in fact leadership in all that will contribute to the betterment of the world and the happiness of its people.⁴⁴

He then explained the steps that needed to be taken to enable BYU to “train for leadership.” They included:

- the need to have faculty whose scholarship was the best in the world,
- the creation of a great library,
- the establishment of a research division to aid the faculty in improving their scholarship, and
- the need for an extension division to be established in order to extend the reach of the university beyond itself.

He explained that the growth of the university needed to be slow and steady so that it would be lasting.

In his inaugural address on October 17, 1921, Harris tied the future of the university to its ability to produce leaders. “It is with the full recognition of this responsibility that Brigham Young University is laying its plans for future development. It is conscious of the fact that unless it trains men and women for leadership in the various activities in which they engage, it has no excuse for existence.”⁴⁵ In this speech, Harris foreshadows the vision that Church authorities would speak about in later years, such as President Spencer W. Kimball’s statement in 1976 that BYU should aim to lead the world in scientific, intellectual, and artistic endeavors.⁴⁶

Faculty and Accreditation

Strengthening the university’s faculty was one of the first challenges tackled by President Harris. He targeted faculty recruitment as the best place to start and initiated a campaign to hire faculty who held doctoral degrees or who had established strong reputations in their fields of interest.⁴⁷ As part of this new recruitment policy he further stipulated that “all new faculty hold at least a master’s degree.”⁴⁸ Among the faculty hired by President Harris were Harrison Val Hoyt (MA from Harvard University),

L. John Nuttall Jr. (MA from Columbia University), Carl F. Eyring (PhD from the California Institute of Technology), and Melvin C. Merrill (PhD from Washington University in St. Louis).⁴⁹

To encourage existing faculty members to upgrade their educational qualifications, President Harris invited them to take sabbatical leaves to enroll in advanced degree programs.⁵⁰ He offered them partial salary during such sabbaticals as an incentive.⁵¹ His programs were very successful and helped improve the quality of the faculty at BYU.

President Harris understood that faculty needed the support of a strong institutional structure if they were to be successful as scholars and teachers. He also realized that the ill-defined boundary between the high school and the college was preventing BYU from becoming accredited.⁵² Beginning in 1922, President Harris reorganized the academic structure of the university. He organized the university into five colleges, three divisions, and a high school. He also handpicked the men to lead those



College of Fine Arts faculty, 1920s. Harris established the first College of Fine Arts west of the Mississippi and worked to ensure that it had a superb faculty. Harris understood that a university could not thrive without excellent faculty members and worked hard to improve the credentials of the faculty at BYU. Courtesy University Archives, BYU.

colleges into the future. The colleges were the College of Commerce and Business Administration, the College of Education, the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Applied Science, and the College of Fine Arts. The three divisions were the Extension Division, the Graduate Division, and the Research Division.⁵³

The reorganization of BYU's academic structure was basically complete by 1925. The changes instituted as part of the reorganization of the academic structure enabled BYU to be accredited as a college by the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools, the American Council on Education, and the Association of American Universities. The Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools accredited BYU in 1923, as did the American Council on Education.⁵⁴ Accreditation was an extremely important step for the university. It enabled BYU to attract more highly qualified faculty, and it allowed graduates of the university to attend prestigious graduate programs more easily. It also demonstrated to the General Church Board of Education that the university was serious in its aspirations to become the "great Church University." Furthermore, it enabled the university to begin meeting its stated goal of producing leaders in all aspects of life.

A New Library

President Harris lobbied for a new library from the outset of his administration. Harris felt that "the library is the heart of a University"⁵⁵ and that BYU could never be "the great Church university" without it. He had ramped up his campaign to get a new library built on Upper Campus⁵⁶ in February 1924 with a letter to Heber J. Grant, then President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He explained that the current location of library materials was susceptible to fire damage and that it was too small to house the university's growing library collection. He also pointed out that the library collection "is one of the most valuable collections in the West. It is particularly valuable to our people. It could not be replaced for any amount of money."⁵⁷

In May 1924, Harris learned from Elder John A. Widtsoe⁵⁸ that he had "seen President Grant and talked over with him the advisability of a Library building."⁵⁹ Elder Widtsoe also advised President Harris that he would take the "matter up before the Commission of Education."⁶⁰ On August 12, 1924, Adam S. Bennion wrote to President Harris to officially inform him that the General Church Board of Education had approved the construction of a library building on Temple Hill.⁶¹ The minutes of the Executive Committee of the BYU Board of Trustees noted that



Heber J. Grant Library, 1925, from the southeast. The Grant Library was at the heart of President Harris's vision of "the Great Church University." It was the library that enabled scholars and students to expand their capacity for leadership. Courtesy University Archives, BYU.

the General Church Board of Education had appropriated \$125,000 for the construction of the library and that Joseph Nelson had been selected as the architect. They also noted that the university hoped to raise an additional \$10,000 from alumni to cover the costs of beautifying the land around the library building.⁶²

President Harris was thrilled that the library building had been approved, and he wasted little time in sharing the news with family, friends, and colleagues. He wrote to his mother, Eunice S. Harris, "This is something I have been working for ever since I came down and so it is quite a satisfaction to have the efforts bear fruit."⁶³ To Fred Buss, a colleague, he exclaimed, "We were all very much elated yesterday because Wednesday the Church Board of Education decided to build us a fine library building on the hill."⁶⁴ He told his brother, Sterling Harris, "You know we have an appropriation for our new library building and we want to make the hill one beautiful spot, so are raising \$10,000 from all the students in this vicinity to carry on the work."⁶⁵ The excitement surrounding the new library is best reflected in a letter written to President Harris by Eugene L. Roberts, a faculty member, during the construction of the library. Roberts wrote, "A library upon the hill and a beautiful recreational

and social center nearby surrounded with courts, lawns, fields—then the extra-curricula[r] life of the school will be held in the unified grip of an ideal college setting [sic].”⁶⁶

Groundbreaking for the new library was held on October 16, 1924, and the building was dedicated one year later. It was named after President Heber J. Grant to honor his commitment to education and learning.⁶⁷ The building was two stories high and contained office space and classrooms in addition to closed stacks for the library collections and a large reading room.⁶⁸ The new library building was also used to house the university’s Ancient American Collection in an environment that was secure, yet still available to serious scholars.⁶⁹ President Harris felt that the new library was a successful addition to the campus and that it boosted scholarship of both faculty and students. To Elder Melvin J. Ballard he wrote, “The spirit of the school has never been better than this year [1926] and our new library building adds a great deal to the general spirit of scholarship.”⁷⁰

Harris’s Proposal for a New Building Program

Another signal of the strength of BYU’s aspirations toward greatness was President Harris’s plan to establish adequate physical facilities for the university. In the late fall of 1925, four years into his presidency, Harris put together a report entitled “A Program for the Brigham Young University.” Prepared at the request of Superintendent Bennion, the report outlined the steps President Harris felt were necessary to put the university on a more solid footing. The report highlighted the progress made in improving the university and enunciated a plan for future development. Embedded within the plan were the structures Harris felt were needed to allow the university to become an institution capable of producing graduates who could reach the pinnacle of their chosen discipline or field. The report was favorably received by Church leadership and strengthened their commitment to helping Harris achieve his vision for the university.

President Harris used the report to highlight BYU’s progress toward becoming the “great Church University” and to explain the future needs of the growing institution. He tied the success of the university’s goals to the Church by writing that “the Brigham Young University is essentially a Church institution and it will probably always derive the greater part of its funds directly from the Church.”⁷¹ The rest of the report examined the university in five sections: organization, enrollment, greatest needs, building program, and annual maintenance.

Organization. President Harris explained that the university was now organized in three divisions and five colleges. He felt that “the Institution

is in good condition in this respect and that the framework of colleges and departments [*sic*] will need very little change for the next half dozen years.”⁷² The organizational structure had enabled the university to obtain accreditation and was handling the needs of the student body quite well.

Enrollment. President Harris highlighted the growth of the college student body: “In 1919–20 it was 428; whereas in 1924–25 it was 1204; and this year there seems to be about a 15 per cent increase over last.”⁷³ He attributed the growth in student population to the growing excellence of BYU. He believed that the enrollment could double before the organizational structure of the university would need to be changed again.

Greatest Needs. Harris set goals for: “(1) An improved faculty, (2) More adequate scientific equipment, and (3) More books in the library.”⁷⁴ He pointed out that faculty hiring was one of the most important things a university does, and he raised the question of increasing salaries to compete for better-qualified faculty.⁷⁵ He believed that the “modern institution must have the apparatus of the modern world” and that BYU had made



Study hall in the Grant Library, ca. 1925. Students and faculty kept the study hall in the Grant Library constantly occupied as they learned the skills necessary to better themselves and the world. Courtesy University Archives, BYU.

a good start in this direction but still had room to improve. He stated that “large sums” should be spent to improve BYU’s scientific equipment. He acknowledged that the Church had already generously paid for the construction of a library,⁷⁶ but the library collection was inadequate and needed to triple in size.⁷⁷

In order to increase the size of the library collections, Harris implemented a book drive in connection with the construction of the new library. The drive was highly successful. After just two months, over three thousand volumes had been donated to the university and over two thousand dollars had been contributed to purchase needed materials. The list of donors was impressive and showed the wide reach of the young institution, with donations coming from Oregon, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, New York, and Wyoming as well as Canada.⁷⁸ The library continued to grow throughout Harris’s administration.

Building Program. According to President Harris, “Every growing institution must have a building program.” He felt that BYU’s building program needed to include: “(1) A library, (2) A thoroughly modern science building, (3) A gymnasium, (4) A women’s building, and (5) A class room building to house such subjects as English, History, etc.”⁷⁹ Only the library building was built during Harris’s administration because of the financial situation of the Church.⁸⁰ However, all of these buildings were completed following Harris’s administration as the financial situation of the Church improved and it was able to spend more money on its educational programs.⁸¹ Franklin S. Harris’s foresight and planning laid the groundwork for the successful expansion of BYU’s physical plant in the 1950s and 1960s.

Annual Maintenance. In this section of the report, President Harris argued that the appropriation for BYU needed to increase \$16,000 a year for six years until it reached an annual appropriation of \$300,000 a year.⁸² This would enable the university to meet its full potential. The Church’s poor financial position did not permit an increase to the appropriation, and it stayed flat at \$200,000 a year for most of the 1920s and some of the 1930s—even as university enrollment continued to grow.

The 1926 Review of Church Schools

The rest of President Harris’s vision to make BYU the “great Church University” was put on hold for the duration of his administration because of circumstances beyond his control. A serious depression in Utah followed the end of World War I as both the mining and the farming industries collapsed due to decreased demand for their products.⁸³ The financial

struggles of the average Utahn created financial problems for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which derived much of its income from tithing revenues. The financial problems caused by the onset of the depression in Utah coupled with the economic advantage of switching from the academies to seminaries had led the Church to withdraw from high school education beginning in 1920. Continued economic problems and the growing success of the seminary program led to another review of the Church's educational network in 1926.⁸⁴ Early in the year the General Church Board of Education asked Superintendent Bennion to put together a report on the Church's educational network. They also requested recommendations on potential directions the Church's educational network could take.

Superintendent Bennion presented his report, entitled "An Inquiry into Our Church School Policy," to the General Church Board on February 3, 1926.⁸⁵ Bennion opened his report by noting that both the Brigham Young College in Logan, Utah, and Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho, had requested permission to expand their educational programs. He pointed out that the request of the Brigham Young College was the more reasonable one for financial reasons: "This institution can clearly extend the field of its service with a relatively nominal increase in its expenditures." With respect to the request that Ricks College be granted four-year status from its current junior college status, Bennion wrote, "Were the Ricks College to become a senior college it would call for a substantially increased budget along with a building program of significant proportions." He then pointed out that the "other schools in our system if they are to keep pace with similar institutions operated by the State will have to look forward to a considerable, continuing increase of outlay in the next ten years." He made special reference to BYU and highlighted many of the elements of growth pointed out in Franklin S. Harris's "Program for Brigham Young University." He continued by briefly describing the history of the Church's educational program and the gradual emergence of a competitive state-run educational system.⁸⁶ The emergence of the state school system had led directly to the closure of twelve academies by 1924.⁸⁷ It had also led to the growth of the seminary program. Bennion mentioned that by 1926 the Church was operating "59 seminaries, which to date are serving 9,231 students."⁸⁸

The General Church Board had a decision to make. Would they expand their network of higher education at the expense of the growing seminary program, or would they curtail the growth of their higher education program to allow the continued development of the seminary program? The seminary program was a better financial investment for the Church. It was

reaching more students than the colleges for the same amount of money, and it had the potential to reach college students through the new institute program.⁸⁹ Bennion suggested that the Church had three alternatives: (1) it could maintain the schools at their current level of funding and continue expanding the seminary program, (2) it could increase the funding level of the Church schools, or (3) the Church could “withdraw from the field of academic instruction altogether and center our educational efforts in a promotion of a strictly religious education program.”⁹⁰ Superintendent Bennion favored the third plan because it would allow the Church to “complement the work of the entire public school system wherever our people are” and it had the potential to be considerably less expensive in the long run.⁹¹

The General Church Board carefully considered the three alternatives that Superintendent Bennion had presented. Members of the General Church Board raised several questions about the benefits of the seminary program as well as about the desirability of having a strong institution of higher education as part of the Church’s educational network. Among the questions raised were:

Does the Church receive benefit in returns from an 8 to 1 investment in Church Schools as against Seminaries?

Does there lie ahead in the field of the Junior College the same competition with State institutions that has been encountered in the high school field?

Can the Church afford to operate a university which will be able creditably to carry on as against the great and richly endowed universities of our land?

Will collegiate seminaries be successful?⁹²

It was eventually decided that the issue was of such significance that the members of the General Church Board should be given time to seriously consider the implications of their decision and that they would continue the discussion at their next meeting.⁹³

They next met on March 3, 1926, to consider the proposed budget for the Church schools. After Brigham Young College President W. W. Henderson presented his case that that institution should be allowed to become a four-year college, the General Church Board returned to their discussion of the general policy of the Church’s educational network.⁹⁴ This discussion continued over the next several General Church Board meetings, including one in which the presidents of the various institutions that would be affected were invited to participate.⁹⁵ The General Church Board spent most of the month of March debating the issue without coming to a resolution. Toward the end of the month the General Church Board asked

Superintendent Bennion and the First Presidency of the Church to formulate a policy and implement it.⁹⁶ On March 31, Bennion announced to the Board of Trustees of Brigham Young College that “in face of all developments, it is thought wise that we discontinue our academic program and turn our attention to religious education.”⁹⁷ In April 1926, Superintendent Bennion reiterated the changing focus of Church education when he told the Board of Trustees of Snow College that “the Church had established a policy to eventually withdraw from the academic field.”⁹⁸ It does not appear that Superintendent Bennion took this decision back to the General Church Board for ratification, and subsequent events indicate that the policy was not as inflexible as it first appeared.⁹⁹ However, the initial implementation of the policy led many to assume that the Church truly was going to completely withdraw from the field of higher education.

The Closure of Brigham Young College in Logan

The Church began implementing the new policy in the spring of 1926 with closure of the Brigham Young College. The Brigham Young College had been founded in Logan, Utah, by Brigham Young on July 24, 1877. President Young had set aside almost 10,000 acres as an endowment for the new school.¹⁰⁰ He hoped that the school would be established on this land and that students would work the land. The products produced by the students would then be sold to support the school. This plan never materialized, and by the opening of the 1884–85 school year the Brigham Young College was located in the “East Building” at 100 West and 100 South in Logan. Eventually other buildings were built in this same location and it became the permanent home of the Brigham Young College.¹⁰¹ The Brigham Young College offered a four-year baccalaureate degree from 1894 to 1909. In 1909 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints decided to eliminate upper division work at the Brigham Young College and turned it into a junior college.¹⁰² Because the legislature had prohibited the Utah State Agricultural College from offering teacher training beginning in 1905, the Church allowed the Brigham Young College to maintain a normal school along with its junior college offerings.¹⁰³ The loss of the baccalaureate degree in 1909 in combination with competition from the Utah State Agricultural College proved fatal to the Brigham Young College when the Church decided to pull away from postsecondary education in 1926. President W. W. Henderson remarked at the closing of the school, “The total enrollment this year was 323. This is the lowest enrollment in twenty years. It must be remembered, however, that the policy of

the college was reduced a few years ago to very unnatural and unreasonable limitations. It is now a two year school with limited preparatory facilities comparable to the fourth year of the high school.”¹⁰⁴ He clearly felt that the loss of the baccalaureate degree in 1909 had played a major role in the Church’s decision to close the college.

Alumni and faculty attempted to make sense of the closing of their beloved school during the final commencement exercises held on May 23, 1926. President W. W. Henderson commented:

The institution is now to be permanently closed, not because of internal disintegration, but to give greater opportunity for the growth of the seminary movement. If this movement is worth enough to warrant the closing of an institution of such established value as the Brigham Young College it is most certainly one of the greatest movements in religious education.

Henderson went on to question whether the trade-off was really worth it.¹⁰⁵ Dr. Joseph A. Geddes, a BYC faculty member, directed part of the blame at the Utah State Agricultural College. “Brigham Young did not know as President Grant does know that another large college would grow up in Logan. Those who are alive now perceive duplication and unnecessary expense in the maintenance of two colleges.” He also blamed the Church’s “policy of delimitation” that had led to a decline in the number of students, faculty, and courses offered at the Brigham Young College.¹⁰⁶

Persistent Fears of BYU’s Closure

The news of the closing of Brigham Young College created considerable concern among faculty and others associated with BYU. Although BYU did not have to compete with a state-sponsored college in Provo, it did have to worry that Church education funds would be poured into the developing seminary program and the fledgling institute program.

President Harris worked diligently to calm the fears of faculty and others associated with BYU. Harris had good reason to believe that the new policy advocated by Superintendent Bennion was not as firm as it appeared. He realized that the new philosophy at BYU and the structures put in place to support it had strengthened the university’s role in the Church’s educational network. He also understood that members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles including John A. Widtsoe, James E. Talmage, and David O. McKay still strongly believed that the Church needed some representation in the field of higher education and that they had influential voices on the General Church Board. He wrote Melvin C. Merrill, a faculty member, expressing his optimism about BYU’s chances of survival. “There has been considerable discussing of the whole Church

School System this year. This resulted in the closing of the B.Y.C. as you know and the whole thing has taken a good deal of time. It has therefore, delayed us in getting our own budget. Everything seems now in the clear for the B.Y.U. however.”¹⁰⁷ Rumors persisted that BYU was to be closed, and, in June, Professor Merrill expressed his concerns to Harris: “From recent visitors from Logan I have understood that Dr. Adam Bennion made the statement to the B.Y.C. faculty that the new church school policy contemplates doing away with the Church schools and that the Ricks, the Weber, and the B.Y.U. are soon to go. I can’t believe that is true of the B.Y.U. How about it?”¹⁰⁸ Harris responded to Merrill by saying:

Regarding these rumors about Institutions closing, it may be that one or two more of them will close but I think there is no chance of the B. Y. U. closing in my day or yours. Dr. Bennion did talk a little freely but he is not talking that way now and there is no sentiment among any of the general authorities (I am informed from the very best authority) to close the B. Y. U.¹⁰⁹

The rumored closing still had legs in July as evidenced by a letter written from Harris to the editor of the *Banyan*:

I believe your slogan “This is the Place” for an edition of the *Banyan* would be unusually appropriate and as to the rumor of the closing of the B.Y.U. this is something that develops out of the closing of the B.Y.C. and I am sure from those who would know, that there is nothing definite in the rumor. The B.Y.U. is certainly in a more substantial place than it has ever been.¹¹⁰

The rumors were finally put to rest when Harris demonstrated his confidence in the university’s future by leaving on a yearlong tour of the world in August 1926.¹¹¹

The Legacy of Franklin S. Harris

Franklin S. Harris’s ability to articulate a new vision for the university was certainly a major reason for the Church’s decision to not close Brigham Young University in 1926. By changing the focus of the institution from solely producing teachers for the Church’s educational network to enabling students to become leaders in the arts and sciences, government, and academia, President Harris gave new focus to BYU and ensured that it would always have a continuing purpose in the Church’s educational network. By demonstrating to Church leaders such as President Heber J. Grant, Elder David O. McKay, Elder James E. Talmage, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, and Elder John A. Widtsoe that BYU was capable of fulfilling the new vision and by gaining their support, Harris ensured

that the university would survive. A comment by Elder Widtsoe reflects the support Harris had garnered from Church leadership. He wrote, “Your candidates for the Bachelor’s degree, totaling about 168, as I counted them, is an indication of the complete change, during the last few years, in our educational endeavors in behalf of the public at large and of the new service which is being rendered by the Brigham Young University. If any man in our Church should be happy in the success that has attends [sic] such service, you should be that man.”¹¹²

Harris also tied the fate of the university to the growing seminary program by highlighting the university’s role in producing teachers qualified to teach seminary. In a 1930 article in the *Deseret News*, Church Commissioner of Education Joseph F. Merrill wrote that one of the reasons BYU had not been closed along with the rest of the schools in the academy network was that “[a] university [is] an essential unit in our seminary system. For our seminary teachers must be specially trained for their work. The Brigham Young university is our training school.”¹¹³

Equipping students to take the lead in solving world problems and producing teachers for the Church’s seminary program were not the only things President Harris did that enabled Brigham Young University to escape the fate of Brigham Young College. He also succeeded in getting the school accredited on a static budget—proving that the Church could afford to operate a successful university. Accreditation was the result of Harris’s efforts to strengthen the educational qualifications of the faculty and his reorganization of the academic structure of the university. It was also directly tied to Harris’s successful campaign to construct a library building. President Harris’s thoughtful “Program for Brigham Young University” illustrated ways that the university could meet its full potential and convinced Church leaders that maintaining a Church university was both achievable and desirable.

Franklin S. Harris was the right man at the right place, and his calm leadership enabled the university to survive the reorganization of the Church’s educational network. It also ensured that when the question of whether or not to close BYU came up again in 1929 and 1945, the answer was never in doubt—BYU would not close. His vision of the university’s potential as the “great Church University” and his actions to make that vision a reality put BYU on solid footing. The university’s current mission statement says, “All instruction, programs, and services at BYU, including a wide variety of extracurricular experiences, should make their own contribution toward the balanced development of the total person.”¹¹⁴ The purpose of Brigham Young University is to enable students to meet both

personal and global challenges in creative ways that leave the world a better place. Brigham Young University still strives to meet the expansive definition of leadership first articulated for it by Franklin S. Harris.

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1. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 210–11.

2. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 157. Among the colleges and universities established were the University of Deseret (which became the University of Utah), Brigham Young College, and Brigham Young Academy.

3. For more information on the conflict between LDS and non-LDS perspectives on education and the development of the private educational system of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints see John D. Monnett Jr., “The Mormon Church and Its Private School System in Utah: The Emergence of the Academies, 1880–1892” (PhD diss., University of Utah, 1984).

4. Monnett, iv.

5. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 157.

6. The vehicle that the Church eventually decided on was seminaries and institutes. The seminary program had its genesis in 1911 with Joseph F. Merrill. Classes were first held in 1912 with completion of a seminary building next to Granite High School in Salt Lake City. Scott C. Esplin, “Education in Transition: Church and State Relationships in Utah Education, 1888–1933” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 2006), 137–39; Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 168.

7. Royal Ruel Meservy, “A Historical Study of Changes in Policy of Higher Education in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (EdD thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1966), 265–66. There is no definitive answer as to how many academies the Church actually ran in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For purposes of this paper the academies counted are those with physical plants.

8. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 158.

9. Arnold K. Garr, “A History of Brigham Young College, Logan, Utah” (MA thesis, Utah State University, 1973), 75; Ernest L. Wilkinson, ed., *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years*, 4 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 2:14.

10. The reorganization of the Church’s educational network and the divestment of the academy system in the 1920s are covered in Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*; and Janet Jenson, *The Many Lives of Franklin S. Harris* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Print Services, 2002). Neither of these books ties the

new mission for the university advocated by Franklin S. Harris to its ultimate survival during these trying times.

11. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:3.

12. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:5. The Church Commission of Education consisted of the Commissioner of Education, his two counselors, and the Superintendent of Church schools. The Superintendent of Church schools served as the executive officer of the Commission. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:4–13.

13. Minutes of the General Church Board of Education of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (hereafter General Church Board), March 3, 1920, in Kenneth G. Bell, “Adam Samuel Bennion, Superintendent of L.D.S. Education, 1919–1928” (MRE thesis, Brigham Young University, 1969), 52. The minutes of the General Church Board of Education of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are closed to research currently. These minutes were available to Kenneth G. Bell in the 1960s, and excerpts are quoted from his master’s thesis.

14. Bell, “Adam Samuel Bennion,” 52–53.

15. These included Emery Academy, Murdock Academy, St. Johns Academy, Cassia Academy, Millard Academy, Uintah Academy, Gila Academy, Snowflake Academy, Fielding Academy, and possibly Oneida Academy. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:14.

16. Minutes of the General Church Board, March 3, 1920, in Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:14. The minutes of the General Church Board of Education of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are closed to research currently. These minutes were available to the research team writing the Wilkinson centennial history, and excerpts are quoted from this history.

17. Bell, “Adam Samuel Bennion,” 55.

18. Bell, “Adam Samuel Bennion,” 55–57. Those academies were Cassia, St. Johns, and Knight.

19. Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Brigham Young College Board of Trustees, May 21, 1909, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Church Archives).

20. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:3.

21. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:16.

22. Minutes of General Church Board, March 31, 1920, in Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:16–17.

23. Minutes of General Church Board, March 31, 1920, in Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:17.

24. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:17.

25. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:17.

26. For more information on the life and career of John A. Widtsoe, see Alan K. Parrish, *John A. Widtsoe: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003).

27. Jenson, *Franklin S. Harris*, 25–55.

28. Harris did become president of the Utah State Agricultural College in 1945 when he left Brigham Young University. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:402–4.

29. For the 1919–20 school year, Brigham Young University had 438 college students and a large number of conditional students (students not fully prepared

for college work) as well as a sizeable group of high school students. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:47.

30. Franklin S. Harris, Diary, 1908–54, April 15–22, 1921, University Archives, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Perry Special Collections).

31. Minutes of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees, April 26, 1921, University Archives, Perry Special Collections.

32. “Dr. Harris, Pres.-Elect Visits School,” *White and Blue*, May 4, 1921, 1, University Archives, Perry Special Collections.

33. “Dr. Harris, Pres.-Elect Visits School,” 1.

34. Franklin S. Harris, “Inaugural Address,” in John W. Welch and Don E. Norton, eds., *Educating Zion* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1996), 7.

35. “Dr. Harris, Pres.-Elect Visits School,” 1.

36. Jenson, *Franklin S. Harris*, 28.

37. Jenson, *Franklin S. Harris*, 42, 46, 50, 74.

38. Franklin S. Harris, “Code of Life,” in Jenson, *Franklin S. Harris*, frontispiece.

39. For more information on the progressive nature of David O. McKay’s educational thought, see Mary Jane Woodger, “David O. McKay’s Progressive Educational Ideas and Practices, 1899–1922,” *Journal of Mormon History* 30 (Fall 2004): 208–48.

40. David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals: Selections from the Discourses of David O. McKay, Ninth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998), 436. For more information, see Mary Jane Woodger, “Educational Ideas and Practices of David O. McKay, 1880–1940” (EdD diss., Brigham Young University, 1997); and Gregory A. Prince and William Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005).

41. James E. Talmage to Franklin S. Harris, June 10, 1921, Franklin S. Harris Presidential Records, 1921–45, University Archives, Perry Special Collections.

42. Heber J. Grant to Franklin S. Harris, November 22, 1921; John A. Widtsoe to Franklin S. Harris, July 20, 1922; Susa Young Gates to Franklin S. Harris, June 19, 1924, all in Harris Presidential Records.

43. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:32–35. Among those he consulted were John A. Widtsoe, president of the University of Utah, and Harvey Fletcher, a prominent LDS physicist.

44. “Pres.-Elect Harris Writes on Future of School,” *White and Blue*, May 25, 1921, 1, University Archives, Perry Special Collections.

45. Franklin S. Harris, “Inaugural Address,” 7.

46. Spencer W. Kimball, “Second Century Address,” in “Climbing the Hills Just Ahead: Three Addresses,” in *Educating Zion*, 63–75.

47. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:32.

48. Gary James Bergera and Ronald Priddis, *Brigham Young University: A House of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 15.

49. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:97–101.

50. Between 1924 and 1928, sixteen faculty members took advantage of the leave system to improve their academic credentials. Five completed doctoral

degrees, and eleven completed master's degrees. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:140.

51. Jenson, *Franklin S. Harris*, 77. Among the faculty who took advantage of the leave system were Florence Jepperson Madsen, Melvin C. Merrill, and Franklin Madsen.

52. From its establishment in 1875, Brigham Young Academy had focused primarily on elementary and high school education as well as teacher training. It was only in the 1920s that college work began to become the primary focus of the institution. One of the problems that Harris faced in getting the university accredited was the fact that the high school and college students were intermingled in the various classes offered by the university—there was no clear delineation about what were college courses and what were high school courses.

53. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:97–102, 117.

54. The Association of American Universities accredited Brigham Young University as a university in 1928. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:144.

55. Franklin S. Harris. "A Program For the Brigham Young University," in Minutes of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees meeting, December 11, 1925, 3; University Archives, Perry Special Collections. The report was given to Superintendent Bennion on November 12, 1925, 3.

56. "Upper Campus" refers to the buildings constructed on Temple Hill. "Lower Campus" refers to the buildings on Academy Square.

57. Franklin S. Harris and the Executive Committee of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees to President Heber J. Grant, February 6, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.

58. Elder Widtsoe had become Church Commissioner of Education in 1922 when Elder David O. McKay had resigned. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:60.

59. Elder John A. Widtsoe to Franklin S. Harris, May 19, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.

60. Widtsoe to Harris, May 19, 1924.

61. Adam S. Bennion to Franklin S. Harris, August 12, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.

62. Minutes of Executive Committee of the Brigham Young University Board of Trustees, August 18 and September 10, 1924, University Archives, Perry Special Collections.

63. Franklin S. Harris to Eunice S. Harris, August 18, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.

64. Franklin S. Harris to Fred Buss, August 8, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.

65. Franklin S. Harris to Sterling Harris, August 25, 1924, Harris Presidential Records.

66. Eugene L. Roberts to Franklin S. Harris, May 30, 1925, Harris Presidential Records.

67. Augusta W. Grant to Franklin S. Harris, September 5, 1925; Franklin S. Harris to Augusta W. Grant, September 8, 1925, both in Harris Presidential Records.

68. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:64.

69. Franklin S. Harris to Professor G. Oscar Russell (Department of Romance Languages, Ohio State University), February 11, 1926, Harris Presidential Records.

70. Franklin S. Harris to Melvin J. Ballard, January 8, 1926, Harris Presidential Records.

71. Harris, "Program for the Brigham Young University," 1.

72. Harris, "Program for the Brigham Young University," 1.

73. Harris, "Program for the Brigham Young University," 2.

74. Harris, "Program for the Brigham Young University," 2.

75. In 1921, Brigham Young University employed seventy-four individuals, two of whom were classified as administrators. By 1930 there were 109 individuals employed at the university, and there were still only two classified as administrators. Of the seventy-two faculty members in 1921, only one had a doctoral degree and approximately eleven had master's degrees. By 1930, 15.5 percent of the faculty had doctoral degrees. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:113, 125, 260–61.

76. Harris, "Program for the Brigham Young University," 4.

77. Harris, "Program for the Brigham Young University," 3.

78. A. Rex Johnson to Franklin S. Harris, September 28, 1925, Harris Presidential Records.

79. Harris, "Program for the Brigham Young University," 3–4.

80. Utah was in the midst of an agricultural depression that would eventually encompass the entire United States and become known as the Great Depression. Dean L. May, *Utah: A People's History* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 173.

81. For detailed coverage of the building program under Howard S. McDonald, Ernest L. Wilkinson, and Dallin H. Oaks, see Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, vols. 2–4.

82. Harris, "Program for the Brigham Young University," 4.

83. May, *Utah: A People's History*, 173.

84. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:68.

85. Adam S. Bennion, "An Inquiry into Our Church School Policy," Minutes of the General Church Board of Education meeting, February 3, 1926, in Bell, "Adam Samuel Bennion," 81–86.

86. Bennion, "Inquiry into Our Church School Policy," 82–86.

87. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:69.

88. Bennion, "Inquiry into Our Church School Policy," 84.

89. According to Bennion's report, the Church schools cost \$204.97 per capita and the seminaries cost \$23.73 per capita. This is nearly a 9 to 1 ratio in favor of the seminary program. Bennion, "Inquiry into Our Church School Policy," 85.

90. Bennion, "Inquiry into Our Church School Policy," 85.

91. Bennion, "Inquiry into Our Church School Policy," 86.

92. Minutes of the General Church Board, February 3, 1926, in Bell, "Adam Samuel Bennion," 86–87.

93. Minutes of the General Church Board, February 3, 1926, 87.

94. Minutes of the General Church Board, March 3, 1926, in Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:72.

95. Minutes of the General Church Board, March 3, 1926; March 10, 1926; March 18, 1926; and March 23, 1926, in Bell, "Adam Samuel Bennion," 87–91; Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:73.

96. Minutes of the General Church Board, March 23, 1926, in Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:76.

97. Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Brigham Young College Board of Trustees, March 31, 1926, Church Archives.

98. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:76.

99. See the General Church Board minutes available in Bell and Wilkinson. Although a number of schools were closed or transferred to state governments, Brigham Young University was not the only school to escape closure. Both LDS Business College in Salt Lake City and Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho remained open.

100. Garr, "History of Brigham Young College," 5.

101. A. J. Simmonds, Register to the Papers of Brigham Young College, 1877–1960, ca. 1969, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library, Utah State University, Logan, Utah.

102. Garr, "History of Brigham Young College," 46–47.

103. Simmonds, Register; see also Alan K. Parrish, "Crisis in Utah Higher Education: The Consolidation Controversy of 1905–07," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (1994): 208.

104. W. W. Henderson, "The President's Report," *Brigham Young College Bulletin Final Volume Final Number*, 18, Papers of Brigham Young College, 1877–1960, Special Collections and Archives, Merrill-Cazier Library.

105. W. W. Henderson, "The President's Report," *Brigham Young College Bulletin Final Volume Final Number*, 18.

106. Joseph A. Geddes, "History," *Brigham Young College Bulletin Final Volume Final Number*, 59.

107. Franklin S. Harris to Melvin C. Merrill, May 6, 1926, Harris Presidential Records.

108. Melvin C. Merrill to Franklin S. Harris, June 10, 1926, Harris Presidential Records.

109. Franklin S. Harris to Melvin C. Merrill, June 14, 1926, Harris Presidential Records. From comments made in Harris's journal and correspondence in Harris's presidential records, it appears that the "very best authority" is John A. Widtsoe.

110. Franklin S. Harris to Julius V. Madsen, July 13, 1926, Harris Presidential Records.

111. Wilkinson, *First One Hundred Years*, 2:77–85. President Harris had been invited to speak at the third Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Japan in the fall of 1926 and decided that this would be a good opportunity to do a world tour visiting educational institutions to gain ideas for improving Brigham Young University. He was given permission to go by the General Church Board of Education as long as he conducted Church business along the way. He left in August 1926 and returned in August 1927.

112. John A. Widtsoe to Franklin S. Harris, June 15, 1928, Harris Presidential Records.

113. Joseph F. Merrill, "Brigham Young University, Past, Present and Future," *Deseret News*, December 20, 1930, 3.

114. "BYU Mission Statement," <http://unicomm.byu.edu/about/mission/> (accessed November 17, 2005).

The Archive of Restoration Culture, 1997–2002

Richard Lyman Bushman

When I first began work on *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* in 1996, I realized that reconstructing the cultural environment of the Prophet would be one of my largest tasks. I could scarcely conceive how to go about probing the huge quantities of sermons, newspapers, journals, pamphlets, books, artworks, and private diaries that possibly bore on the restoration of the gospel in the 1820s through the 1840s. Yet the culture of that period bore directly on the success of the young church under Joseph Smith's leadership. People would never be able to grasp theological ideas that were entirely foreign to them. They would need a basic preparation for the Prophet's revelations, making the cultural environment crucial to understanding how the Restoration came about.

Faced with this apparently insuperable difficulty, it occurred to me that my problem was the problem of every historian interested in early history of the Church. We all need information about the sources as they relate to the distinctive doctrines of the Restoration. I would deal with many of the issues in my biography, but subsequent researchers would think of new questions about Joseph's times. All of these historians would benefit from a collection of materials from the world in which Joseph Smith flourished.

So was born the concept of "The Archive of Restoration Culture," an assemblage of source materials illuminating contemporaneous thought about the prominent principles of the Restoration. I am pleased now, a decade later, that this massive research database is now available on the BYU Studies website.

As my initial ideas began to take shape, I proposed to Ronald Esplin, then director of the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute of Latter-day Saint

History, that we assemble a few well-qualified students each summer to work on the project. Characteristically, he at once saw the merits of the idea and promised to raise funds for the first summer. We wanted to invite advanced LDS undergraduates and graduate students from all over the country, and we knew we had to offer them a small stipend in lieu of summer employment as well as defraying living expenses in Provo. Though Ron might find the money for one year, the project would require outside support to continue. Fortunately, I was able to turn to David and Karen Davidson, a couple sympathetic to scholarly ventures, who were acquainted with other potential donors. They took on the job of fundraising and within a year obtained pledges that sustained these summer seminars for five years.

About ninety young scholars submitted applications for the first Archive of Restoration Culture Summer Seminar in 1997. Six were admitted. They were a crucial component in the overall development of the Archive, because only by working together could we refine our purpose. The general idea of collecting information on Joseph Smith's cultural environment had an immediate appeal; deciding exactly how to go about it presented new questions every day as we met for eight weeks through that first summer.

The first step, we decided, was to construct an abbreviated inventory of what we called "Distinctive Doctrines of the Restoration." We circulated the list widely and assembled a group of experienced scholars to amend it as they saw fit. As we began poring through the materials, new ideas suggested themselves and the list grew ever longer. By 2002, in the sixth year of the seminar's life, the Archive included the topics listed below.

We also had to devise a form for recording relevant documents as we found them in the source materials. Besides the usual citation data, we decided that the researcher should comment on the nature of each source so that future readers would have the benefit of the researcher's judgment about its biases and purposes. We also asked the researchers to explain why they thought the passage was relevant to LDS doctrines (it is not always obvious). We wanted to get down everything the researcher learned while poring through the material. Finally, a generous excerpt from each source was recorded. We hoped that subsequent researchers, looking for information on topics ranging from Abraham to Zion, would find enough in the Archive to decide about the relevancy and value of a source. A few paragraphs were no substitute for the entire passage in context, but we wanted to offer enough to help researchers choose whether or not to take the next step.

At first we believed we needed an intricate cataloging system to lead scholars to the right page. That problem solved itself as search engines improved. Now it is possible to type in a keyword like “intelligence” or “priesthood” and bring up every source in the electronic Archive where these words appear. To make the implications of a passage clear, the researchers headed their report pages with key words that were implied in the passage. An excerpt might be all about apostasy, for example, without using the term. So the researcher inserted the term in the heading to ensure that future scholars would find the related passage.

We began the first summer by looking at religious periodicals in the 1820s and 1830s, the decades most relevant to the Restoration. In subsequent summers we reviewed the references to Joseph Smith’s background in Fawn Brodie’s *No Man Know My History* and John Brooke’s *The Refiner’s Fire*, the books in the library of Manchester, New York, and every other relevant place we could think of. Overall we created over a thousand entries from hundreds of sources. Meanwhile, besides submitting entries, the summer fellows prepared papers for the annual Smith Institute symposium on “The World of Joseph Smith.” These have been published separately by the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History in two volumes, 1997–1999 and 2000–2002.

A few examples from the Archive give an idea of the materials that were collected. Here are five excerpts from non-Mormon sources treating doctrines circulating within Christianity in Joseph Smith’s day.

1. An Embodied God

I would ask, if the Divine being is divisible, Is he not material? if he has NO body, how can he be substantial? and, if he has no PARTS, how can he BE or EXIST, at all? What difference can there be between saying God has NO BODY; and flatly declaring that he is NO-BODY? I cannot split this hair; and therefore, I cannot perceive wherein this doctrine of God’s having no body differs from ATHEISM. Surely every christian knows, or ought to know (with St. Paul,) that there are not only bodies terrestrial, but bodies celestial also; and as it is plain there can be nobody without its corresponding essence it must evidently follow, there can be no essence without its corresponding body: Material essences have material bodies; and spiritual essences have spiritual bodies also.

John Hargrove, *A Sermon, on the True Object and Nature of Christian Worship; Delivered at the Opening of the New Jerusalem Temple, in the City of Baltimore* (1800), 16.

2. Degrees of Glory

There will be different degrees of glory; some apartments being vastly superior to those of others. In the heavenly house, there is room for ever

soul of man. . . . But as our Lord prepares the mansions, they will be exactly suited to our circumstances; and those of the lowest order will be perfectly glorious.

J. Edmondson, *Scripture Views of the Heavenly World* (New York: Lane & Scott, 1849), 41.

3. The Trinity, Purgatory, and Infant Baptism

For the instruction of others, particularly young preachers, I here observe, that many words are now in use to describe some principal part of doctrine, which are not in the scriptures. . . . If the word and doctrine are both unscriptural, it is in vain to undertake to prove from the bible that which is not once named there. The word *trinity* is an unscriptural word, and so is the doctrine, and we may as well prove *purgatory* from the bible, as the trinity; for neither of them are mentioned there. . . . [Baptism] is in the bible; but there is no account of baptising infants there; and all said in favor of that is invention.

Elias Smith, *The Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travels, and Sufferings of Elias Smith*. Vol. I (Portsmouth, N.H.: Beck and Foster, 1816), 141.

4. Eternal Progress

Another element in the happiness of the redeemed is its progressive character. The saints above, beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, “are changed into the same image *from glory to glory*.” Thus they make perpetual advances towards the perfection of the great Supreme.

Man, then, is destined to unceasing advances, and innumerable stages of existence. Having attained to the resurrection, is no reason why he should advance no farther and higher. There are some infinitely lofty mansions in our Father’s house; and we may rise from one to another through infinity, thus continually approximating to the nature of Jehovah, without ever attaining to his absolute perfection.

J. J. Kerr, *Future Recognition; or, The Blessedness of Those Who Die in the Lord* (Herman Hooker, 1847), 60, 61–62.

5. Restoration and Dispensations

This now is a dispensation of that time mentioned, of a gathering in of heavenly spirits to Christ, out of the reformed Paradise. But there is yet a fuller time and dispensation to come, that shall answer to the Jerusalem above, which is said to come down. Here is a Mount Sion church to be gathered out from among all churches of men, by *the preparing ministry of an Elias spirit*; who is to make ready against the Lord’s return from that solemnized wedding with the present triumphant church. Now what is meant by this Elias spirit, but such a spirit as hath power to transform and translate at pleasure? THIS ELIAS IS NOT AN ABSTRACTED GHOST, BUT IS IN CONJUNCTION WITH A FLAMING BODY OF LIGHT. This was that which the apostles eyed much in their days, and had the revelation thereof FOR THE LATTER AGES.

Jane Lead, *Divine Revelations and Prophecies* (1700; reissued 1830), 31.

What should be made of all this data remains to be seen. That will be the task of historians and religious scholars for years to come. These materials will help lay a cultural foundation for thorough assessments of the significance, uniqueness, responsiveness or commonality of the revelations and teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith when compared with the intellectual and religious milieu of the early American Republic.

From the beginning I worried that the enormous labor on this Archive would go to waste. I had seen ambitious data-gathering projects disappear from sight and never put to use. Too often information of keen interest to one generation of scholars fades into insignificance for another. I would benefit from the Archive as I wrote my biography of Joseph Smith, but would anyone else?

That seemed to be the fate of the Archive of Restoration Culture until John W. Welch, editor in chief of *BYU Studies* proposed to make the Archive available to researchers through the BYU Studies website, and Josh Probert prepared the somewhat outdated computer files, making the data publishable. The Archive can be accessed via the website at byustudies.byu.edu. Hard copies of the Archive are also deposited in the L. Tom Perry Special Collections at the Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University and the Church Archive in Salt Lake City. The master copies reside at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship.

I am grateful to all of the parties who facilitated the formation of the Archive of Restoration Culture, and especially to Ronald Esplin and Jill Derr, directors of the Smith Institute, to Karen and David Davidson and the generous donors they assembled, and above all to the more than forty fellows who came together over six years to reconstruct the world of Joseph Smith.

This Archive is organized under the following subjects and with these searchable terms:

Revelation, Spiritual Gifts

Visions, dreams, revelations
 Angels
 New scripture
 Tongues, healings
 Miracles to confirm revelation
 Magic, money-digging, working
 with the rod, handling snakes
 Prophets
 Salvation through knowledge

Book of Abraham

Abraham
 Ur
 Egyptus
 Egyptian
 Astronomy
 Kolob
 Ancient of Days
 Priesthood from the fathers
 False priesthoods

Book of Mormon

Secret combinations
 Great and abominable church
 Liahona
 Opposition in all things
 Elephants and horses in America
 Destruction of an ancient people
 Translation
 Native American history
 and religion
 Tree of Life
 Urim and Thummim and
 seerstones
 Pre-columbian migrations
 to America
 Cataclysmic events at crucifixion
 Arabian peninsula
 (land of Bountiful)
 Christ to other peoples

Bible Revision, Book of Moses

Translation
 Prophets
 Enoch
 Melchizedek
 Moses and authorship
 of Pentateuch
 Elijah
 Elias
 Cain
 Christianization of the
 Old Testament
 Corruption of biblical texts

Ritual and Ceremony (nontemple)

Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
 Infant baptism
 Baptismal covenant
 Mode of baptism
 Laying on of hands for the gift of
 the Holy Ghost
 Patriarchal blessings

Zion

New Jerusalem, City of Zion
 Enoch
 Consecration
 The poor
 Common property in the
 New Testament
 Inheritance in Zion
 Gathering
 Judges in Israel, office of Bishop
 Land of promise
 Religion and government
 Religion and the economy

Priesthood and Church

Melchizedek (High) priesthood
 Aaronic priesthood
 Apostles
 High priests
 Seventies
 Elders
 Bishop
 Priests
 Presidency
 Patriarchal blessings
 Church discipline
 High councils
 Lay priesthood and preaching
 Proselyting
 Descent of authority
 Basis of authority
 Keys
 Stakes and wards
 Conferences
 Name of church
 Ordination
 Priesthood and lineage
 Order
 Paid clergy
 Priestcraft
 One true church
 Priesthood oath and covenant
 Women's role
 Missionary work

Redemption

Atonement
 Justification
 Sanctification
 Judgment
 Jesus Christ
 Fate of those without gospel
 Seeing God
 Men become gods
 Unpardonable sin

Creation

God's purpose in creation
 Eternity of matter
 Council in Heaven
 Lucifer
 Plural worlds
 Adam
 Eve
 Garden of Eden
 The fortunate fall
 Earth and the environment

Afterlife

Spirit world
 Three degrees of glory
 Resurrection
 Eternal life
 Hell
 Spiritual death
 Sons of perdition
 Glory
 Endless punishment
 Unpardonable sin

Temple

Endowment of power
 Washings and anointings
 Pentecost
 Eternal marriage
 Baptism for the dead
 Covenant
 Seal and bind
 Learning

Plural marriage
 Spiritual wives
 Mysteries of God
 (esoteric knowledge)

Israel

Jews
 Native Americans as Israel
 Restoration of Israel to
 knowledge, to their lands, to
 favor with God
 Old and New Jerusalem
 Covenants with Israel
 Gentiles
 Descent of Israel
 Gospel for Israel
 Ten Tribes
 Moses, Elias, and gathering
 of Israel

God

God's body
 Elohim
 Jehovah
 Holy Ghost
 Three separate beings
 Plurality of Gods
 Progressive
 Spirit of Christ; light of Christ
 Mother in Heaven
 Throne of God (Kolob)

Humanity

Agency
 Spirit, soul, and body
 Word of Wisdom
 Spirit child of God
 Intelligence and intelligences
 Premortal existence
 Spirit and matter
 Race
 Happiness as God's purpose
 for man
 Purpose of mortal life

Last Days

Destruction
Second Coming
New Church
Preparation of the earth and
preceding events
Millennial conditions
Location of Second Coming
Places of refuge
Judgment Day
Renewal of the earth

History

Primitive Church
Apostasy
Restoration
Sectarian strife
Corruption of the churches
Old Testament as context for
doctrine
Modern recapitulation of biblical
events
History, religion, and civilization
Divine mission of the United
States
Dispensations

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Life with Ana

Amber Esplin

A few days after Halloween 2004, I came home from visiting my cousin in Texas and found a letter from my grandmother. It was late at night by the time I arrived at my apartment, and it was election day, so I turned on the television, hoping to hear the reporters announce the next president of the United States. I might have eaten a snack; I don't remember. I do remember several trips to the vending machine while I waited for my flight in Dallas and then devouring slice after slice of the homemade bread my cousin had sent home with me. I was so hungry. I kept trying to calculate calories, and the numbers went up and up, but I couldn't help it. With every slice, I hoped it would be enough to finally fill me up. But it never was. I think that was my second binge. The first one, a couple of months earlier, was very brief and involved chocolate and French bread. I wrote it off as a fluke, a tiny blip in a long, neat pattern of discipline. I wasn't starving then. I don't think I knew yet what it was to be so hungry. I couldn't see straight.

That night in November I hated myself for what I had eaten, but I tried to let it go. After all, I had been off my normal routine. I had been traveling, with nothing to do or think about for hours. Now that I was home, I would go back to my usual pattern of careful consumption and calorie counting. And, I reassured myself, I had kept up my running. I had run every day while I was at my cousin's house, except for Sunday, when I never ran anyway. So even though my indulgence horrified me—the thought of actually eating half a loaf of bread in a single afternoon—I held out hope for the future. Besides, it was late, I was tired and maybe even a little punch drunk. I sorted through my mail and opened the letter from my grandmother. It contained a bunch of photocopies of articles on eating

disorders. I read the handwritten note. She thought I needed professional help. I laughed. Grandmas are so funny, aren't they? They worry about the silliest things. I had heard that my grandmother thought I was anorexic, but she had seen me only once that summer. I saw myself every day, and I knew that I wasn't too thin. Sure, I had lost some weight without meaning to, just because I had started running so much and trying to eat healthier, and now I didn't want to gain it back. But I loved food. Hadn't I just proven that? I loved it way too much. Ironic, I mused. She thinks I'm anorexic, but if she only knew.



I think of that day as Ana's anniversary. Some people personify eating disorders as "Ed," but that makes me think of a fat, hairy guy on the couch drinking beer. Ana isn't like that. She is light and quiet but very strong, so strong that she is beyond needing. I want to be beyond needing, too.

I didn't agree with my grandmother then that I was anorexic. I still don't. But over the coming winter, the number of people who did agree with her grew, and in the spring I spent a month in a residential treatment center for eating disorders. The whole time my "team" and I were at cross-purposes. I guess we both wanted to save me from myself, but they wanted to save me from an imaginary, too-thin self, and I just wanted to save me from me.



Whenever my grandmother comes to visit now, she wants to take me out for food. I start dreading the effort it will take to push aside her insistence. I am not upset by her concern or even by her encouraging me to eat more. Instead, I am frightened and repulsed by the idea of spontaneous eating—going out for a sandwich that I hadn't planned on or budgeted for. I simply can't fit it in; I can't allow it. And her reluctance to accept that reinforces my conviction that no one understands the real problem here—that I have fooled everyone without meaning to. Why can't they see me for the pig that I really am? I am a compulsive overeater. That is the true me. I am an obese person in a temporarily thin body. When I look in the mirror, I see my real self, the fat self, the out-of-control self. I see it all the time, and so I know it is there. But my grandmother doesn't. She sees the image I am struggling to hold onto—the thin arms, the shrunken chest. The fake me. The façade.

It is my own fault if no one understands, because I have tried so hard to hide this ugly person inside me. I eat in secret. I skulk about in the middle of the night with a plastic spoon and a container of uncooked oatmeal. I feel ashamed. I think of the Book of Mormon, the secrets of the Gadianton robbers, and I know that God doesn't like secrets because it is dark inside them. Dark and lonely and unclean. Just like the fat, I realize. Because the fat is hardly even physical. Something purely physical could never be so scary. Oh no, it is much more ethereal. It is floaty; it is dirtiness, laziness, ugliness in the most spiritual sense. It is unworthiness, and I am covered up in it. It is all over inside me. It *is* me. I am a bad person, but I am fighting so hard to keep away from the filth, to stay one step above it, and every morning and every evening the scale judges me. "Today you slid deeper into slime," it tells me some nights. But other times it says, "Good. You were clean today." Always, though, it warns me to stay vigilant. I cannot let my guard down, or the pounds, the guilt, will pile on.

Every day I struggle to survive. I run because I have to. I run and I fast, not to get anywhere, not even to lose weight. Just to stay where I am. It takes all the energy I can muster to cling to my present state because I am being pulled down so hard, and I don't know how much longer I can hang on. I am more tired than ever before in my life. I fall asleep everywhere except in my bed, and there I stay awake, chomping on tropical fruit gum and hearing the kitchen call to me: "Come, eat, feel safe. Pile up food against this darkness, against the pain of waking in the morning and facing another day." And all too often I listen. I throw back the covers and walk out to the fridge for an apple. This apple can't hold me or protect me or tell me it loves me. I know that. But I eat it anyway, in despair, because it is all that I have, because I ran seventy-five miles last week and it wasn't enough. I ran and I ran, and still I couldn't escape the real me.



One night I have a dream that haunts me. I dream that the sun is shining and the weather is fine, and I am standing up in a parked pink convertible, leaning out slightly over a ledge beyond which the ground drops steeply to a highway below. A breeze caresses my cheek. A pair of yellow leaves dance by, swirling like a couple in a ballroom. I lean out farther to watch them, and suddenly I am falling. I am not surprised because now that it is happening it seems inevitable, as if the leaves and the pink convertible and even the highway all came into existence for the sake of this very moment. Nevertheless, I cannot restrain a dissociated shock of horror, what a stranger might feel upon witnessing a disaster that he cannot

prevent. I know I will die when I hit the asphalt, but no, it is more awful than that. I don't die. I fall onto the highway, and I live, and my body is hideously broken.

In the hospital I am conscious, but I am separated from myself too. I don't feel the pain of my injuries, but another kind of anguish overwhelms me. I can't bear it. No, no, make it stop! I don't want to recognize how much human beings can suffer. All the agony of this world—let it not be real, let it not be true. Our capacity to experience is too deep. We feel too much.

Someone is stroking my hair. "We have to tell . . ." I stammer, "we have to let my mom know." The nurses frown; they have more pressing concerns. I can barely weep, but I choke out the words in a sob of desperation. "I want my mother," I cry like a little child. "I want my mother."



I don't want my mother to know that I need her. I don't want to need her at all, just like I don't want to need protein or fat or even my favorite, carbohydrates. If I were a stronger person, I insist to myself, I wouldn't eat so much and I would exercise more. I would run until . . . until what? I don't know. Secretly I have always hoped that someday I would just collapse on the treadmill. Unless that happens, I have to face the knowledge that I could have done more. So I ran ten miles. I should have done twelve. So I ran a marathon. Everyone is doing that these days. Where does it end? When does someone say, "Let me take this burden of the world from you so that you can rest for a little while"? Never, I guess, but there must be a point where your body simply refuses to take another step. I'm too self-indulgent to let that happen. I get close, maybe, and my legs swell with water and get heavy, my whole body feels weak, and my lungs function as if I have never run before. My eyes tear with the effort of pushing through the fatigue, and finally I give in. I take a break from running. I "crash," but I don't crash literally, so there isn't any glory in it.



My mother is fat. She is also beautiful. I remember as a child running fingers through her beautiful dark hair. She asked me to trim it for her once. It took forever as I nervously separated dense locks into manageable strands. It used to take her three hours to get her hair permed. Luckily she doesn't do that anymore.

No one ever believes that my mother is in her fifties. Many mistake her for my sister. That's because her skin is smooth and soft. She complains of wrinkles, but only she can see them (just as my fat is visible only to me). I want my skin to be like my mother's when I'm older, but I am not counting on it. Since the eating disorder, my skin is drier. I somehow have more wrinkles than my mother, and I am nearly twenty-five years younger. My hair is no longer thick like hers, either. My hair is falling out.

"You aren't her," my therapist tells me when I confide my fear of being sucked into a destiny that has already been laid out.

"In my extended family," I explain, "I have no identity of my own." They have written me off as another copy of my mother. Surely that is my doom anyway, to have all the same problems. Later I find amusement in reflecting that my life mirrors a Greek tragedy. The more I fight against my fate, the more I ensure that it will happen. Irony is my favorite form of humor, and luckily there is a great deal of irony in an eating disorder. Like the way I changed my diet to cut out salt so that I could avoid high blood pressure, and then a year later my doctor blamed the edema in my legs on a salt deficiency. Like the way I took my first long-distance walk on Valentine's Day to "do something good for my heart," and last month my doctor gave my heart a fifty-fifty chance of hanging in there for the next five years. (Ha, I thought to myself, another worrier like my grandma.) Like the way I don't want to gain weight because I like fitting into a size-small sports bra, and in the end having an eating disorder is far more costly than breast reduction surgery. Like the way I used to exercise to numb the loneliness, and now I am assured to be alone because food is at the heart of so many social occasions and I can't eat with other people. I can't imagine being married. I can't imagine having children. I'd never know how to feed them. I'd worry constantly that I was giving them too much or, worse, failing to provide the nourishment they need. I was so afraid of what I would become, that I am becoming the worst possible me.

Fear—that seems to be at the heart of it all. Like fear of chocolate chip cookies. "I saw the cookies laid out on the table," I tell my therapist, "and I thought to myself, 'Would it kill me to eat just one?' And the answer was yes, it would." Easier to not have any than to have one and then stop, because if I let myself feel the intensity of my desire, it will overwhelm me. Easier to pretend that I don't need anything or anyone because if I let myself feel how much I need love, the hurt will be more than I can bear.



For a long time, I feel myself moving away from God. Religion is another standard to be judged by, another set of criteria that I am not living up to. I stop reading my scriptures. I stop going to the temple. I don't want to need God, either. But in the end, I have nowhere else to turn. Still, how can I ask for comfort? How can I ask for anything? I push God away because there are too many things I have to do before I can ask. I have to start reading my scriptures again the way I used to. And I don't, so I'm stuck. I am too tired to move forward, so I let myself drift backward.

One night as I lie awake, a new thought occurs to me. Could God come to me in my darkness? Instead of my wading through the heaviness that oppresses me, would he come down to me, take my hand, and walk with me? Would he? If I threw out my list of prerequisites, could I seek his help? Even before I have reestablished my regular scripture reading? I am breathless with hope.



It's funny the way you can know things without realizing you know them. I tell myself I don't have the answers, but maybe they are there inside all along. When my therapist asks me what step I need to take first to get better, I know what to say. "Receive the love of God," I affirm, but then I cry because I can't imagine how I will ever do it.



So, if love is a chocolate chip cookie, will it kill me to eat it? I don't know. A friend at church wants to bring me a miniloaf of pumpkin bread for Christmas, but only if I promise not to let it go to waste. It's a special recipe, she informs me. I can appreciate this. After all, I have spent hours poring over cookbooks for entertainment. The food channel is one of the few I watch regularly. "Something like that has to be honored," I say, and she nods. "I put chocolate chips in it," she declares. I smile. I can't remember the last time I had a chocolate chip, but I remember exactly what they taste like. "I used to put in nuts, but then my son said, 'Can you put some chocolate chips in this thing?'"

"Well," I say, "why not?"

This essay won second place in the 2006 *BYU Studies* essay contest.

The Imprisonment of Martin Harris in 1833

Mark B. Nelson and Steven C. Harper

With editorial work on Joseph Smith's legal papers in full swing,¹ the attention of several attorneys, historians, archivists, and law students has turned increasingly to American legal culture in the 1820s through the 1840s and specifically to cases involving Latter-day Saints. At the same time, Mark Nelson recently discovered court documents of a trial involving Martin Harris in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania. These brief documents add considerable information to an otherwise little-known chapter in the life and ministry of Martin and Emer Harris. Readers also learn about early Mormon missionary adventures generally.

These documents shed light on an incident in the life of Martin Harris that biographers previously have been able only to hint at. Harris family tradition recalls vaguely that Martin "was imprisoned for his forthrightness in proclaiming the restored gospel."²

It has long been known that Martin Harris—Joseph Smith's early benefactor, scribe, and financier of the Book of Mormon—drew his brother Emer into Mormonism at an early date, and that in 1832–33 the two served together as missionaries for nearly a year among Emer's "old neighbors" in southern New York and northeastern Pennsylvania. In May 1833 as their labors neared an end, Emer wrote to his wife in Ohio that they had "traveled mutch & Preached mutch. Eighty two have been baptised and many more have believed. We find no end to the call for our labors."

1. Joseph Smith Papers, Legal Series, forthcoming.

2. Emer Harris to Mr. George James, May 7, 1833, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, quoted in Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Investigating the Book of Mormon Witnesses* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 110.

Mark B. Nelson

As a coordinator in the Church Educational System, I was responsible for central and northeast Pennsylvania, including the Harmony area. On one occasion I visited the Susquehanna County courthouse. I had read of Martin Harris's arrest and wondered if any record existed. In a dusty, damp courthouse basement I found all the pertinent documents associated with his arrest in 1832. It was thrilling to find these documents, which contained the signature of Martin Harris and had likely not been read since they had originally been filed. Although I could not purchase them, I was allowed to make facsimiles of them, which are now being published.

As was the case with so many early Mormon missionaries, Emer noted both the "many kind friends who have administered unto my necesetys" and the "many apposers & bitter Enimyes." The brothers would have returned home by now, Emer wrote, but were delayed due to Martin's January 24, 1833, imprisonment "on a fals[e] charge of slander."³ (When this letter was originally transcribed by Harris biographers, Emer's writing was rendered "a fals charge of *standen*."⁴ Anyone who works with paleography and transcription can make that mistake easily without the aid of external evidence. The discovery of these court records provides just such evidence. The charge was *slander*, so close and yet so far from *standen*.)

The success and opposition faced by the Harris brothers were related. As their preaching took root among citizens of Springville Township in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, opposition escalated. This trend included the events that led to Martin Harris's imprisonment. On November 1, 1832, he preached to a group of townsfolk, including a single woman named Eliza Ann Winters. She later told the court that Martin loudly

3. Emer Harris to Mr. George James or Mrs. Parna Harris, May 7, 1833, Perry Special Collections.

4. Madge Harris Tuckett and Belle Harris Wilson, *The Martin Harris Story: With Biographies of Emer Harris and Dennison Lott Harris* (Provo, Utah: Vintage, 1983), 122.

denounced her. Picking Winters out of the crowd, Martin allegedly said: “She has had a bastard child.”⁵

Whatever the truth of the matter, Winters sued Martin Harris for slander. In her complaint to the court she testified that Martin’s claim of fornication was intended to “render her infamous and scandalous,” soiling her “good name.” She sued for restoration of her reputation and punitive damages of a thousand dollars. Winters filed her suit at the county courthouse in Montrose on December 5, 1832, through an associate named Benjamin Comfort. At that time women could not file suits in their own names, so Comfort filed the suit officially. Accordingly, Sheriff Joseph Williams arrested Martin on January 23, 1833, and imprisoned him in Montrose to await a court appearance. In the twenty-first century these would be classified as civil charges and not subject to imprisonment, but in the 1830s both civil and criminal charges could result in imprisonment prior to posting bail. Bail was set at one thousand dollars, the amount of the suit, ensuring satisfaction if the court found for the defendant. Neither of the Harris brothers had that amount on hand.

Martin first appeared before the local judge on February 1, 1833, when his bond was set. Martin would have remained in prison until his trial if not for Larson and Ezra Kingsley of nearby Bridgewater. They posted his bail on February 7. It is unclear whether the Kingsleys were sympathetic to Harris because of his Latter-day Saint religion or for some other reason. The Kingsleys are not mentioned specifically in records of local converts. Regardless, their charity was undoubtedly appreciated by the Harrises. It enabled Martin to continue preaching the restored gospel while he awaited trial, initially scheduled for April 30. However, the court postponed the trial date to September 3. Martin and Emer returned to Ohio by summer 1833, so Martin left an affidavit with the court. Apparently his absence did not hinder his defense. Judgment was “entered against the plaintiff.”⁶ Winters, it appears, was either “infamous and scandalous” before Martin denounced her, or could not convince the court that his words were legally slanderous.

5. Miss Winters, Affidavit, Warrant issued December 5, 1832, and recorded in court proceedings April 30, 1833, as recorded in Court Records found in Archives of Common Pleas 1832–33, Montrose, Pa., under “Harris, M”; a facsimile copy is in possession of Mark B. Nelson.

6. The Sheriff’s bill, arrest warrant, and Martin’s signed affidavit are all in the Susquehanna County Court records found in Archives of Common Pleas 1832–33, Montrose, Pa., under “Harris, M” and a copy of all three documents is held by Mark B. Nelson.

The Documents

Prothny⁷ B. T. Casey[?] [illegible] Atty.
Susquehanna County, ss.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
To the Sheriff of Susquehanna County==Greeting:
YOU are hereby commanded that you take

Martin Harris _____

so that you have him before our Judge of the Court of Common pleas, to be holden for the said County, at Montrose, on the first Monday of February—next, there to answer Eliza Ann Winters by her next friend Benjamin Comfort_____

a plea of trespass on the Case, for slanderous words—
Damages one thousand dollars _____

Thereof fail not. Witness, the Honorable Edward Harick, President of our said Court, the fifth – day of December, —in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty two.

Asa Dimock [illegible] Prothonotary.

Susquehanna County P-
Eliza Ann Winters by her next friend Benjamin Comfort
vs.

Martin Harris

Issue capias in case⁸
For slanderous words
Returnable to next term— Damages
\$1000 [illegible word(s)]

Jany. 24. 1833
To Asa Dimock jp esq.⁹

7. Abbreviation for prothonotary, the principal clerk in certain courts of law.

8. The Latin word *capias* (that you take) is a writ ordering the sheriff to take the body of the defendant to answer the plaintiff in a plea. The amount of the suit is noted on the writ.

9. Justice of the Peace, Esquire.

No 39

Feb 7—1833

Eliza Ann Winters by her next friend Benjamin Comfort vs Martin Harris

Precipe for Capias¹⁰

Filed Jan. 24, 1833

No. 39 Feb. 7, 1833

Eliza Ann Winters

vs.

Martin Harris

[illegible]

B.T. Case, Atty

Filed Feb. 9[?]-1833

Susquehanna County P-

N^o of February term

A.D. 1833_

Martin Harris late of said county, yeoman, was attached to answer Eliza Ann Winters, a minor under the age of twenty one years, who sued by her next friend Benjamin Comfort, of a plea of trespass on the case, &. And Whereupon the said Eliza Ann Winters, by Benjamin Comfort, her next friend, complain that whereas she the said Eliza Ann Winters is a good, true, honest, chaste and faithful citizen of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and of good name, fame[?] behavior and character, and so amongst all her neighbors and others to whom she was known deservedly hath been esteemed and taken, and as such from the time of her nativity hitherto hath behaved and carried herself, and during all that time hath been held and esteemed of a good name, fame[?], behavior and character and free from all hint[?] of fornication and from all suspicion of committing such crime. By reasons whereof the said Eliza Ann Winters the

10. The Latin word *precipe* (give an order) is a writ used to commence an action. It commanded the defendant to do what was ordered or to appear and show why he or she had not followed orders. Precipe is also an order that commands the clerk of a court to issue a formal writ of execution directing the enforcement of a judgment already rendered or commanding a public officer to seize the defendant's property to satisfy the debt.

favor, good will and esteem of all her neighbors and others to whom she was known deservedly did acquire and gain. Nevertheless the said Martin Harris not being ignorant of the premises, but continuing[?] and maliciously intending, the said Eliza Ann Winters not only of her good name, credit and esteem to deprive, but also to render her infamous and scandalous among her neighbors aforesaid. And also the said Eliza Ann Winters into danger of the penalties of the law against fornicators made to induce & bring—the first day of November, in the year one thousand, eight hundred & thirty two, at the county aforesaid, (and having discourse then and there with divers persons of & concerning the said ~~Ann~~ Eliza these false, feigned, and scandalous English words, in substance as follows, of and concerning the said Eliza Ann Winters, in the [illegible words] hearing of those persons, falsely & unjustly did say, speak, and with a loud voice proclaim & publish to wit, “She” (the said Ann Eliza Winters¹¹ [illegible]) has had a bastard child,” by means of the speaking and publishing of which said false and scandalous words, the said Ann Eliza Winters ~~not only~~ in her good name and fame aforesaid is grievously hurt and injured. To the damage of the said Ann Eliza Winters of one thousand dollars. And therefore she brings her suit, &c.

Pledges &c. John Doe &
Richard Roe

B.T. Case, pltf. atty.

No 39
Feb 7, 1833
Eliza Ann Winters
By her next friend
Benjⁿ Comfort
vs
Martin Harris
Affidavit of Deps
Filed April 30th
1833—

11. It is unclear why the affidavit states her name as both Ann Eliza and Eliza Ann.

Eliza Ann Winters by her
next friend Benjamin Comfort

Com pleas
Susqu Cty
Cases

Vs.

Martin Harris

Martin Harris the above named Defendant
being duly affirmed says that he has understood from
~~the~~ Benjamin Comfort the next friend of the Plaintiff in this case, and
believes that the said Benjamin Comfort and also the said Eliza Ann Win-
ters the above named Plaintiff both reside above five miles from New Town
in the State of New York —

Martin Harris

Subscribed & affirmed
In Open Court 30th April 1833
Asa Dimock Prot

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Astonishment

In spring we are running at dusk,
all five of us, away from a wisp
of victim when a cloud
barrels down out of the heavens,
immense roll and wash, leviathan,
barrels end over end, knocking us down
in a field's loneliness three furlongs
from the house of my father—
the full grain brushed
with dew, the dew almost touching
the soil, quick in its descent,
sweeping towards a night between film and glaze—
barrels in before Ammon sees the outline,
like metal burnishing in the summer sun,
and I sense that I've heard of something like this,
argued with my father about *thrones*,
dismissed him as he spoke of *seraphim*
more beautiful than beryl,
when Alma looks up too, and catches
the horse speed of shadow
and white—this chrysolite sheet
as powerful as ten suns,
dropped before us in a blind
and boom of eclipse and thunder
while we hold out for each other
in this thrashing of sonic death,
as though outside of this empty
field nothing else existed, nothing
that was clear enough to hallow
after we fell again to earth,
to dew that tried to make us clean,
face first with the blast of angel and sky.

—Mark Bennion

*This poem received a third place award in the BYU Studies
2004 poetry contest.*

The “Beautiful Death” in the Smith Family

Samuel Brown

Despite thoughtful attempts by Douglas Davies to situate death at the center of the Mormon “culture of salvation,” the exploration of death in early Mormonism has been somewhat limited to date, particularly as it relates to the Smith family and the earliest years of Mormonism.¹ Against this relative silence stands the testimony of the Smiths themselves, who were deeply concerned with questions of mortality. Joseph Smith was unequivocal on this point during his 1843 funeral sermon for James Adams: “All men know that all men must die. What is the object of our coming into existence then dying and falling away to be here no more? This is a subject we ought to study more than any other, which we ought to study day and night. If we have any claim on our Heavenly Father for any thing it is for knowledge on this important subject.”²

1. There are several treatments of the experience of death in Mormonism: Douglas Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2000); Klaus J. Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 84–112; Lester Bush, *Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), chap. 1; Mary Ann Meyers, “Gates Ajar: Death in Mormon Thought and Practice,” in *Death in America*, ed. David E. Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 112–33; M. Guy Bishop, “To Overcome the ‘Last Enemy’: Early Mormon Perceptions of Death,” *BYU Studies* 26, no. 3 (1986): 63–79; Truman G. Madsen, “Distinctions in the Mormon Approach to Death and Dying,” in *Deity and Death*, ed. Spencer J. Palmer (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1978), 61–76; M. Guy Bishop, “Celestial Family: Early Mormon Thought on Life and Death, 1830–1846” (PhD diss., Southern Illinois University, 1981). Only Bishop, “Celestial Family,” has dealt directly with early Mormonism as opposed to a general survey.

2. Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet’s Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 418.

Samuel Brown

This work began as an exploration of the role of angelic messengers in the Restoration. As my pregnant wife and I, along with our daughter, made our way through the town cemetery in Camden, Maine, imagining the life stories behind the laconic engravings on worn grave markers, I was struck by the fact that these angels were not just visitors from heaven but also from beyond the grave. This recognition, coupled with my professional experience with life-threatening illness and death, fueled an expansion of the initial project into a broader view of Joseph Smith's vision of the complex interactions between the living and the dead.



Before I could comprehend Joseph Smith's formal revelations on death and the dead, I felt the need to understand the personal side of these experiences—how Joseph and his family would have understood and encountered death. The journey has drawn me through the increasingly rich literatures on death studies and American cultural history, as well as the personal writings of the Smith family. I have discovered a new mental and spiritual world, part of which I introduce in this essay.

As I document in detail in a book project nearing completion, by understanding the death culture of Joseph and his family, I have gained new insight into a variety of Joseph Smith's revelations, from the temple and the mission of Elijah to the teachings of the Book of Mormon on seership, to celestial marriage and the law of adoption. Above all, it has become clear to me that the family represented the key to Joseph Smith's conquest of death, that the eternity of family intimacy was a great secret of the Restoration. It is fitting that the story should begin with a grieving family assembled to bid farewell to a beloved son.

Many of Joseph’s teachings that centered on death were presented as funeral sermons (most famously those for Seymour Brunson and King Follett), and many of the rites he revealed held the keys to overcome death. Through these teachings, the Prophet provided knowledge of the afterlife, clarifying and correcting both the modern, domestic heaven of his peers and the more traditional, theocentric heaven of his predecessors.³ Although the Restoration eventually provided potent means for understanding death, the Smith family still faced the bare facts of death in ways similar to antebellum Protestants inhabiting the American frontier. To borrow Joseph’s phrase, “many deaths” left “a melancholly reflection, but we cannot help it.”⁴

The project of this paper is to examine those bare facts of death, exploring the passings of Alvin and his father, Joseph Sr., contextualizing their deaths within antebellum American folkways to better understand how Lucy Smith and her family experienced mortality and bereavement. Understanding the cultural context of their bereavement behavior illuminates and challenges current proposals regarding the (patho)psychology of the Smiths, including Lucy’s reported suicidal depression. In addition, this contextualization explains previously obscure aspects of stories, such as the disinterment of Alvin. Finally, appreciating the Smiths’ cultural milieu clarifies the emotional valence of Joseph’s often death-emphatic ritual and doctrinal innovations.

The “Beautiful Death”

The early American Republic was the era of the “beautiful death,” a cultural phenomenon that had evolved from medieval Christianity through the English Church and into the post-Puritan environment of antebellum Protestantism.⁵ Well outlined by Philippe Ariès, Clare Gittings,

3. Two main conceptions of heaven were most relevant to early Republican and antebellum Protestants. The theocentric view, most closely tied to traditional Christianity, including Calvinism, taught that God is so vastly superior to humanity that human preoccupations and relationships would be irrelevant, even blasphemous, in the afterlife. The rising domestic heaven of popular Protestantism claimed that heaven was much like the idealized Victorian hearth, in which family relationships persisted in the presence of God’s glory.

4. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 531.

5. The beautiful death is a phrase from the work of Philippe Ariès. His *Western Attitudes toward Death* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 55–82, is a reasonable summary of his seminal work published as *The Hour of Our Death* (New York: Knopf, 1981). This culture was quite widespread, though

and others, the beautiful death included an intimacy with death that is unfamiliar to modern readers, born in part from the frequency of premature mortality. Death appeared omnipresent, both physically and intellectually, as evidenced by the much-repeated quotation, “In the midst of life we are in death.”⁶

This death culture negotiated rising threats to community integrity. As the individual became more significant in Western culture, the community was less able to absorb each loss. At the same time, the commitment to *avaritia*,⁷ familiar and beloved elements of mortal life, was seeing a resurgence after a long rejection that was quite prominent in the medieval church. Community, loneliness, and the worth of the individual were major themes in this beautiful death culture, as were ritual elements that served ultimately to distinguish the living from the dying.

Participants in this culture hungered to have forewarning of their own death. When the time of death approached, the dying were required to maintain a perfect calm as a sign of their righteousness and faith in Providence; with this calm they generally instructed and exhorted their many visitors. The dying were not abandoned to a sterile corner of a hospital ward: the deathbed was surrounded by attendants, both mortal and immortal. Perhaps most importantly, the beautiful death emphatically focused on the family ties and friendships about to be dissolved, through both an expressive bereavement and the emphasis on the coherence of the community. After death both the integrity and the location of the corpse bore a significance that may strike modern-day readers as excessive.⁸

Although this death culture was maintained as an oral folkway, its contours were regulated by written guides. Almanacs, Bible dictionaries, newspapers, and published sermons all reinforced the details of the

contemporary Unitarians and Deists had developed approaches to death that distinguished them from their peers in mainline and populist Protestantism. See James J. Farrell, *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830–1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 28–29, 33–34.

6. Burial service, Book of Common Prayer, used by the Church of England since 1549.

7. On *avaritia* in Christianity, see Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 130–31, 308–9. Though ultimately representing the deadly sin of avarice, at its base *avaritia* referred to attachments to this world.

8. Clare Gittings has traced the evolution of the beautiful death through English culture. See particularly Clare Gittings, “Expressions of Loss in Early Seventeenth-Century England: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal,” in *The Changing Face of Death*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Glennys Howarth (New York: St. Martin’s, 1997), 19–33; and Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Croom Helm, 1984).

beautiful death. The sermons of the Anglican cleric James Hervey—widely published in antebellum America and known to have been in Joseph Smith's possession—are emblematic of this merger of private and public, oral and written, in the traditions of Anglo-American death culture. Hervey's compiled sermons are prefaced by a biographical sketch of which nearly a third is devoted to a protracted description of his deathbed scene. Visitors seemed to throng about him in his final days. Just three hours before his death, James Hervey made his statement to attendant friends, "urging the importance of his everlasting concerns as here is no abiding place."⁹ Critically, as he approached his final agony, he stated, "Mine eyes have seen thy precious salvation." He then passed "without the least struggle."¹⁰ Friends marked his passing with their vocal, even florid bereavement. His biographer carefully recalled the interment of his remains in the cemetery Hervey had so affectionately conjured in his "Meditations among the Tombs."

Fiction, too, reinforced the nineteenth-century traditions of the beautiful death. Harriet Beecher Stowe's Little Eva St. Clare is considered quintessential, but she is accompanied by T. S. Arthur's Little Mary Morgan, Mark Twain's caricatured Emmeline Grangerford, and many others. In each of these sentimentalized scenes, the nature of the beautiful death shines through clearly.¹¹

The Smiths in Antebellum America

The Smiths, like their compatriots, were familiar with death. Many antebellum Americans, recognizing the high infant mortality, abstained from naming their children until they had survived infancy.¹² Survival to adulthood without bereavement was painfully uncertain. Statistically, the

9. James Hervey, *Meditations and Contemplations*, 2 vols. in 1 (Essex, England: J&B Williams, 1836), 13. Smith donated a copy of the book to the Nauvoo library, as outlined in Kenneth W. Godfrey, "A Note on the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute," *BYU Studies* 14, no. 3 (1974): 386–89.

10. Hervey, *Meditations and Contemplations*, 14.

11. Little Eva is the daughter of the family that owns Uncle Tom in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1851–52). See Gary Laderman, *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes toward Death, 1799–1883* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 55–56. T. S. Arthur's widely published *Ten Nights in a Bar Room and What I Saw There* describes the demise of the waifish Mary Morgan. Ariès adduces Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* and the short story "Californian's Tale." *Western Attitudes toward Death*, 61, 67. See also Farrell, *Inventing the American Way of Death*, 40.

12. Lewis O. Saum, *The Popular Mood of Pre-Civil War America* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1980), 88.

Smiths were probably better acquainted with premature death than their peers. Joseph's mother, Lucy, lost seven of her eleven children, while he lost six of his eleven (despite his own death in his late thirties).¹³

The Smith family faced death within cultural norms, with the help of their matriarch's guiding hand. Though corroborated by the writings of Joseph Smith and others close to the family, Lucy Mack Smith's family memoir is a central source of our understanding of the Smiths' experience with death.¹⁴ The lack of additional source material limits the scope of this paper, and our insights into Smith family deathways are thus limited somewhat by Lucy's perspective, but the extent of these limitations is not disabling to the present analysis.

This memoir is not simply Lucy's creation—it is the culmination of decades of living with memories and seeking personal and cultural themes from them. Lucy's personality and beliefs, which she possessed as she raised Joseph and his siblings, permeate the memoir. These same attitudes and beliefs likely shaped, at least in part, the lives of her children, including Joseph's. The strength of the cultural milieu, combined with evidence from other sources, further confirms the representative nature of Lucy's memoir.

Though some regional and sectarian differences certainly existed, the core of the beautiful death was common to most of the early Republic. While the wealthy were able to comply with the dictates of this death culture with greater ostentation, the marginalized also shared the ideals and modes of the beautiful death. For the poor, impediments to their participation in certain portions of the beautiful death did not lessen their devotion to its precepts. Impoverished workers were known to sacrifice present comforts to secure a beautiful death and burial.¹⁵

Lucy's frequently expressed yearning for greater social status does not mean that her reports of deaths are a textual act of social climbing or

13. Nicholas Marshall, "In the Midst of Life We Are in Death': Affliction and Religion in Antebellum New York," in *Mortal Remains: Death in Early America*, ed. Nancy Isenberg and Andrew Burstein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 177. I have included the Murdock twins for Joseph Jr. and all stillborn children for both Joseph Jr. and Lucy.

14. I have primarily used the original manuscript as published in Lucy Mack Smith, *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir*, ed. Lavina Fielding Anderson (Salt Lake City: Signature, 2001).

15. Michael Sappol, *A Traffic of Dead Bodies: Anatomy and Embodied Social Identity in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), 36.

an attempt to reclaim her family's honor.¹⁶ Her treatment of death does not so much elevate her to a higher social status as confirm her membership in American society. Although she may have amplified the tenets of the beautiful death, there is no reason to doubt that her children, including the dying Alvin and his prophet brother, participated in the same cultural milieu.

The formal nature of the deathbed scenes we shall examine derives from this very culture. Though skeptics may remark that the dying rarely have the presence of mind to interact meaningfully at the deathbed, this view belies the great cultural divide between current approaches to death and those of antebellum America. In the nineteenth century, both the living and the dying sought the death of the blessed. The importance of acting out the sacred deathbed drama was such that a dying person would have expended considerable energy to play his or her part, and the audience would have willingly filled in gaps for this person, understanding paragraphs of meaning from mere words or gestures. There is little cultural reason to discount Lucy's deathbed scenes; her depictions themselves participate in the required drama of death.

Even before becoming a parent, Lucy had experienced the death ritual of family members. She memorializes an episode with her mother in which most of the deathbed scene was carried out. After the final round of hortatory farewells, her mother "shortly recovered."¹⁷ Similarly, Lucy's sister Lovisa acted out her entire deathbed drama before being granted a miraculous, if temporary, reprieve, explaining that "I saw the Saviour, as through a veil, which appeared to me about as thick as a spider's web, and he told me that I must return again to warn the people to prepare for death." On the cusp of death, Lovisa sang Isaac Watts's arrangements of Psalms 30 and 116 as an extension of her ministry.¹⁸ Near the time of Lovisa's dramatic recovery, Lovina—the sister who had nursed Lovisa through her probable tuberculosis—fell ill of the same disease. Lovina's gradual decline also followed the deathbed canon. Before dying, the placid teenager exhorted her assembled audience to greater piety as she calmly recited Isaac Watts's hymn "Death! 'tis a melancholy day."¹⁹ Lucy mourned Lovina's passage with great vigor, reporting serious and dark thoughts

16. Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1992), 426–27.

17. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 256.

18. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 239–40.

19. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 240–43. Lovina reportedly requested, "Mother I am going now and I wish you to call my young mates that I may speak to them again before I die."

that biographers employing a psychological interpretation have used as evidence of depression.

Lucy had practiced the death rituals by the time of the most affecting deathbed scene in her memoir, that of Alvin. As the first surviving child of Joseph and Lucy Smith, Alvin looms over the family narrative like a mythic hero.²⁰ Though various commentators (applying modern psychological interpretations of family and intrapersonal dynamics) have seen Alvin as the token of Smith family strife, nearly all agree that Alvin was much loved and respected in his family.²¹

But Alvin's time on earth was limited to a quarter century. His death arrived precipitously, the entire process occupying less than one week. According to Lucy's narrative, shortly after Alvin pledged to provide the family with land ownership and a sturdy home, he "came to the house in great distress," at "10 oclock in the day." Alvin was "taken very sick . . . with the bilious cholick" and on arriving in the home "requested his Father to go for a physician." An unfamiliar physician from a neighboring village was summoned when the trusted Dr. Alexander McIntyre was absent. The substitute physician prescribed calomel, a toxic salt of mercury used as a cathartic, to treat the colic. Alvin rejected the medicine until "by much persuasion he was prevailed on" to take the purgative. When Doctor McIntyre was



Alvin Smith grave marker, Swift Cemetery, Palmyra, New York. The inscription reads, "In memory of Alvin, Son of Joseph and Lucy Smith who died Nov. 19, 1823, in the 25 year of his life." Courtesy Larry C. Porter.

20. Lucy and Joseph Sr. had a stillborn child in 1797. Alvin was their first child to survive infancy. See Dan Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2004), 1:576, 578, 469 (including note 5). Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 42, describes Alvin as "auxiliary family head." See also Christopher Stafford's 1885 recollection in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:194.

21. Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), xx–xxi. Jess Groesbeck makes the same argument in "The Smiths and Their Dreams," *Sunstone* 12 (March 1988): 22–30. Davies, *Mormon Culture of Salvation*, 86–90, also treated the centrality of Alvin and his death to the Restoration, as does William Morain in his Freudian analysis of Joseph Smith, *The Sword of Laban: Joseph Smith, Jr., and the Dissociated Mind* (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Press, 1998).

finally located, he decried the decision to prescribe calomel, but it was too late: “All the power [and] medicine which was afterwards prescribed by 4 skillful physicians could not remove it.”²² Alvin expired four days after he fell ill, probably of appendicitis or a toxic effect of the calomel.²³

The Gift of Foreknowledge

Despite the rapid pace of his illness, Alvin realized his impending death, which allowed him to initiate the beautiful deathbed. He announced to the assembled doctors, “The calomel is still lodged in the same place and you cannot move it consequently it must take my life.” To Hyrum he said, “I must die,” and to Joseph he said, “I am going to die now the distress which I suffer and the sensations that I have tell me my time is very short.”²⁴ These were cues for his family to begin the ritual of the deathbed farewell.

To an even greater extent than his son Alvin, Joseph Sr. had time to ensure that his own death would be beautiful: his terminal decline lasted almost a year. He experienced symptoms of tuberculosis, and his was the slow fate of the nineteenth-century consumptive: intermittently bloody coughing, fatigue, and breathlessness together with the relentless cachexia that gave tuberculosis its familiar name, consumption.

In Joseph Sr.’s case, this foreknowledge of his death, while critical, was made painful by the instability of his family’s social situation. Lucy reports that during forced migrations, often separated from his beloved namesake son, her husband had been obsessed with the idea of having their children present at his deathbed.

[He] was very feeble his cough increased and he became so weak that I was often under the necessity of lifting from his bed[,] one night as I was raising him up he said Mother I do’nt know but I shall die here alone with you and perhaps in your arms while you are lifting me—Oh no Father said I you will not for when you die you will have all your children round you[,] I will said he if you say so in real earnest I believe it will be so.²⁵

22. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 350–51.

23. Alvin’s reported fear of calomel was both culturally appropriate and medically reasonable. See Guenter B. Risse, “Calomel and the American Medical Sects during the Nineteenth Century,” *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* 48 (January 1973): 57–64.

24. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 351–52.

25. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 709.

Once the family had arrived in Nauvoo, Joseph Sr. asked his children to “stay with him, as much as they could consistently.” He was miserable when Joseph went to Washington, D.C., to plead for the Missouri reparations before President Martin Van Buren.²⁶ Though the mission was unsuccessful, the return from Washington was glorious to the two Josephs, who had lived to see each other once more. Joseph Sr. “having had a relapse was confined again to his bed,” and he “cried for joy at the thought of being spared to see his [son’s] face again.” Even at that time, Joseph Sr. “knew that he could live but a short time.”²⁷

Such foreknowledge of death was vital to allow the dying to achieve the requisite calm in the face of death. The deathbed script could not be initiated without forewarning. Hervey, representing generation after generation, called an unanticipated death “most pitiable.”²⁸ Death was robbed of its beauty when the great bedside drama could not be staged.²⁹ In this respect, little seems to have changed from medieval cultural expectations.

Community of the Deathbed

Advance warning also allowed for the assembly of the deathbed audience. In antebellum America, the deathbed was a communal locus. The audience was central to the beautiful death. At such a momentous occasion, even strangers may have been present, and Christians generally were exhorted to come in order to be edified by their encounter with the dying. In Hervey’s phrase, “The deathbed of the good man is a privileged spot.”³⁰ Presbyterian ministers were instructed to exploit such opportunities for instructing the living; mothers were even counseled to bring their children to the deathbed for instruction.³¹ By modern standards, these scenes

26. After the Mormon War in Missouri (1838–39), the Mormons hoped to receive payment for the lands they had forfeited to their opponents, including vigilantes and the state militia. Joseph made a trip to Washington, D.C., to speak directly with President Martin Van Buren, who argued that he did not have the authority to meddle in Missouri’s affairs.

27. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 714.

28. Hervey, *Meditations and Contemplations*, 30. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death* (1981), 394. Ariès traces this phenomenon to the Tame Death of medieval Christian chivalry.

29. Robert V. Wells, *Facing the “King of Terrors”: Death and Society in an American Community, 1750–1990* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 45.

30. Hervey, *Meditations and Contemplations*, 15.

31. Farrell, *Inventing the American Way of Death*, 38–39; Sheila M. Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death: Tuberculosis and the Social Experience of Illness in American History* (New York: BasicBooks, 1994), 94.

would appear crowded, but such was the desired norm: one of the greatest fears of Americans traveling westward was the thought that they would die without an audience.³² These interactions cemented the hope of future reunions focusing on instruction and exhortation. Thus, the integrity of the community could be maintained. The Smiths were known, even by unfriendly neighbors, to have been tender and observant participants at deaths within their community.³³

Those surrounding the deathbed were edified by the presence of the dying as much as by the words they spoke. The Prophet Joseph Smith, eulogizing Elder Lorenzo Barnes, emphasized the lessons that death could teach: "To . . . all the Saints who are mourning, this has been a warning voice to us all to be sober and diligent and lay aside mirth, vanity, and folly and be prepared to die tomorrow."³⁴

Alvin died, surrounded like Little Eva by his emotionally devastated family. As they awaited his every word, he gave each individual final instruction. Hyrum and Sophronia were told to look after their parents, as was young Lucy. To Joseph, Alvin urged fidelity to his new visions: "Do everything that lays in your power to obtain the records," though in Lucy's account Alvin closed this instruction with the same admonition to look after their parents.³⁵ The focus on the unity of the Smith family is nearly overwhelming in this scene; Lucy revisited it later when she noted that Alvin died with the fifth commandment on his lips.³⁶ Though Lucy's emphasis may be on the tender love of a child for parents, crowding out other themes in her narrative, this was not simply filial affection: Alvin was stressing the continuity of the society of the bereaved—an act that echoed his grandfather Asael Smith's request that his family meet together regularly after he died.³⁷ The unchurched Alvin expressed his religious

32. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 448; Saum, *Popular Mood of Pre-Civil War America*, 95.

33. Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:103, 139, 156. For a description of the cultural implications of such interactions, see Wells, *Facing the "King of Terrors,"* 105.

34. Faulring, *American Prophet's Record*, 367. The recommended deportment is clearly reminiscent of Joseph's poetic depiction of Alvin's deportment in the Book of the Law of the Lord. See Dean Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92), 2:440–41.

35. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 352–53.

36. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 435–36.

37. "If you cannot Meet, Send to and hear from each other yearly, and oftener if you can." Richard Lloyd Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage: Influence of Grandfathers Solomon Mack and Asael Smith*, 2d ed. (Provo, Utah: Deseret Book, 2003), 164. In fact, Asael explained his decision to write a memorial

faith in the admonition to his younger brother, the rising prophet. The rest of his energy was invested in maintaining the integrity of his family.

Alvin's father passed away in an even more prominent assembly of the deathbed community. Approximately a month after the vicarious baptism that sealed Alvin's place in celestial glory, Joseph Sr.'s tuberculosis resulted in fits of bloody coughing and worsened breathing. Aware that these hemorrhages could be harbingers of death, he wanted his children to be available for his imminent deathbed scene.

Lucy's narrative appears to telescope around a month, perhaps combining two dramatic episodes. She assembled all but one of "the children [Katharine] who did not live in the city." After blessing that daughter's husband, Joseph Sr. "called us . . . all round his bed" and began to combine the sealing of "patriarchal Blessing[s]" with his "dying blessing." He began with Hyrum, to whom he passed the patriarchal ordination, and bestowed general blessings of spiritual strength. Joseph Sr. then moved from son to son in descending age, highlighting their service to the Church, blessing them with strength and glory, and blessing their offspring. He next blessed daughters Sophronia and Katharine (in absentia) with peace and family blessings. Finally, he blessed his "darling" daughter Lucy in similar terms, before returning to his wife, Lucy. Joseph Sr. spoke directly about the mourning he knew would soon begin, warning her that she "must not desire to die when I do."³⁸

A printed eulogy of Joseph Smith Sr. by Robert B. Thompson, who served as a scribe for the Prophet, confirms Lucy's depiction of the deathbed audience: "He has proved himself worthy of . . . such a family, by whom he had the happiness of being surrounded in his dying moments; most of whom had the satisfaction of receiving his dying benediction. . . . On Sunday he called his children and grand children around him, and like the ancient Patriarchs, gave them his final benediction."³⁹ Wilford Woodruff and Eliza R. Snow even hailed Father Smith as Jacob, Father Israel, emphasizing a biblical tradition for the deathbed assembly.⁴⁰

pamphlet by his insecurity about the likelihood of having sufficient warning to have his family gathered: "I know not what leisure I shall have at the hour of my death to speak unto you." Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 24.

38. The eulogy and Lucy's account both cite the beginning of the scene as coincident with another episode of bleeding. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 713–22.

39. "Nauvoo, Ill. Sept., 1840," *Times and Seasons* 1 (September 1840): 170–71.

40. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–84), 2:451–52,

Grace at the Deathbed

These grand farewell scenes were marked by the near-ataractic calm required of the dying. The offices of a graceful death were enjoined on all righteous Christians. According to an 1815 Bible dictionary: “It should be our daily petition to God, that he would enable us to perform this last act of our life with decency and constancy of mind, that neither our disease, nor our weakness, may destroy the firmness of our spirits, and cause us to be amazed with fear, or filled with peevishness.”⁴¹

James Hervey prefaced his “Meditations among the Tombs” with the exhortation that the righteous should “look forward upon their approaching exit without any *anxious apprehension*; and when the great change commences, may bid adieu to terrestrial things, with all the *calmness* of a cheerful resignation, with all the *comforts* of a well-grounded faith.”⁴² In 1843 a Mormon eulogist for Elias Higbee noted approvingly that “he died perfectly resigned—perfectly calm and tranquil—to the last moment.”⁴³ Lewis Saum mentions other notable examples, from Melville (“To expire mild-eyed in one’s bed transcends the death of Epaminondas”) to a simple Missourian, worried he had missed his friend’s deathbed scene (“Gives me eas if he was perfectly resined to gow”).⁴⁴ Robert V. Wells adduces many such examples from Schenectady, New York, in the antebellum period.⁴⁵

Many reports are emphatic about a lack of physical suffering, not simply an emotional calm. These descriptions of physical comfort and ease during the mortal passage seem to have been considered proof of a blessed moral state. Thus, Hervey died “without the least struggle,”⁴⁶ and Lucy’s sister Lovina Mack lapsed into eternal sleep as she completed her recitation of a hymn. Likewise, an early Native American minister, his death self-consciously modeled on a beautiful Christian death, “immediately dy’d when his Prayer ended.”⁴⁷

August 23, 1844; Eliza Snow, “The Venerable Lucy Smith,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (May 15, 1845): 911.

41. John Robinson, *A Theological, Biblical, and Ecclesiastical Dictionary* (London: Longman, 1815), s.v. “Death.”

42. Hervey, *Meditations and Contemplations*, 21; emphasis in original.

43. “Death of Elias Higbee,” *Times and Seasons* 4 (June 15, 1843): 233.

44. Saum, *Popular Mood of Pre-Civil War America*, 98–99, citing Melville’s *Mardi: And a Voyage Thither* and an 1855 private letter. Epaminodas was a celebrated Greek military hero.

45. Wells, *Facing the “King of Terrors.”*

46. Hervey, *Meditations and Contemplations*, 14.

47. Laura M. Stevens, “The Christian Origins of the Vanishing Indian,” in Isenberg and Burstein, *Mortal Remains*, 25.

The Smiths were no exception. Lucy portrayed Alvin as being able to bid his family goodbye with perfect presence of mind and lack of fear. Her account of his final moment reports him as saying, “Father Mother brothers sisters farewell I can now brathe out my life as calm as a clock after which he immediately closed his eyes in death.”⁴⁸

Lucy was even more explicit about her husband’s calm. Shortly after the patriarchal deathbed blessings were complete, Joseph Sr. had a perfect clarity of vision: “Pause—Why I can see and hear as well as ever I could—<2n> <I> have my senses <perfectly> well ... Pause I shall live 7 or 8 minutes—.” Lucy continues, “He then straightened him self and laid his hands together and began to breath shorter and shorter untill at last his breath stopped without a struggle or even a sigh.”⁴⁹ Thompson’s eulogy corroborates this account. “Although [Joseph Sr.’s] strength was far gone, and he was obliged to rest at intervals, yet his mind was clear, perfectly collected, and calm as the gentle zephyrs.”⁵⁰

Heavenly Community

The righteous calm of the dying was often rewarded by the presence of visitors beyond mortal kith and kin. Stressing the persistence of earthly ties after death, angels or spirits—often representing deceased ancestors—might be present as well.⁵¹ The presence of angels that drew antebellum Christians to the next life echoed the martyrs who had crowded about the medieval deathbed, filling the same role.⁵² In Philippe Ariès’s phrase, “In the beautiful death of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the room of the dying man is filled with disembodied friends and relatives who have come from the other world to assist and guide him in this first migration.”⁵³ A common nineteenth-century trope for the moment of death was this visit of an angel to guide the dying to heaven.⁵⁴ Generally,

48. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 354.

49. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 723.

50. “Nauvoo, Ill. Sept., 1840,” 173.

51. See Peter Metcalf and Richard Huntington, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*, 2d ed., rev. (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 85–90, 104.

52. Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 16.

53. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 460.

54. Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death*, 16, 34.

the person dying was the only one to see these spirits; survivors remained earthbound—the heavenly society was not yet theirs.⁵⁵

In a Protestant culture fearful of malevolent interference from pretended angelic visitors, the deathbed remained a safe haven for true angelic visitations.⁵⁶ Furthermore, the presence of immortal beings at the most mortal of events was interpreted as a reassurance of the victory of God over the void of extinction and a reminder of the cohesiveness of human society, comprising both the living and the dead.

The Smiths also partook of this phenomenon. As Alvin passed on, “one present said Alvin is gone an angel has taken his spirit to Heaven.”⁵⁷ Joseph corroborated his mother’s statement in his dictation of the Book of the Law of the Lord entry of August 23, 1842, which underscored Alvin’s participation in the beautiful death: “When he died the angel of the Lord visited him in his last moments.”⁵⁸ Evidence does not suggest that the family directly observed this angel (which would have violated the canon), merely that the language of angelic guides deeply penetrated their understanding of Alvin’s final moments. Indeed, despite his many personal exposures to angels, the Prophet never identified Alvin’s guide by name.

Alvin’s place in the celestial kingdom had been vouchsafed by an 1836 revelation and through an 1840 vicarious baptism.⁵⁹ This assurance made Alvin the natural choice to escort his father heavenward from the

55. For an observer to witness an angel was a deviation from the sacred script, more likely to be found in the hemi-Christianized Indian than in the practicing believer. Erik R. Seeman, “‘Reading Indians’ Deathbed Scenes: Ethnohistorical and Representational Approaches,” *The Journal of American History*, June 2001, <<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/88.1/seeman.html>>.

56. Elizabeth Reis, “Immortal Messengers: Angels, Gender, and Power in Early America,” in Isenberg and Burstein, *Mortal Remains*, 163–64. Reis sees the deathbed as giving women access to these encounters, since an angelic visitation to a woman in any other setting was suspected to be Satanic. These are to be distinguished from the conversion theophanies that accompanied Evangelical revivalism. The Puritan leader Increase Mather summarized a common view that persisted well into the nineteenth century: “How easy then is it for *Daemons*, who have a perfect Understanding in *Opticks*, and in the Power of Nature to deceive the Eyes, and delude the Imaginations of Silly Mortals?” Reis, “Immortal Messengers,” 167, citing *Angelographia, or A Discourse concerning the Nature and Power of the Holy Angels, and the Great Benefit which the True Fearers of God Receive by Their Ministry* (Boston, 1696), 10.

57. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 354.

58. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:441.

59. M. Guy Bishop, “‘What Has Happened to Our Fathers?’: Baptism for the Dead at Nauvoo,” *Dialogue* 23 (Summer 1990): 92.

deathbed. Indeed, in his previously described moment of mortal clarity Joseph Sr. exclaimed, “I see Alvin.”⁶⁰

Smith family culture preceded Alvin’s death. His mother’s father, Solomon Mack, receiving Lucy’s sister Lovisa during her miraculous recovery, “cried out in amazement Lovisa is dead and <Loe> her spirit has come to admonish me of my final exit.”⁶¹ Though both participants in this strange encounter were alive, the message was clear: the dead guided the dying to the next life. One contemporary theologian interpreted Elijah’s grand chariot of fire as representing the angels that take the righteous to heaven,⁶² while sermons of the day often anticipated deceased friends as guides to heaven.⁶³ This belief would be evident during the Civil War, as dying soldiers were reported to have seen their mothers (and other dear relatives) as they passed on.⁶⁴

The Bereaved Survivors

As the angel and his or her ward departed, the focus of the deathbed turned to the bereaved, whose “mourning was unfurled with an uncus-tomary degree of ostentation.”⁶⁵ Integral to the community of the beautiful death was this marked emphasis on mourning. Indeed, this may have been the chief role of the living at the scene. In a dramatic phrase from Ariès, “Emotion shook them, they cried, prayed, gesticulated. . . . These activities were described as if they had been invented for the first time, spontaneously, inspired by a passionate sorrow which is unique among sorrows.”⁶⁶ This sentiment, deeply rooted in Anglo-American culture, was widespread in antebellum America and was supported by (and in turn supported) a sentimental literature about the deathbed.⁶⁷

60. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 723.

61. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 238.

62. Robinson, *Theological, Biblical, and Ecclesiastical Dictionary*, s.v. “Elijah.”

63. Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death*, 126–27. Rothman provides an example from Dover, Massachusetts, in 1844. See also Wells, *Facing the “King of Terrors,”* 74.

64. Laderman, *Sacred Remains*, 135.

65. Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death*, 67.

66. Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death*, 59.

67. Marshall, “Affliction and Religion in Antebellum New York,” 182, 185. Marshall does not sufficiently appreciate the extent to which this “sentimental, if not maudlin, literary culture” was driven by a death culture. See also Ann Douglas, “Heaven Our Home: Consolation Literature in the Northern United States, 1830–1880,” in *Death in America*, ed. David Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 49–68.

The Smiths participated fully in this custom of bereavement. After the peaceful dignity of Alvin’s passage, the family began to mourn in earnest. Lucy reported that the family “wept with one accord [their] irretrievable loss.”⁶⁸ The effects of Alvin’s death were not limited to his immediate family. In retrospect, Lucy saw Alvin’s death not only as an overwhelming personal tragedy but also as a potent influence on all of Palmyra. She proclaimed that “the circumstance of this Death aroused the neighborhood to the subject of religion,” perhaps as a muted response to the insensitive eulogizing of Reverend Stockton.⁶⁹ The scope of her son’s influence was broad and long lasting. Lucy noted that Alvin’s fiancée “was rendered most desolate by his unexpected Death and as long as we knew her she never recovered her wonted animation and Good spirits.” Lucy saw Alvin’s shadow on Joseph’s decision to marry, reporting “Joseph called Mr Smith and myself aside and told us that he had felt so lonely ever since Alvin’s death that he had come to the conclusion of getting married if we had no objections.”⁷⁰ She also saw Joseph’s prophetic call as being closely tied to his older brother: “None were more engaged than the one whom we were doomed [to] part with for Alvin was never so happy as when he was contemplating the final success of his brother in obtaining the record.”⁷¹

For his part, the Prophet minced no words on his grief over Alvin’s passing: “Alvin my oldest brother, I remember well the pangs of sorrow that swelled my youthful bosom and almost burst my tender heart, when he died.”⁷² Indeed, as Joseph began to record the story of the Restoration, he and Hyrum carefully inscribed a mark of dedication, “In Memory of Alvin Smith,” and attached it to the manuscript of what would become the *History of the Church*.⁷³ Joseph later dictated a few lines of memorial poetry to his brother in the Book of the Law of the Lord, reverencing

68. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 356. Vogel is open about his diagnosis of suicidality. Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*, xx.

69. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 355. Stockton was the Palmyra Presbyterian who presided at Alvin’s funeral. According to William Smith, Stockton “preached my brother’s funeral sermon and intimated very strongly that he had gone to hell, for Alvin was not a church member.” Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:513. Such would have been a standard Presbyterian funeral, given their stated emphasis in such sermons on emphasizing preparation for death. See Farrell, *Inventing the American Way of Death*, 40, citing *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America*, which was ratified in 1821.

70. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 362.

71. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 465.

72. Jesse, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:440.

73. This inscription is on a slip of paper attached to the front cover of the Manuscript History of the Church, probably in Hyrum Smith’s handwriting.

Alvin's memory: "In him there was no guile He lived without spot from the time he was a child From the time of his birth, he never knew mirth He was candid and sober and never would play and minded his father, and mother, in toiling all day."⁷⁴

The family followed the same bereavement script for Joseph Sr.'s death. Joseph first addressed the impending fear of loss during an episode of illness in Kirtland in October 1835. Joseph's diary reads,

[I] visited my Father /again/ who was verry sick./ In secret prayer in the morning the Lord said, "My servant thy Father shall live."/ I waited on him all this day with my heart raised to God in the name of Jesus Christ that he would restore him to health again, that I might be blessed with his company and advise. Esteeming it one of the greatest earthly blessings, to be blessed with the society of Parents, whose mature years and experience renders them capable of administering the most whol[e]some advice.

When Joseph Sr. arose miraculously from his presumptive deathbed, Joseph and his brother William expressed their elation by singing "Songs of praise to the most High."⁷⁵

However, Joseph Sr. would live only five more years. When he passed in September 1840, Lucy recalled that the family "felt so desolate that we could not endure to be separated more than could possibly be avoided." She continued,

I am convinced that no one but a widow can imagine the feelings of a widow but my situation was not such as is common in similar cases my beloved companion who had shared my joy and grief for 44 years lay before me a cold lifeless corpse and the cold hand which I held in mine returned the pressure of my own no longer. My Fatherless children stood around me gazing in agony upon those eyes which had until a few minutes previous always beamed upon them with the tenderest [blank line].⁷⁶

Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:55. See also the discussion in Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:265–67.

74. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:440–41. Though not printed in poetic form, the entry is clearly in rhymed couplets with a disclaimer afterward, calling them "childish lines." Hicks has independently identified these lines as poetry, though he missed the fact that they represent memorial poetry. Hicks also identifies a similar memorial poem to Joseph Smith Sr. (also in the Book of the Law of the Lord), though he again does not recognize the genre. Michael Hicks, "Joseph Smith, W. W. Phelps, and the Poetic Paraphrase of 'The Vision,'" *Journal of Mormon History* 20 (Fall 1994): 63–84.

75. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:51.

76. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 724.

Robert Thompson's eulogy supports Lucy's emphasis on the bereaved family and describes "the sorrowing widow, the disconsolate husband, the weeping children, the almost distracted and heart broken parent."⁷⁷

The bereavement of the beautiful death was so intense that it bordered on the suicidal. Non-Mormon John Lewis, mourning his daughter's death in 1830 New York, "professed the further hope that . . . all the family would 'join the dear departed child in realms of endless bliss.'"⁷⁸ Epitaphs from the period, such as "I live to mourn her and to join her in the grave," corroborate Lewis's sentiment.⁷⁹ A grief so severe that it flirted with suicide powerfully affirmed the rent in the fabric of human existence occasioned by the death of a loved one.

In this context, Lucy's statement that the family was "mak[ing] speedy preparation to follow him," is not diagnostic of suicidal depression, as has been suggested by Dan Vogel, but rather is emblematic of culturally appropriate bereavement. Lucy's vocal and dramatic mourning for her departed sister Lovina, often quoted as evidence of instability, partakes of the same cultural milieu. To be "pensive and melancholy, and often [think] that life was not worth possessing" was an appropriate response within the script of the beautiful death.⁸⁰

Negotiating Sorrow and Providence

The intense bereavement of the survivors was at odds with the peaceful demeanor of the dying. The dying person was not allowed to publicly express grief because doubting the justice of God's plan and the propriety of one's own death could threaten salvation. This stark contrast in behavior may have served to further divide the living from the dead. From another perspective, mourning was the means to recognize and valorize the missing loved one. Each individual had to leave a void, or his or her identity amounted to very little. What the pious humility of the dying could not express, the loud tears of the bereaved demonstrated. An 1830s Latter-day Saint summarized the problem poignantly: "Perhaps we should be found

77. "Nauvoo, Ill. Sept., 1840," 173.

78. Marshall, "Affliction and Religion in Antebellum New York," 176, citing John Lewis Diary for February 1830.

79. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 529.

80. Vogel, *Making of a Prophet*, xx, 4. This is not to say that Lucy could not have been depressed, nor do I want to partake in the stigmatization implicit in pathopsychologic analyses of the Smiths. I merely wish to indicate that statements of florid bereavement are not useful evidence of clinical depression given the cultural context.

wanting in feelings of respect and friendship, were we not to notice the departure of our beloved brother the loss of whom we view as an afflicting, though just providence.”⁸¹

Providence and the hand of God in mortal events have a vital, if complex, history in the inner life of Anglo-American Christians, and death was the supreme event in need of providential interpretation.⁸² The prescribed calm of the dying on the deathbed signified the acceptance of Providence. But for mourners, this path of calm was as hard to negotiate as the mind of God was difficult to ascertain, and antebellum Americans searched their souls for the cause of mortality.⁸³ Because death was often painful, it was common to seek sin as an underlying cause.

For Puritans and their heirs, premature death could be seen as an indication of moral laxness or of sinful attachment to the present world. In one of the paradoxes surrounding death, the bereaved might worry that his or her mourning represented a punishable distraction from the glory of God. Among American Puritans, Cotton Mather wrote that the death of his daughter Jerusha would be a sacrifice “to glorify God,” believing that his excessive fondness was likely responsible for her illness. Later, as his son Samuel languished near death, Mather “bewayled the Sins, by which the Life . . . of this desirable Child [would be] forfeited.”⁸⁴ Mather’s predecessor Thomas Shepard, dealing with a shipboard illness of his oldest child, identified the cause in the “immoderate love of creatures and of my child especially.”⁸⁵ In the next century, a Protestant minister, possibly Jonathan Edwards, saw high child mortality as “a Testimony against our Immoderate Love to, and Doating upon our Children.”⁸⁶ A contemporary to the Smiths wrote to his bereaved siblings of the practical implications

81. “Obituary,” *The Evening and the Morning Star* 2 (December 1833): 117.

82. Lewis Saum details the transition in providential thinking that occurred around the time of the Civil War in *Popular Mood of Pre-Civil War America* and *The Popular Mood of America, 1860–1890* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1990). On the robust Evangelical view of the Providence behind death, see Farrell, *Inventing the American Way of Death*, 37–38.

83. Nineteenth-century tuberculosis narratives are fraught with the tension of this quest. Rothman, *Living in the Shadow of Death*, 228.

84. Philip Greven, *The Protestant Temperament: Patterns of Child-Rearing, Religious Experience, and the Self in Early America* (New York: Knopf, 1977), 30–31, citing *Diary of Cotton Mather*.

85. Greven, *Protestant Temperament*, 30, citing *God’s Plot: The Paradoxes of Puritan Piety Being the Autobiography and Journal of Thomas Shepard*.

86. Greven, *Protestant Temperament*, 34, citing a 1738 entry in the record book of the Hampshire Association of Ministers. Though the attribution is not certain, it seems likely that this was Jonathan Edwards.

of excessive love for children: "If we do not in some degree turn our affections away from them we sharpen the arrow that is to pierce our vitals."⁸⁷ Joseph Smith expressed a similar sentiment in his eulogy for Ephraim Marks. "When we lose a near and dear friend, upon whom we have set our hearts, it should be a caution unto us not to set our affections too firmly upon others, knowing that they may in like manner be taken from us. Our affections should be placed upon God and His work, more intensely than upon our fellow beings."⁸⁸

Like other families, the Smiths had to develop explanations for suffering and death. An extreme example is the attribution of the Zion's Camp cholera outbreak (with its associated deaths) to sin and infidelity.⁸⁹ A disavowal of *avaritia* was often found in eulogies and musings on death, though Lucy demonstrates little acceptance of such a view. Persecution represented her explanatory framework, such that even deaths from natural causes may have qualified as martyrdom.⁹⁰ Reporting her daughter-in-law's death (which she attributes to the Missouri persecutions) in the closing paragraphs of her memoir, Lucy states, "The sum of martyrs in our family [is] no less than six in number."⁹¹ While Hyrum and Joseph were the only family members clearly murdered by enemies, Lucy and her family also saw the others as martyrs. Joseph Sr.'s death from tuberculosis—the omnipresent scourge of the era—was "brought upon him through

87. Saum, *Popular Mood of Pre-Civil War America*, 88, citing the private letter of R. Owen, Carrolton, Alabama, April 22, 1836.

88. *History of the Church*, 4:587. Wilford Woodruff's notes for the sermon leave off the final sentence, though the sentiment is culturally implicit in his comments and thus seems an appropriate emendation or correction (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:168, April 9, 1842).

89. Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:80, 106. See also Roger D. Launius, *Zion's Camp: Expedition to Missouri, 1834* (Independence, Mo.: Herald, 1984), 145–46, 151–52; Hansen, *Mormonism and the American Experience*, 93–96. Attributing cholera to sin during the initial American epidemic (1832–34) was common, as outlined in Charles Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849, and 1866* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 30–34.

90. There is some evidence that stillbirths may have been attributed to sin, as with the lost firstborns of Father Smith and Joseph. See Vogel, *Making of a Prophet*, 5, 125. Joseph Murdock's death from measles was considered a martyrdom of sorts, as were many Latter-day Saint deaths after infancy.

91. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 752 n. 125. Anderson believes the martyrs are Joseph Sr., Joseph Jr., Hyrum, Samuel, Caroline Grant, and Mary Bailey. Bushman, *Rough Stone Rolling*, 9, substitutes Don Carlos for Mary Bailey. Wilford Woodruff's reference to his visit with Lucy in August 1844 (*Wilford Woodruff's Journal* 2: 450) clearly specifies "Don Carloss" as a martyr, confirming Bushman's list.

suffering by the hands of ruthless mobs.”⁹² Son Don Carlos died in 1841 from a probable pneumonia, but Lucy apparently believed that he contracted his fatal disease because persecutions had forced him to recover the Church’s printing press in unhealthy conditions (“an underground room through which a spring was constantly flowing”) to publish the *Times and Seasons*.⁹³ Samuel died from an uncertain illness, perhaps pneumonia, approximately a month after his brothers’ murders in 1844. Lucy reports that “his spirit forsook its earthly tabernacle, and went to join his brothers, and the ancient martyrs, in the Paradise of God.”⁹⁴

Lucy appears to have thought of Alvin differently, perhaps because his death preceded the founding of the Church. Though she does not explicitly apply the title of martyr to Alvin, she is adamant that his death was not from natural causes, reflecting an undercurrent of persecution even at that early stage. In her words, “Alvin was murdered by a quack physician.”⁹⁵

Her explanations of death should be recognized as distinct from, or at least a special case of, the sense of persecution that attends the first century of the Restoration. She was not simply reporting the family’s nobility in the face of adversity. Martyrdom, as a special case of the Providential death, represented a death caused by the martyr’s righteousness. God was not displeased with the family for their failure to live divine principles or for their excessive devotion to earthly relationships; he was displeased with the enemies of the Church. Lucy presided over a family of martyrs, torn from her one after the other by the wicked.

92. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:439; Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 493.

93. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 763–65, 767. The Don Carlos material is appended to the end of the memoir, as discussed in *Lucy’s Book*, 752–53. William Smith’s late reminiscence (Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:488) notes that “Don Carlos died of chills & fevers.” See also the death announcement in *Times and Seasons* 2 (August 16, 1841): 503–4.

94. On Samuel Smith, see Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 265, 750–51. Pneumonia or pneumothorax seem possible given his complaints of a pain in his side, though a diagnosis is by no means certain. Even Lavina Anderson accepts the idea of Samuel’s martyrdom in her Smith family chronology. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 207. Samuel’s nephew, Joseph F. Smith, later reported that “the rupture of some blood vessel” was the direct result of fleeing the mob, and this resulted in his death. Joseph F. Smith, “Joseph Smith, the Prophet,” *Collected Discourses*, ed. Brian H. Stuy, 5 vols. (Burbank, Calif.: B. H. S. Publishing, 1987–92) 5:343. This explanation seems medically unlikely.

95. Smith, *Lucy’s Book*, 493.

The Corpse

The scene of the beautiful death extended beyond the deathbed and well into the grave. For participants in this death culture, the remains of the dead continued to wield power. The corpse was consummately liminal, neither dead nor alive, while being both simultaneously.

The power of Alvin's corpse is underscored by a heartrending scene recorded in his mother's memoir. Alvin's sister Lucy "would run out of the house and drag in a board and lay beside [Alvin's] corpse then take a white cloth and wrap herself in it and lay down on the board by his side."⁹⁶

This liminality framed and amplified the corpse's power.⁹⁷ Further, Christians believed that the body was essential to immortality. The remains of the beloved were to be closely guarded against artificial dissolution, and cremation was considered sacrilegious.⁹⁸ The integrity of the body between death and resurrection was of immense importance.

Foreign to twenty-first-century readers is the overwhelming fear of body snatching. The appropriation of corpses by surgical anatomists was initially a punishment for the most heinous of capital crimes and was seen as a fate worse than death.⁹⁹ In response to the exigencies of a limited supply of executed felons, a group of protocapitalists labeled resurrectionists arose, supplying anatomists and surgeons with purloined cadavers for dissection. Despite a flurry of legislation against body snatching in the second decade of the nineteenth century, the practice of stealing fresh corpses overrode the imagination of all castes of society, though the resurrectionists tended to steal the bodies of the poor and dispossessed.¹⁰⁰

Ten months after Alvin was interred in the Palmyra cemetery, rumors caused the family to feel anxious about his resting place. This led Joseph Sr.

96. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 354. The entire passage has been crossed out in the original manuscript. The published version replaces this material with a note that young Lucy "manifest[ed] such mingled feelings of both terror and affection at the scene before her, as are seldom witnessed."

97. The notion of liminality is prominent in the anthropological literature and has been expounded by Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), and later expanded by Victor Turner and Edmund Leach. See Metcalf and Huntington, *Celebrations of Death*, 115.

98. Stephen Prothero, *Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 78–80.

99. Sappol, *Traffic of Dead Bodies*, 13. Ruth Richardson, *Death, Dissection, and the Destitute*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 28–29, 36, 54, 97. Richardson treats the English side of the problem.

100. Sappol, *Traffic of Dead Bodies*, 102–4.

to perform an unenviable task. The only firsthand report of the incident is an advertisement repeated for six straight weeks in the town newspaper.

Whereas reports have been industriously put in circulation, that my son *Alvin* has been removed from the place of his interment and dissected; which reports, every person possessed of human sensibility must know, are peculiarly calculated to harrow up the mind of a parent and deeply wound the feelings of relations . . . —therefore, for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of such reports I, with some of my neighbors, this morning repaired to the grave, and removing the earth, found the body which had not been disturbed.¹⁰¹

While Dale Morgan dismissively groups the disinterment with popular ridicule of the Smiths' treasure seeking, and some critics believe Alvin's father and brother sought talismans from dismembered limbs, the exhumation of Alvin's remains was neither unimaginable for a poor New Englander nor consciously associated with money digging.¹⁰² The dissection mentioned in the newspaper advertisement above referred to the predations of the anatomists rather than the craft of the necromancer or the toiling of the treasure seeker. Independent of these proposed associations, the claims of dissection would have been extremely denigrating, placing the Smith family in the company of the dispossessed "as people who were unable to protect their dead, whose dead deserved no protection."¹⁰³

A misplaced corpse was seen as a nidus for hauntings and other calamities, so the Smiths' fear of the doubled loss of their beloved son is

101. *Wayne Sentinel*, September 29 to November 3, 1824, reprinted in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:217–18.

102. John Phillip Walker, ed., *Dale Morgan on Early Mormonism: Correspondence and a New History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986), 239. The physical relic theory is prominent in anti-Mormon discussions, though it has not been advanced in scholarly contexts. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 160–61, stops short of claiming a necromantic exhumation, though he believes the village rumors were grounded in beliefs about Smith necromancy. Morain, *Sword of Laban*, 147, sees the exhumation as evidence of Joseph Sr.'s emotional instability.

103. Sappol, *Traffic of Dead Bodies*, 113. One anonymous reviewer wondered whether the rumors might have indicated that the Smiths were so poor that they sold Alvin's corpse to a resurrectionist, and the disinterment was to prove this rumor wrong. Sale of a loved one's corpse was an exceedingly rare event, and such a rumor seems unlikely, even recognizing the dislike of many neighbors for the Smith family. However, had that rumor circulated, this would further confirm the great stigma associated with mistreatment of the corpse.

not surprising.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, riots related to the suspicion of empty graves occasionally broke out against medical institutions, and other disinterments from the period have been described.¹⁰⁵ Any implication that Joseph Sr. violated New York laws on disinterment betrays a poor understanding of contemporary popular and legal culture: state laws against body snatching were designed to protect kindred remains from the resurrectionists. Disinterring one's own son was a private act consistent with the spirit of those laws.¹⁰⁶

Knowing that Alvin remained safe in the ground, ready to join the family in the Resurrection, was imperative for the grief-stricken Smiths. The fact that this exhumation occurred around the time of Joseph's annual visit with Moroni could simply reflect how strongly the family (and their neighbors) associated Alvin with his younger brother's sacred mission.¹⁰⁷ Late in her memoir, Lucy makes one cryptic reference to the exhumation, which supports the nonmagical interpretation: "Alvin was murdered by a quack physician; but still he lay at peace."¹⁰⁸ The emphasis, both at the time and in retrospect, was on the sanctity of Alvin's resting place and the sacred obligation of the family to protect their dead. Relief at the security of Alvin's remains may have outweighed the shock of seeing his body in the later stages of decay, contrary to the assertion that the disinterment itself was a second major dissociating trauma for young Joseph.¹⁰⁹ Though the

104. R. C. Finucane, *Ghosts: Appearances of the Dead and Cultural Transformation* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1996). Finucane provides an excellent treatment of the cultural context of Anglo-American hauntings.

105. Sappol, *Traffic of Dead Bodies*, 106, reports riots in 1824 (New Haven and Hartford) and 1830 (Pittsfield, Mass.; Woodstock, Vt.; Castleton, Vt.). Sappol reports an alleged disinterment motivated by rumors of body snatching (108).

106. Morain, *Sword of Laban*, 147. (See Steven G. Barnett, "The Canes of the Martyrdom," *BYU Studies* 21, no. 2 [1981], 206.)

107. Though the culture of reverence for the corpse would make necromantic goals for the exhumation a possibility, I do not see compelling evidence for that interpretation when the act fits so well in another explanatory context. Alvin's relevance to Joseph's mission is amply documented in accounts from Father Smith and Joseph Knight Sr. as well as in statements from Philastus Hurlbut's and William and Edmund Kelley's collections. See Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:460; 2:67, 131, 159; 4:13.

108. Smith, *Lucy's Book*, 493.

109. Morain, *Sword of Laban*, 137–47. Some of Smith's followers would reverently handle his corpse at a later stage of decay, taking some of his hair during a reinterment. Some of Smith's followers would reverently handle his corpse at a later stage of decay, taking some of his hair during a reinterment.



Nauvoo resident George Cannon cast plaster masks of Joseph and Hyrum Smith as their bodies lay in state after their murders in June 1844. Relics were important to nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints, and the tradition of collecting artifacts continues to this day. Courtesy Val Brinkerhoff.

dead are dramatically present in early Mormonism, there is no need to propose Alvin's disinterment as the cause of imagined visits from Moroni.¹¹⁰

Respect for the corpse was further expressed in a minor cult of relics, including posthumous portraits, photographs, death masks, and preservation of locks of hair and various personal effects.¹¹¹ Hair had replaced the (embalmed) heart as an incorruptible memento of the corpse in the eighteenth century, as it also partook of the obdurate immortality of the skeleton.¹¹² This cult of relics was embraced by Latter-day Saints. Wilford Woodruff gave as a New Year's present "some Hair from the Heads of Joseph Smith the Prophet And all the Smith family of Male members also Mother Smith And from most all the quorum of the Twelve Also A peace of Joseph Smith Handkerchief."¹¹³ Death masks of the martyred brothers were cast and preserved, and the first coffins in which their bodies were returned from Carthage to Nauvoo were later crafted into canes that were distributed among the family and their close friends.¹¹⁴

110. Morain, *Sword of Laban*, 137, 145–46.

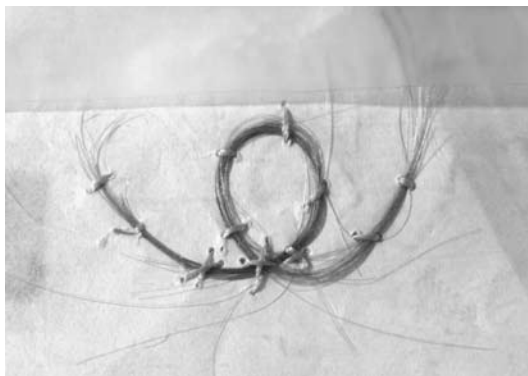
111. Jay Ruby, *Secure the Shadow* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), is an excellent history of posthumous portraiture in America. On hair, death masks, and other relics, see Laderman, *Sacred Remains*, 76, 132, 150.

112. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 388. Though there is no taxonomic link, the preservation of hair of the deceased has a worldwide distribution. See Metcalf and Huntington, *Celebrations of Death*, 63.

113. Wilford Woodruff's *Journal*, 3:3, January 1, 1846. The gift was sent to Elder Samuel Downing. At least two of Joseph's widows kept locketts of his hair. Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1997), 371; Roger Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 39.

114. Barnett, "The Canes of the Martyrdom," 205–11. See also Jennifer Reeder, "Eliza R. Snow and the Prophet's Gold Watch: Time Keeper as Relic," *Journal of*

Lock of Joseph Smith’s hair. This lock was given to Henrietta K. Whitney in Nauvoo, Illinois, as a memento not long before the Prophet was killed. An inscription reads, “Lock of the Prophet Joseph Smith’s hair cut off by Mrs. Mary Ann Smith-Stratton just before he was taken prisoner.” Courtesy Val Brinkerhoff.



Christians anticipated that their community would not be undone and that their dead would rise together at the day of the Resurrection. To have disturbed or moved the remains that would be revived was a mark of great disrespect and a possible cause of damnation. The fear was that a body removed from its sacred resting place would not be able to partake of the Resurrection. The thought that a loved one’s body could go missing, however theologically inept, was very real.¹¹⁵

The community of corpses, originally in churches and family estates, then in cemeteries, underscored both the importance of the remains and the necessity of being buried in the correct place. From the medieval practice of burial *ad sanctos* (“near the tombs of the martyrs”) to the nineteenth-century rural cemetery movement,¹¹⁶ the location of kindred remains has been considered of utmost importance both for human community and

Mormon History 31 (Spring 2005): 120–21, and Glen Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 402–3.

115. Regarding a Christian belief that the mishandled corpse could not rise, see Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 31–33. Regarding the idea that cursing could result from mishandling corpses, see Laderman, *Sacred Remains*, 68.

116. Because of rapidly increasing population, the old churchyards and burial grounds became so crowded they were often offensive to visitors and presented public health hazards. Changes in cemetery layout began in New England with an effort to make cemeteries places of peacefulness surrounded by nature. Hills and trees became part of the cemetery landscape, and roads followed the contours of the land. These cemeteries resembled beautiful parks rather than overcrowded graveyards. Mount Auburn Cemetery, established in 1831 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is recognized as the first rural cemetery in America. For more information, see Stanley French, “The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the ‘Rural Cemetery’ Movement,” in *Death in America*, ed. David E. Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 69–91.



Cane made from blood-stained wood of the coffin used to transport Joseph Smith from Carthage to Nauvoo, with the hair of Joseph and Hyrum Smith braided and encased in glass in the cane's handle. Courtesy Val Brinkerhoff.

for salvation.¹¹⁷ Thus, one father of a Civil War soldier reports that “all my care and toil was nothing, compared with the satisfaction of knowing that [my son’s] remains had been taken up from a grave in an enemy’s land, and had been safely transported to the land of his birth, and peacefully buried in our family cemetery.”¹¹⁸ Joseph Smith preached that “the place where a man is buried is sacred to me. This subject is made mention of in the Book of Mormon and other scriptures. Even to the aborigines of this land, the burying places of their fathers are more sacred than anything else.”¹¹⁹ In fulfillment of his mandate, he built in Nauvoo a family tomb, the “Tomb of Joseph,” in which he hoped to bury his entire family.¹²⁰

Conclusion

Several historical aspects of the early Restoration are clarified by the contextualization of the Smiths’ deathbed scenes. What has been identified as Lucy’s extremely despondent bereavement following the death of

117. Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 31–33, 41. See also Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death*, 22.

118. Laderman, *Sacred Remains*, 152. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington and the Whitehall cenotaph in London memorialize the misplaced corpse in our current era. See Mike Parker Pearson, *Archaeology of Death and Burial* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999), 55.

119. Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:361.

120. Susan Easton Black, “The Tomb of Joseph,” in *The Disciple as Witness: Essays on Latter-day Saint History and Doctrine in Honor of Richard Lloyd Anderson*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and others (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 2000), 61–86. Ultimately, only one sister-in-law was interred there, and the precise location is not firmly established, though there is no doubt of its existence. See also Joseph D. Johnston, “‘To Lay in Yonder Tomb’: The Tomb and Burial of Joseph Smith,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 5 (Fall 2005): 2.

loved ones possesses a different significance when situated within the antebellum American culture of the beautiful death. Though it is tempting to interpret her melodramatic grief as evidence of mental illness, her reaction is a better indication of the cultural divide between the Smiths and modern skeptics than an index of actual illness.

The reason for the stylized deathbed renditions also comes into clear focus when placed within antebellum culture. Rather than demonstrating fanciful dreams of an ideal farewell with her child, Lucy's formal deathbed depictions affirm the part that the dying was expected to play in the mortal drama. By presenting Alvin's fulfillment of religious obligations on his deathbed, her account had an impact similar to Joseph's 1836 vision of the celestial kingdom and Hyrum's 1840 baptism on Alvin's behalf; all affirmed Alvin's proper place in heaven. Whatever words were exchanged, great spiritual communication occurred around Alvin's deathbed, and Alvin likely understood the role he was to play. Lucy's retelling of that sacred event was a memorial, even ritual, act on behalf of her departed son.

In addition, placing Alvin's death in its historical context modulates the significance of Alvin, suggesting that he and his death were more emblematic of deep cultural currents than they were cause for his brother's prophetic mission. While profoundly significant for the Smith family, including the future prophet, I suspect that Alvin's death created emotional valence for future revelations more than it defined them.

The cultural context of the Smith family deathbeds also clarifies the emotional and spiritual impact of the rites and doctrines revealed by the Prophet. These were no theoretical doctrines; they spoke to some of the deepest emotions held by early nineteenth-century Americans.¹²¹ In Lucy's deathbed portrayals, readers catch a glimpse of the new theology that her son Joseph was revealing. The transaction of grace between the living and the dying is cast in decidedly patriarchal terms, particularly in the case of Joseph Sr. Where other antebellum Christians exchanged pious aphorisms and exhorted greater Christian faith, the Smiths saw Joseph Sr. as the patriarch Jacob dispensing prophetic blessings. The history of Israel was recapitulated on the Smith deathbeds, just as that history was being relived by members of the early Church.

In the end, I believe that the significance of this research lies in our capacity to better understand the family at the center of the Restoration. Knowing what death and bereavement signified for the Smiths is both

121. See, for instance, D&C 42: 44–47.

illuminating in our study of their personalities and compelling for our own modern-day experience of these same significant events. Through these deathbed scenes we witness the incredible intimacy of church and family, the overlapping boundaries that would be further developed in the redemption of the dead, celestial marriage, and other distinctive Latter-day Saint doctrines and practices. They are all at home in the intimate community of the beautiful death.

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Sisterz in Zion. Directed by Melissa Puente.

Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University;
American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2006

Reviewed by John M. Murphy and Leslee Thorne-Murphy

The film *Sisterz in Zion* is a one-hour documentary following the experiences of twenty-six young Latter-day Saint women from New York City who travel to Utah to attend a session of Especially for Youth at Brigham Young University. As one of their Young Women leaders, Renee Larson, remarks, these teenage girls are “really trying hard to be good Latter-day Saints—read their scriptures, pray, and do what Heavenly Father would want them to do—but they’ve never seen anybody else do it, and it’s like they’re making it up as they go along.” Their Church leaders hope that at EFY the young women will have the opportunity to be surrounded by youth who are striving to live the gospel. As another leader, Jaime Rasmussen, explains, “We wanted to create a connection [between these young women and] . . . other youth in the Church.”

The film highlights the experiences of several young women. They live in various parts of New York City, come from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and participate in typical LDS youth activities, such as early-morning seminary and the Young Women program. In virtually every case, they are the only LDS teenagers in their schools, and they are all fairly recent converts to the LDS Church. Daisy Andino is from Honduras and immigrated with her family when she was ten years old. Wendy Lee was born in Malaysia and moved to New York City when she was sixteen. Syretta McQuiller lives in the Bronx with her mother and sister. Massiel and Vanessa Gutierrez are from the Dominican Republic and now live in Manhattan. They all value and enjoy living in New York City specifically because of its cultural diversity. As Jaime Rasmussen explains, “One of the things that we were concerned about was the fact that [at EFY] they’d be probably the only nonwhite kids with . . . suburban teenagers, and [we

ANNOUNCEMENT

**BYU Studies Creates New Board
for Reviews of Books and Creative Works**

A new board has been organized at BYU Studies to review the broader universe of Latter-day Saint culture and art. In addition to reviewing books of LDS interest on history, society, and theology, BYU Studies will now review theatre, art, music, film, literature, and other media such as websites. We also plan to review museum and art exhibits that focus on LDS themes or feature works of LDS artists. We anticipate that this new scholarly initiative will appeal to a broad audience of readers. We also hope to bring attention to the work of LDS artists, playwrights, designers, musicians, composers, directors, actors, writers, and curators.

LDS prophets have said that the creative work of the Saints will one day fulfill the cultural and artistic aspirations of our highest gospel and societal ideals. We share this worthy ideal, and at BYU Studies our goal is to contribute to the realization of this prophetic vision.

The list of talented review editors includes: Kent R. Bean (Snow College) in film and television; Richard H. Cracroft (BYU emeritus) in literature; Gary Gillum (BYU) in new media; Greg Hansen (professional musician) in music; and Richard G. Oman (Museum of Church History and Art) in art and exhibits; Don Marshall (BYU emeritus) in film; and Eric R. Samuelsen (BYU) in theatre. These editors will identify works and performances, write reviews as well as identify potential reviewers, and prepare prospective reviews for publication. Reviews will be posted on byustudies.byu.edu, and selected reviews will be published in the print journal. We hope our readers will enjoy and benefit from this new initiative.

—John M. Murphy
Co-chair, Review Editor

—Eric Eliason
Co-chair, Review Editor

were] not really sure how they'd react, whether they'd feel welcomed, whether they'd like it."

When the young women arrive in Utah, they are struck by the sidewalks in Salt Lake City that are so clean "you could even walk [on them] barefoot"; the trusting nature of a candy store owner who leaves open barrels of candy unattended; and a young man who holds a door open for every person in the group. At EFY, they are similarly surprised by the cultural differences they encounter as they meet and get to know LDS youth from the western United States. Syretta's roommate, Chelsea, is from Vernal, Utah. They shyly begin to get acquainted. Daisy and her friend Wendy Cacho are in the same EFY group and struggle to connect with their group members who like to discuss wakeboarding and whose taste in music contrasts with their own.

Music is one of several motifs in the film that both highlight difference and provide common ground for the various young women at EFY. At almost every stage in the film, the young women must negotiate differences in musical taste. When Wendy and Daisy roll their eyes at the corny lyrics and melody their group members compose as a cheer, contrasting musical tastes are more than evident. As Daisy comments, she and Wendy were "thinking in a hip-hop way." Yet, just as music can reveal divisions, it also has the power to unify. When twelve of the young women from New York City perform a merengue dance at the EFY talent show, they are delighted by the enthusiastic audience response. They and their music have been accepted; cultural differences are appreciated and celebrated. As Daisy says, "They loved our culture, our moves, our dance. . . . [It made me] proud to be a Latina." The young women from New York City view this acceptance as a transitional event. While the merengue performance allows the young women to celebrate cultural distinctions, Church music offers an opportunity for them to share their common religious convictions. In a pivotal segment of the documentary, several young women from New York City comment on how they feel united with all the young women as they sing "As Sisters in Zion." As Leyddy Rosario remembers, "When we sang, 'As Sisters in Zion,' I felt the Spirit very strongly. . . . We're all daughters of God, and our race doesn't matter."

The need to negotiate cultural difference is a dominant theme throughout the entire documentary. All the EFY participants, whether they are from New York City or elsewhere, are in a position where they must find common experiences and beliefs as well as find ways of expressing their own individuality. In its depiction of youth striving to make sense of their world, *Sisterz in Zion* is reminiscent of a coming-of-age film, or *bildungsfilm*. The youth discover different patterns of living, identify ways to

overcome differences by finding common ground in their religious convictions, and, at the same time, retain a sense of their own unique identity as they confront expectations and assumptions unlike their own. This film is, in many respects, a specifically LDS coming-of-age narrative: youth responding to the challenges of keeping faith in a modern world.

One of the great strengths of the film is in the youth telling their own stories. The director and editors do not use a narrator; instead, they present footage of the young women shot before, during, and after the week at EFY. They were able to conduct post-EFY interviews with many of the New York City participants as well as some of their EFY roommates from the western United States. This allows us to view EFY activities and to hear commentary from the young women after they have had a chance to reflect on their experiences, resulting in a balanced narrative that brings the young women to the foreground.

The film was directed and edited by Melissa Puente, who as a Young Women President in Manhattan wanted “to document . . . [the] courage and bravery” of the young women in her LDS ward.¹ Their courage and bravery does indeed come through. It would be a compelling film to show to a youth group, yet this is not its only potential audience. Its depiction of cultural and ethnic interactions is timely for all members of the LDS community. The film reflects many of the changes that confront an ever-expanding Church. As it documents cultural difference and the forging of new identities within a gospel context, the film portrays Church members developing Christian communities based upon shared assumptions of faith and belief.

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1. Melissa Puente, “Background to the Movie,” <http://www.sisterzinzion.com> (accessed January 23, 2007).

States of Grace. Directed by Richard Dutcher.

Provo, Utah: Zion Films, 2005

Reviewed by Kent R. Bean

While leaving the theater after viewing Richard Dutcher's *States of Grace*, I could not help reflecting more on the film's audience than on the film itself. The film is the most daring expression to date of the Mormon film movement, and I wonder if many who went to the theater to see *States of Grace* were expecting something of a continuation of the spirit and fun in its predecessor, *God's Army*. Indeed, three characters from the first film have minor roles. Furthering the idea that this was a sequel, the film was first released in Utah as *God's Army 2: States of Grace*.

Because this film raises more questions than it answers, viewers will react in many ways to it. I saw a husband and wife, who I imagine were expecting a continuation of the more benign *God's Army*, leave the theater during an intense scene and did not return to see the last twenty minutes of the film. I was rather sorry that they did not return, for Dutcher provides a spiritual context for the harrowing incidents. In contrast to this couple, a middle-aged man whom I had never seen before approached me and my wife after the credits finished rolling. "Wasn't that great?" he exclaimed, "What a fantastic film!"

States of Grace begins with a bang—literally. Elder Lozano (Ignacio Serricchio) and Elder Farrell (Lucas Fleischer) are distracted by two bikini-clad women when they bump into a group of gang members who do not take kindly to their carelessness. One gang member threatens the elders and lifts his shirt to show them his gun. Seconds later, a car drives up and a rival gang member opens fire on everyone in sight. The elders make it to safety, but one of the gang members is now dead and the one who had flashed the elders his gun is bleeding to death. Without thinking, Elder Lozano strips his shirt off and plugs up the young man's wounds, thereby revealing gang tattoos on his own back that bespeak a troubled history previous to his mission.

Dutcher as a screenwriter and director has created a film that does not provide easy answers. For example, at one point the elders discuss whether to rescue a homeless man who lies sick behind a dumpster. Elder Farrell protests that it is against the rules to take him to their apartment. Elder Lozano counters, “We can keep the rules and leave him lying here on garbage, or we can break the rules and keep the commandments.” Dutcher gives a clear example of the differing perspectives that sometimes occur in spiritual matters. One perspective might argue that the letter of the law exists for a reason, for our protection. Others may assert that the law alone too often stifles goodness. Lozano demands of Farrell, “What would Jesus do?” Farrell says, I think honestly, “I don’t know!”

While it may be easy to identify with Lozano’s goodness, Dutcher does not let the viewer off so easily. Helping the homeless man is an act of charity, but it is also breaking the rules, and it sets in motion a chain of events that allows for grave sin to occur. Did the sin necessarily have to happen as a result of helping the homeless man? Dutcher does not allow the easy physics that believers too often attribute to religious faith: that if we do A then B will happen and all will be right with the world. Indeed, the title *States of Grace* is not without reason: we live by grace because ultimately we cannot completely control the trajectories of our existence. Influence it, yes; control it, no. The issues Dutcher raises in the film are important for us to consider as a community, one whose scriptures testify of grace but one whose members may often believe in the power of their own works.

Dutcher’s latest film can help Latter-day Saints and all Christians realize how often they as believers fail to live up to the beauty of Christ’s doctrines. When Elder Farrell testifies of God’s love to a non-LDS woman who believes that the whole world, including God, despises her, our heart cries out with empathy, reaffirming the words of his testimony. God *does* love her and has provided a way that she can be forgiven of any wrongdoing. But when a lifelong Latter-day Saint in the film falls from grace, he does not believe that he can receive forgiveness. As I sat in the theater, I had to chastise myself, for I momentarily wondered the same thing. Why did I doubt that the Atonement had power for both Mormon and non-Mormon?

The DVD is now available with English and Spanish subtitles and director’s commentary. If you choose to watch the film, I urge you to think hard about the questions it asks and leaves for you to answer.

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Edward L. Kimball. *Lengthen Your Stride:
The Presidency of Spencer W. Kimball.*

Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005

Reviewed by Gary L. Hatch

Edward L. and Andrew Kimball's 1977 biography, *Spencer W. Kimball*, is a candid and intimate portrait of the life of the twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. That book, which went up through President Kimball's first year as president, set the standard at the time for Latter-day Saint biography. Other biographies written by the sons of Church Presidents preceded this one, perhaps most prominent among these is the biography of Joseph F. Smith by his son Joseph Fielding Smith.¹ Edward and Andrew Kimball likewise had a close personal connection to their subject, but *Spencer W. Kimball* was different in that they approached their prophetic father with an unusual candor and openness combined with a meticulous attention to detail and a desire to get the story right. Several biographies that followed *Spencer W. Kimball* would take a candid approach to representing Church Presidents, among these is Leonard J. Arrington's *Brigham Young: American Moses*² and most recently Richard L. Bushman's *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*.³ The same basic spirit of openness, together with the added benefit of personal familiarity, characterizes Edward L. Kimball's new biography *Lengthen Your Stride: The Presidency of Spencer W. Kimball*.

Edward Kimball began planning to write a book about President Kimball's years as president even as he was finishing the first biography. Because of his unique relationship to the president of the Church, Edward Kimball was able to keep track of events in the life of the prophet and in the history of the Church as they unfolded. And because President Kimball was aware of this project, he was able to provide his son with biographical material that would not have been available to any other scholar. In addition, President Kimball himself kept meticulous journals throughout his

entire life. Even after he became ill, his secretary, D. Arthur Haycock, who was President Kimball's constant companion, kept an official journal. As he served as Church historian, Leonard J. Arrington called Spencer W. Kimball's journals one of the greatest resources for historians of the LDS Church:

Three great diaries have chronicled the history of the Church. The first is the diary of President Wilford Woodruff, which provides a day-by-day record of the Church from 1834 until his death in 1898. The second is the diary of President Heber J. Grant, which supplies a daily history of the Church from 1882 until 1944. The third is the diary of Elder Spencer W. Kimball, which carries the history of the Church, in painstaking detail, from 1942 [1943]. (xiv)

At one point Edward Kimball thought that he could merely include supplementary material in a reprint of the original biography, but he soon realized that he had enough material for a second work. In fact, there was so much material that it could not all be included in one book. As a result, Kimball worked with BYU Studies to produce *The Spencer W. Kimball CD Library*, which accompanies each copy of *Lengthen Your Stride*. The CD includes over sixteen hundred additional footnote citations that were omitted from the book to enhance readability, a longer research version of the book, additional photographs, audio clips of Spencer W. Kimball's voice before and after his throat surgery, and several other biographies of Spencer and Camilla Kimball. A book aimed at a general Church readership combined with a CD with additional material of a scholarly interest may well point the way to the future of LDS publishing.

Lengthen Your Stride reveals the personal side of a prophet, but it is also a history of the Church over the twelve years of President Kimball's administration from 1973–1985. Kimball organizes his biography both chronologically and thematically. He begins with the calling of Spencer W. Kimball as President of the Church, focusing on the dramatic difference between what some expected of the Kimball administration and what they immediately realized: President Kimball was not merely a caretaker holding the place for a younger and healthier successor. In fact, it was apparent from the beginning that President Kimball would make dramatic changes in the direction of the Church, a development that was surprising even to himself. Spencer W. Kimball set the tone for his administration in a dramatic address delivered to regional representatives and general authorities in preparation for the April 1974 General Conference.⁴ In this address he developed themes that would shape the first several years of his ministry: the importance of missionary work, the development of missionaries in lands outside the United States and Canada, the eventual opening of new lands (such as the Soviet Union, China, and India), and the call for

members of the Church to lengthen their stride. W. Grant Bangerter, who attended the meeting as a regional representative, relates that as President Kimball spoke

a new awareness seemed suddenly to fall on the congregation. We became alert to an astonishing spiritual presence, and we realized that we were listening to something unusual, powerful, different from any of our previous meetings. It was as if, spiritually speaking, our hair began to stand on end. . . . We realized that President Kimball was opening spiritual windows and beckoning to us to come and gaze with him on the plans of eternity. . . . I doubt that any person present that day will ever forget the occasion. (18–19)

Following his description of the beginnings of President Kimball's ministry, Edward Kimball roughly follows the chronology of the prophet's early years to describe his distinctive leadership style (particularly his one-on-one interactions with others) and some of his core teachings, including his focus on morality, journal keeping, and provident living. Of particular interest to Church history scholars is the section on controversial issues, of which there were many in the turbulent decade of the 1970s. These chapters focus primarily on the Church's position on women's issues, the Equal Rights Amendment, and blacks and the priesthood.

The revelation President Kimball received on the priesthood in June 1978 forms the apex of the book. Edward Kimball carefully explores the issues as well as the unfolding of the Church's position. There is a moving account of the moment when President Kimball received the revelation with the Quorum of the Twelve, which Elder Bruce R. McConkie described as "another day of Pentecost" (222). Kimball carefully documents the dramatic events of that day and also addresses some possible misconceptions about the circumstances surrounding the revelation. Gordon B. Hinckley clarified:

There was not the sound "as of a rushing mighty wind," there were not "cloven tongues like as of fire" as there had been on the Day of Pentecost. . . . But the voice of the Spirit whispered with certainty into our minds and our very souls. . . . Not one of us who was present on that occasion was ever quite the same after that. (223)

Several other members of the Twelve confirmed Elder Hinckley's sentiment: it was an experience that would leave them individually changed forever. The revelation on the priesthood would also have a dramatic effect on the Church, as missionary work spread rapidly in South America (particularly Brazil), South Africa, and West Africa.

Although President Kimball is best remembered as one who ministered to others, he also made important administrative changes in the Church as it emerged from its center in the Rocky Mountain West to grow

into an international church.⁵ His partner in several of these administrative changes was Gordon B. Hinckley, who carried the primary responsibility for the daily administration of the Church when President Kimball's health declined dramatically from 1981–1985. In explaining some of these changes, Gordon B. Hinckley said in 1984, "We can't lick every postage stamp in Salt Lake City. We have to do something about decentralizing authority" (249). These changes included reconstituting the First Quorum of the Seventy, redefining the duties of the Twelve and the Presiding Bishopric, and instituting emeritus status for General Authorities other than Apostles (250–59). President Kimball also established the Church Correlation Department in 1975, consolidated the auxiliaries' separate funds in 1978, and introduced the consolidated meeting schedule in 1980 (260–73). President Kimball also introduced a program for building new chapels and temples that would not be matched until the administration of President Hinckley. As Edward Kimball reports, "During President Kimball's twelve-year administration, the number of dedicated temples rose from fifteen to thirty-six, with construction begun on five more and another six announced" (358).

As President of the Church, Spencer W. Kimball traveled extensively, particularly through a series of area conferences, from 1974 to 1980. During this time, the Church held sixty-three total area conferences throughout the world. Edward Kimball's review of President Kimball's travels to these conferences provides insight into the many small miracles that accompany Church leaders on their journeys and also provides a useful summary of the administration of the prophet. After 1980, President Kimball did not travel extensively due to his health, and new media made it possible to reach members via satellite.

Edward Kimball concludes his biography with the decline and eventual death of his father. These years, 1981–1985, provide a stark contrast to the energy and activity of President Kimball's early years. During these years his many health problems took their toll. President Kimball had uncharacteristic moments of anger, despair, and disorientation, but these episodes were paired with moments when he was remarkably lucid and in control.

Although Edward Kimball has lost his father, he maintains the same objective tone throughout the biography and allows the story to carry its own emotional weight. Appendix 1 provides many stories of those who had personal encounters with President Kimball. Appendix 2 provides a more concise chronology of Spencer W. Kimball's presidency.

Edward Kimball's *Lengthen Your Stride* is a remarkably intimate portrait of a President of the Church during twelve significant years in Church history. It is a story that could have been told by none other than a faithful

and scholarly son of the prophet. This unique perspective reveals itself particularly in the prophet's relationship to his family. In chapter 6, Edward Kimball describes the strained relations between Spencer W. Kimball and his oldest son, Spencer. Although he served a mission to Canada, Spencer Jr. "had doubts that grew until they overcame his belief" (61). He became a distinguished member of the law school at the University of Chicago and could no longer accept the "truth claims" of Mormonism. He was never antagonistic toward the Church and remained proud of the service of his father, who worked throughout his life to try and reclaim his son's faith. But President Kimball's persistent efforts only created greater tension between father and son. The father could not understand why his oldest son rejected the beliefs that he had worked his entire life to proclaim. The son could not understand why his father could not simply accept him and love him for who he was. This episode is only briefly mentioned in the biography, but it is the kind of human relationship that could only be fully comprehended by a biographer who was himself both a believer and a professor of law, and both a son and brother in this remarkable family.

Just as in the original biography of Spencer W. Kimball, *Lengthen Your Stride* sets new standards for LDS biography. In addition to being an inside look at a prophet, it is a record of Church history and provides a detailed account of the workings of the priesthood and Church administration at the highest levels. Because *Lengthen Your Stride* is both a book and CD, it reaches two audiences: the general Church readership and scholars interested in Mormon studies. One hopes that the book will encourage many readers to delve into the CD, providing them with an even more comprehensive understanding of this extraordinary person.

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1. Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Life of Joseph F. Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938).
2. Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1985).
3. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005).
4. Spencer W. Kimball, "When the World Will Be Converted," *Ensign* 4 (October 1974): 4–13.
5. In 1974, Church membership stood around 3.3 million. By 1985, it had grown to 5.7 million.

Robert S. Wicks and Fred R. Foister.
*Junius and Joseph: Presidential Politics and
the Assassination of the First Mormon Prophet.*

Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2005

Reviewed by Susan Sessions Rugh

In what has been called the Age of the Common Man, Andrew Jackson's Democrats invented a new style of politics. The founding fathers, who were suspicious of political parties and omitted them from the United States Constitution, would have spun in their graves if they could have seen the parades, barbecues, and rallies that roused the party faithful for Andrew "Old Hickory" Jackson. The Democrats' opponents assembled themselves into a loose coalition of moralists, capitalists, and antislavery advocates so bereft of a unifying ideology that they had to borrow their name—Whig—from history. All they knew was that they could not stand Democrats and King Andrew. Elections became no-holds-barred battles for white male voters, who turned out in droves to cast their ballots. For the next two decades, Whigs would spar with the Democrats, winning only one decisive presidential victory and then fade into oblivion as the new Republican party formed in 1854.

It is against this backdrop of partisan warfare that the authors of *Junius and Joseph* stage their story. Previous works on the murder of Joseph and Hyrum Smith have focused on the trial of their accused killers, the fate of the attackers, or the assassination as a pivotal event in the history of God's chosen people. My own work analyzed the event from the point of view of Hancock County's old settlers, particularly those in the rural areas who burned out the Mormons and drove them toward Nauvoo.

Junius and Joseph takes a new slant on an event that reveals the dark side of democratic rule, what Tocqueville is known to have called the tyranny of the majority. Ultimately, Wicks and Foister argue that it was party politics that killed Joseph Smith. Bit by bit the authors slowly lay out their argument—that political operatives present at events surrounding the charge on the jail had ties to Whig presidential candidate Henry Clay. Protagonists include George T. M. Davis, editor of the Whig *Alton Telegraph*; General John J. Hardin, Whig and commander of the Illinois

militia assigned to keep order in Hancock County; and finally, the lowly drifter John C. Elliott, who is said to have shot the fatal bullet from a large-bore shotgun. It is an intriguing story, and putting the events in Hancock County in the context of state politics is long overdue. Thus this book is a welcome fresh look at events in 1844 that led to the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. The book's argument, that conspiring Whigs were responsible for the death of the Mormon prophet, will join the annals of conspiracy theories so attractive to some Americans.

Readers may have trouble making their way back from political detours to the main argument, which is not sprung on the reader until page 260 in chapter 20. This rhetorical strategy of surprising the reader does generate suspense but runs the risk of driving away readers not patient enough to connect the dots. But back to the main question: Is the notion of a national-level Whig conspiracy to assassinate Joseph Smith believable? For me, the claim remains speculative because the evidence does not sustain the argument. First, the authors build their case by tracing the details of rhetoric in the party-sponsored newspapers of antebellum Illinois. Those newspapers are sharply partisan rags and are not to be taken at face value. Second, they rely on sources written decades after the event, such as a deathbed confession or biographical sketch. Third, their argument often lacks local context. For example, they claim that delegates from each state were present at a "star chamber" meeting the night before the attack. There may well have been men from many states, but because Hancock County was at a middle latitude of the nation, such an array occurred naturally as a result of migration flows. For me, the evidence is still weighted toward local concerns and political and economic jealousies that spurred a mob to form. In this dark period of democracy, many Americans viewed mobs as a legitimate solution to a problem they could not solve any other way. Because Hancock County lacked a reliable police force or militia, the Carthage and Warsaw militias had nearly free reign to impose their will.

In light of these factors, the authors assign too much weight to party affiliation as a motive in the murder plot. A Whig sold the press to William Law, but it does not follow that the Whig who sold it wanted Smith to die. And despite the efforts of men like Davis, the Whigs were not even close to winning Illinois for Henry Clay in the 1844 election, meaning the assassination (if indeed it was motivated by political rivalry) was all for naught. The Democrats won Illinois with a plurality of over thirteen thousand votes, resulting in part from the dramatic increase of over eleven thousand Democratic votes since 1840, compared to only an increase of 355 Whigs in the same four-year interval. In *The Rise and Fall of the American*

Whig Party, Michael F. Holt argues it was this surge in new voters that gave Democrats nine-tenths of their margin of victory in Illinois. Democrats took 54.4 percent of the vote in 1844, compared to 42 percent for the Whigs (the rest went to the Liberty party).¹ Whigs held just one-third of the seats in the Illinois legislature; did that mean state party officials were willing to stoop to murder to put Henry Clay in the White House? Even if the one thousand or so Mormon voters had not switched their votes from Whigs to the Democrats, it would not have been enough to give Whigs the victory they so ardently desired. Making a case for murder gives little consideration for the broader context in which historical events occurred.

If historians of Mormonism are ever to join the historical mainstream, the events of Mormon history must receive more careful attention by those well trained in broader historical contexts. Only when we can show how the Mormon story matters to larger narratives will that story matter to anybody besides us.

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1. Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 197, 214.

Newell G. Bringhurst and
Darron T. Smith, eds. *Black and Mormon*.
Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2004

Reviewed by Emmanuel A. Kissi

The subject of this publication is blacks and the priesthood, specifically the former priesthood ban by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This compilation contains eight articles that “explore the varied issues affecting African Americans in the LDS Church, focusing on the period since 1978 and revolving around three fundamental issues: progress, continuing problems, and prospects for the future” (9).

A primary focus in *Black and Mormon* is that the nineteenth-century Church was influenced by the cultural traditions of their day. Outside the Church, slave traders and slave owners claimed that black Africans descended from Cain and Ham as a justification for enslavement. Others thought blacks were an inferior race with limited intellectual capabilities. As a result, some Latter-day Saints ignorantly incorporated such folklore as doctrine.

Despite these external social forces, one African American Latter-day Saint received the priesthood during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. Elijah Able was ordained “to the priesthood office of Seventy in December 1836” and his “ministerial license . . . was renewed several times during Joseph Smith’s lifetime, for the last time in Nauvoo in 1841” (38). Abel served two missions under Joseph Smith and a third one in 1883. This case is especially noteworthy when compared to many other nineteenth-century African American Mormons who did not receive the priesthood.

Throughout Mormon history, theories to justify denying blacks the priesthood were interpreted as being doctrine. The first recorded statement about the priesthood ban was by Parley P. Pratt on April 25, 1847 (20). The first documentation of the Church’s priesthood denial policy came from Brigham Young on February 13, 1849 (19). Furthermore, “Before the Mormons moved west, the church had already specified that slaves were not to be ordained to the priesthood. In a hierarchical church, the possibility

of slaves presiding over others—particularly their masters—would have been a terrible circumstance” (39).

In the twentieth century, various Church leaders continued to offer possible reasons why a race of people was prohibited from holding the priesthood. One explanation, carried over from the previous century, stated that blacks were descendants of Cain, the first murderer, and therefore were denied the priesthood because of lineage. Another theory held that blacks were less valiant in the premortal existence and therefore had certain spiritual restrictions placed upon them during mortality (132). Priesthood denial was perceived to be one of these spiritual restrictions. But by mid-century, President David O. McKay stated, “There is not now, and there never has been, a doctrine in this Church that the negroes are under a divine curse. . . . It is a practice, not a doctrine, and the practice will some day be changed” (37). In June 1978, Church President Spencer W. Kimball announced a long-awaited revelation that changed the policy on the issue of blacks holding the priesthood. Black Church members rejoiced at the change in policy, which confirmed what most of them understood—that folklore and racism instituted by the natural man are temporal and earthly while religious identity is eternal.

The book begins with Newell G. Bringhurst’s essay, “The ‘Missouri Thesis’ Revisited: Early Mormonism, Slavery, and the Status of Black People.” Social tensions in Missouri influenced the way the Church integrated its small number of black members. Many Latter-day Saints had come from the North and generally were against slavery. Because Missouri’s population largely adhered to the institution of slavery, the citizens perceived the Mormons to be a threat to their way of life. Missourians “accused the Latter-day Saints ‘tampering with our slaves, and endeavoring to sow dissensions [*sic*] and raise sedition among them,’ and of ‘inviting free negroes and mulattoes from other states to become “Mormons” and settle in Missouri.” Missourians believed “The ‘introduction of such a caste [of free blacks] amongst us would corrupt our blacks and instigate them to bloodshed” (14). Following this social tension the Mormons in Missouri “abandon[ed] their northern attitudes in favor of an anti-Negro posture” (15).

In the next essay, “The Traditions of Their Fathers: Myth versus Reality in LDS Scriptural Writings,” Alma Allred boldly tackles two persistent LDS misconceptions “that blacks are descendants of Cain,” and that there is “a *doctrine* that Ham married a descendant of Cain.” She explains that over the years, these types of “extracanonical theories” have been incorrectly elevated “to the status of church doctrine” (34).

Ronald G. Coleman and Darius A. Gray recount the stories of Jane Elizabeth Manning James and Len Hope Sr., two African American

Mormons. Baptized into the Church in 1842, James lived in the home of Joseph and Emma Smith, and traveled to Utah with the Saints. She asked Church presidents from Brigham Young to Wilford Woodruff if she could receive her temple endowment, but was continually denied. Len Hope Sr. joined the Church in 1919, and he and his family eventually settled in Utah. Though he could not hold the priesthood, Hope “attended high-priest group meetings although he could not fully participate” (56). Hope looked forward to the day when this policy would change.

In “Spanning the Priesthood Revelation (1978): Two Multigenerational Case Studies,” Jessie L. Embry examines two black Mormon families and their experiences. Even though they have encountered some stumbling blocks, “their faith gives them an emotional and spiritual resilience that enables them to overlook the puzzling history of Mormonism’s exclusion of African American men from priesthood ordination and also to shrug off the hurtful incidents of insensitivity and prejudice on the part of white Mormons” (78).

Armand L. Mauss, in “Casting Off the ‘Curse of Cain’: The Extent and Limits of Progress since 1978,” points to Church President Gordon B. Hinckley’s statement that the 1978 revelation “continues to speak for itself. . . . I don’t see anything further that we need to do” (82). Mauss wonders what impact President Hinckley’s statement will have on the Church as it continues to grapple with the previous priesthood ban. Mauss observes “a conscientious outreach by the church toward black people everywhere” at the “operational level” while “at the ideological level there is a less clear strategy for coping with the doctrinal residue of a discarded racial policy” (82).

In “African American Latter-day Saints: A Sociological Perspective,” Cardell K. Jacobson looks at “some of the changes in attitudes and racial composition that have occurred” in the Church “since the priesthood revelation of 1978” (116). Because of this previous priesthood ban, he reasons that “to some observers it might seem ironic” that Mormon missionaries now actively seek to proselytize blacks worldwide. “A further irony may be that many African Americans join and that, overall, those who stay feel quite comfortable much of the time” (130). Those who are baptized do experience struggles, often from white members who may be ignorant or insensitive. Nevertheless, most black members “just want to feel accepted and to succeed in their chosen church” (131). Several benefits from Church programs and teachings offset negative feelings about the former priesthood ban. Interestingly, studies show that black Mormons “are upwardly mobile both in terms of their education and their occupational status” (125).

Ken Driggs’s essay, “How Do Things Look on the Ground?: The LDS African American Community in Atlanta, Georgia,” examines the

Church in Atlanta, Georgia, which has a large population of urban blacks, university students and professors, military personal, and foreign immigrants. On any given Sunday, “usually about half of the group [in Driggs’s ward] is black and half is white” (133). Driggs shows how Church leaders from both races have consciously worked to help all members feel included.

Darron T. Smith, in “Unpacking Whiteness in Zion: Some Personal Reflections and General Observations,” highlights two tenets of whiteness theory: “Avoidance of race talk and color blindness” (151). As a black Latter-day Saint, Smith theorizes that these two issues continue to marginalize black Church members.

Black and Mormon eloquently demonstrates how external social events influenced the Church’s policy of denying blacks the priesthood for more than a century. While many theories can be offered about why that policy was adopted and changed, I am simply grateful that our loving, longsuffering, and merciful God stepped into the course of human history in 1978, as he did in correcting Nathan’s counsel to King David (1 Chr. 17: 2–4) and as he has done at other crucial junctures to direct the ongoing progress of his covenant people.

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Dan Vogel. *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet.*

Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004

Reviewed by Kyle R. Walker

Following up on his five-volume *Early Mormon Documents* series, Dan Vogel recently completed a psychobiography on Joseph Smith. Vogel adopts a similar thesis to Robert D. Anderson's earlier work *Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith: Psychobiography and the Book of Mormon*. The author highlights major portions of Anderson's earlier interpretations, and adheres to Anderson's conclusions about Smith (xi). Vogel, like Anderson, views the Book of Mormon as a fabricated history that was written by Smith as a medium for dealing with his dysfunctional family background and satisfying his own personal ambition. Having reviewed Anderson's psychobiography, as well as that of Thomas Morain's *The Sword of Laban: Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Dissociated Mind*, I found elements of both books heavily integrated into Vogel's work. Consequently Vogel's work suffers from many of the same weaknesses as these previous psychobiographies of Smith.

The author indicates in the introduction that he interprets "any claim of the paranormal . . . as delusion or fraud" (xii). Discounting the supernatural, Vogel then asserts that he will use an approach in interpreting Smith's personality that has "the fewest assumptions and inconsistencies, and requiring the least elaboration" (xvii). However, in borrowing from Anderson and Morain, who utilized an approach termed "applied psychoanalysis," Vogel adheres to a modality that requires a significant amount of elaboration and assumptions. Although psychoanalysis is grounded in scientific and academic history, it is only loosely based on the body of knowledge about social and psychological phenomena, and when utilized in evaluating limited historical information it requires extensive speculation. Vogel's applied psychoanalysis is rooted more in a system of beliefs and constructs than it is in a body of scientific knowledge. In turn, he speculates extensively that Joseph Smith's childhood led to impairment in his adult personality. This may be at least part of the reason why Vogel limits

his biography of Smith to the years 1805–1831, because psychoanalysts believe that most adult dysfunction stems from childhood.

In addition to psychoanalysis, Vogel proposes using family systems theory to further substantiate previous claims that Joseph Smith's upbringing was largely negative. He states in the introduction that he sees Joseph Sr. and Lucy Smith's marriage as "essentially dysfunctional" due to religious differences and financial burdens. However, he fails to document patterns of conflict that would lead to such an overarching conclusion. Besides documenting a single disagreement surrounding the Smith parents' religious differences, Vogel fails to cite ongoing turmoil to substantiate his claim. Instead, he hypothesizes that an episode such as Joseph Jr.'s refusal to drink alcohol during his leg surgery was evidence of chronic marital conflict over Joseph Sr.'s supposed misuse of the substance (28). Similarly, he conjectures that when the Smiths lost their Palmyra-Manchester farm, "The loss added stress to an already strained marriage. One can only speculate about the fallout that must have followed this event, and it is doubtful that Joseph Sr. would have escaped blame" (78). While Joseph Sr.'s decisions regarding the family finances certainly made life more difficult for the family, Vogel's interpretation of the limited information may lead to inaccurate conclusions.

Vogel additionally portrays Joseph Sr. as an alcoholic and Lucy Mack Smith as depressed and suicidal. For these overarching diagnoses, Vogel speculates extensively beyond available data. As an example, Vogel makes reference to a blessing Joseph Sr. gave to his son Hyrum in 1834, in which he states, "Though he [referring to himself] has been out of the way through wine, thou hast never forsaken him nor laughed him to scorn." Though Vogel cites antagonistic Palmyra neighbors for additional evidence of Joseph Sr.'s use of alcohol, his diagnosis of alcoholism may be greatly overstated. In this instance, Vogel uncharacteristically ignores context in early nineteenth-century America. This context would have shed light on whether Joseph Sr.'s drinking was even considered unusual at the time. He goes on to conclude that the Smith children "felt regret and embarrassment over his drinking habits and recognized the pain it caused his family" without documentation (28). Similarly, Vogel fails to provide sufficient evidence for diagnosing Mother Smith as depressed. The single instance cited was the time period following the deaths of Lucy's two older sisters. Lucy recounted feeling "pensive and melancholy, and often in my reflections I thought that life was not worth possessing." Vogel cites this solitary episode to account for his conclusion that Mother Smith struggled with "periodic bouts with depression" and had "suicidal fantasies" (4). Once again, Vogel may be prematurely drawing conclusions, as Lucy

may simply have been experiencing normal grief following the loss of two family members.

One major limitation of the book is that Vogel fails to substantiate claims of family dysfunctionality, and fails to carry the claim through to the end of the book. This is a critical error, because Vogel argues that the “singular environmental pressure’ motivating Smith’s behavior came primarily from his family” and that “he began his religious career, in part, to resolve family conflict” (xxi). If the family was indeed functional, then Vogel’s arguments lack validity. He assumes the reader is familiar with earlier works by Anderson and Morain to support his conclusions that the Smiths were a dysfunctional family and Joseph struggled with either bipolar disorder or a narcissistic personality. In an earlier review of Anderson’s book, the reader is made aware of the impropriety of diagnosing the dead—especially with a limited amount of historical information that would justify such far-reaching diagnoses.¹ The same could be said of Vogel’s case for family dysfunction, where he fails to provide sufficient documentation to justify his conclusions and carry it through to its conclusion, as the book veers in other directions.

In adhering to Robert Anderson’s earlier assumptions, Vogel perhaps inadvertently adopts his same approach—where Anderson confesses that he would pay “increased attention to outside documentation and voices of others, including antagonists. These will include the townspeople in the Palmyra/Manchester area and his [Joseph Smith’s] wife’s relatives and friends in Pennsylvania. Generally, these voices paint what I see as a consistent picture of a progressively fabricated history.”² Vogel similarly places an increased emphasis on the voices of those outside the movement, relying heavily upon E. D. Howe’s *Mormonism Unveiled*. Though Vogel does a better job than Anderson or Morain of integrating the voices of those who were within the movement, and thus closest to Smith, in the end he superficially dismisses their accounts. An example is when Vogel cites accounts from Emma Hale Smith regarding the process of translation. Emma indicated that during translation, when Joseph had difficulty pronouncing names, he would spell it out—such as was the case with the name “Sariah”—then Emma would pronounce it for him. Vogel quickly disqualifies Emma’s account, conjecturing that the delay “was due to a difficulty Smith sometimes encountered in inventing new names.” When Emma expressed confidence in her husband’s gift of translating by noting that he lacked the ability to “write . . . [or] dictate a coherent and well worded letter,” Vogel concludes that she simply “overstated the case for Joseph’s illiteracy” (119). Vogel dismisses and then overlays his own interpretation so that the sources harmonize with his central thesis.

Historians may be most interested in the concluding chapters (29–31), as these chapters focus more on the history of Joseph Smith and early Mormonism. Chapters 1–7 comprise Vogel’s attempt to make a case for family dysfunction and its impact on Joseph Smith. The majority of the book (chapters 8–28) is reserved for what Vogel terms “The Book of Mormon Project, 1828–1830,” which is an analysis of how Joseph Smith purportedly integrated his own life experience into stories, characters, and doctrines found in the Book of Mormon. An example of how Vogel attempts to weave portions of Joseph Smith’s “dysfunctional” life experience into Book of Mormon narrative comes from the story of Amalickiah. States Vogel:

The Lamanite nation is at odds with itself and on the verge of self-destruction until Amalickiah steps in and does what is necessary to unite the military under his leadership. Interestingly, this is accomplished through deception and betrayal of a man named Lehonti, a possible link to father Lehi. However, Lehonti’s subsequent death by poisoning calls to mind Alvin, Joseph’s surrogate father, who died of poisoning. Although Joseph had nothing to do with this, he may have felt guilt about stepping into his older brother’s role. It is common for surviving siblings to feel such guilt, especially if the misfortune was preceded by envy. (256)

Such speculation is prevalent throughout this portion of the book. If Vogel fails to substantiate family dysfunction—such as his supposition that Father Smith was an alcoholic or that Alvin was indeed Joseph’s surrogate father—then Vogel’s interpretation regarding various individuals and stories within the Book of Mormon requires even greater hypotheticals.

One area in which I felt confused dealt with Vogel’s explanation of how Joseph dictated the Book of Mormon text from memory. He states that Smith had been rehearsing stories that would eventually appear in the Book of Mormon as early as 1823 (when Joseph was seventeen years old), which enabled him to dictate the stories from memory by the time the Book of Mormon was written. For an uneducated twenty-three-year-old farm boy to dictate a six-hundred-page book completely from memory—with only minimal subsequent changes—would require the work of a genius of exceptional talent and learning. Vogel concludes, “The Book of Mormon was a remarkable accomplishment for a farm boy” and “remained his most creative, ambitious work in scope and originality” (466). This summary left me wondering that if Vogel’s interpretations are correct, why those outside the movement of Mormonism haven’t made greater inquiries into the genius of Joseph Smith.

One of the strengths of Vogel’s book is his familiarity with the historical context of the day. He cites numerous sources that provide a rich background for the religious and political environment in which Joseph Smith

lived. One of Vogel's purposes in providing such context is to help explain how Joseph Smith would have been familiar enough with such historical context to enable him to incorporate those ideas into the Book of Mormon text. Again, I was perplexed on how a farm boy with limited educational opportunities and who in his youth was described by his mother as "less inclined to the perusal of books" would have been so intimately acquainted with such obscure works as cited by Vogel.³ As historian Richard L. Bushman recently summarized, "To account for the disjuncture between the *Book of Mormon's* complexity and Joseph's history as an uneducated rural visionary, the composition theory calls for a precocious genius of extraordinary powers who was voraciously consuming information without anyone knowing it."⁴ Once again, Vogel's interpretations are at odds with historical accounts. Still, the historical context provided by Vogel may be of interest to historians who want to learn more about the political and religious environment of Joseph Smith's day.

In summary, Vogel's book fails to document solidly patterns of individual and family behavior that would justify his conclusions regarding Joseph Smith and his family of origin. While I share the belief that tools from the mental health profession can assist in understanding historical topics and characters in a new light, such professionals must use historical sources responsibly and utilize sound methodology in order to find general acceptance by the historical community. Although Vogel has entertained psychological and family systems issues in his analysis of Joseph Smith, the thesis of the book fails to bridge the chasm between psychology and history, and instead diverges into other directions.

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1. Kyle R. Walker and Douglas E. Craig, review of Robert D. Anderson, *Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith: Psychobiography and the Book of Mormon*, and William D. Morain, *The Sword of Laban: Joseph Smith, Jr. and the Dissociated Mind*, in *Journal of Mormon History* 30 (2004): 253–261.

2. Robert D. Anderson, *Inside the Mind of Joseph Smith: Psychobiography and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999), xxvi.

3. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet and His Progenitors For Many Generations* (London: S. W. Richards, 1853), 84.

4. Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 72.

Lance Larsen. *In All Their Animal Brilliance*.

Tampa, Fla.: University of Tampa Press, 2005

Reviewed by Casualene Meyer

How can I respond to Lance Larsen's *In All Their Animal Brilliance*? I could say that I am not equal to the task of adequately analyzing or appreciating this collection of poems, but therein lies the responsibility to respond: Should I shrink from reviewing poems Larsen did not shrink from writing? Larsen takes on something bigger than himself, and he presents the telestial world of mortality with brilliant humility.

In some ways it is ironic that the word that signifies human existence on the earth, *mortality*, has the Latin root *mort*, or death. To be alive on earth means to be subject to death. As we live, we see death all about us. Surviving organisms depend on the death of other organisms for them to live. Carnivorous animals are an obvious example of this; even a vegetarian human who pulls a carrot out of the ground to eat has stayed alive through the death of another organism.

In a life-death reading of Larsen's collection, the animal in "animal brilliance" is significant in that animals remind us of our mortal condition on almost a daily basis. Not only do many humans depend on the death of animals for food and clothing, but roadkill, swatted flies, belly-up goldfish, hatchlings fallen from the nest, poisoned fire ant mounds, and countless other organisms that are regularly found dead remind us that life can be easily cut off. There is the other face of mortality—reproduction. One reason we coexist with so many dead and dying animals is that animals are so fecund. Cattle are bred and talked about in terms of herds, dogs and cats have multiple litters, bees and mosquitoes have high populations, and fruit flies multiply quickly. Pondering on the reproduction and death of animals enriches a vision of mortality and the telestial world in which humans and other organisms reproduce, live, and die in such interlocking ways. This vision is the substance of Larsen's *In All Their Animal Brilliance*.

The life-death theme, including human and animal fecundity and death, corporeality, the sensuous body, and desire for intimacy is

ubiquitous in Larsen's collection. If readers wish, they can read thematically, tallying and analyzing the numerous instances of these themes in the poems. Truly, a study of Larsen's book would be larger than the book itself. For this review, let us look at a few representative poems that blend bodies, animals, and death in reflection of the telestial world.

Consider first a tally in "Landscape, with Hungry Gulls." This poem is a beach panorama in which a "pair of teenage girls in matching swim suits" (body awareness) bury their brother in the sand (death), and the speaker's son (human reproduction) hunts up horse bones (animal death) and catches damselfly larvae (animal reproduction). The speaker, keenly aware of life and death, seems to be trying to come to terms with his own being and that of those around him:

If I said *burial*, if I said *a lovely morning*
to prepare the body, who would I startle?
 Not this pair of teenage girls in matching swim suits
 making a mound of their brother.
 And not the boy himself, laid out like a cadaver
 on rye, who volunteered for interment. (16)

Death continues in an animal variation with the horse bones and seagulls that appear near the sand-buried boy "to peck at his heart." The speaker concludes by meditating on the horse bones:

And this horse my son is decorating the moat with,
 broken into pieces so various and eloquent—
 where are its pastures, does it have enough to eat? (17)

This poem's blend of life, death, and animals does not draw explicit conclusions about the nature of mortality; rather, it presents the elements and angst of living in a telestial world.

"Santiago Commute" is another panoramic poem, this time from the perspective of an exchange student who rides the bus in Chile. Here is the animal, "*Diablo*, the three-legged nanny," and the dead animals: "each dead dog [who] grew wiser with decay" and "At the slaughterhouse, trotters [who] went in whole / and came out viscera tossed into a pickup." Here also are the dying humans, "At *El Estado Nacional* . . . dissidents / once lay down to be shot," and humans who do glorious things with their bodies, "soccer gods / . . . Part Pelé, part Orpheus." Here are fertile humans, "Teenage girls bibbed / in blue uniforms giggling as they squeezed past." Here also is the complex blended image of new life in peril protected by a dead animal, "A charm dipped in pigeon blood pinned / to a baby's bib." Returning to himself, the speaker, aware of his physical being in an ambiguous existence, confesses:

I chewed my shirt sleeve.
Miracles were everyday. Not the body
I got on the bus with, but the sacred
dirty air and tin saints that dreamed me as I stepped off. (64–65)

Once again, the mortal elements are presented in their animal brilliance, and the conclusions are for the reader to draw.

“Planaria” functions somewhat differently. In this narrative poem, two brothers are on a night expedition to catch planaria, or “*turbellarian flatworms moving / by means of cilia*” with “two pounds of pig liver” on a “rusty lure.” This time it is a pig that is dead, and the planaria, the teeming, lower-order animals unsettle the speaker—and probably readers—of the poem. The planaria “cannot see light. They grow fat on water / and blood . . . Cut them / just right, and they will grow an extra head.” The speaker calls the mass of planaria a “squirming song” in a coffee can and ends the poem with a picture of his brother and him sharing warmth by zipping their sleeping bags together and “counting / constellations we could point to but not name.”

All night, the smell of fire kept oblivion
close. All night, to the left of our heads,
that coffee can—rock securing
its lid—failing to contain the word *planaria*. (33)

The speaker of the poem is cold. Is it simply a cold night, or is it the speaker chilled by the uncontainable thought of raw animal life, raw existence that is persistent and resilient, growing new heads when cut, and feeding blindly on the death and life of other beings? If the latter is true, “Planaria” shows a human facing the animality of life and death and the darkness of a telestial world by drawing his own body nearer to another human body for warmth.

In All Their Animal Brilliance sees a fallen world that is very much a matter of life and death, reproduction and decay, bodies living and bodies dying, the animal world bringing the human world into focus.

Larsen’s collection is solid not only for its content, but also for its delivery. Larsen’s collection has insight, wit, humor, *tours-de-force* form poems, pure beauty, and brilliance. I will highlight one poem as an example of this beauty and brilliance. “This World, Not the Next,” a poem about Adam and Eve and their mortal bodies in a fallen world, is my favorite of the collection. The poem begins:

True, God dreamed our first parents out
of a chaos of firmament and longing.
And true, he pled with them to return
to a savory Forever of his making.

But it was this world, with its tides and machinery
of sweet decay, they learned to love.

The poem ends:

And God blessed
Their bounty to be infinite, but left them
ten crooked fingers to count with.
And buried His echo inside their bodies,
a delicious lapping that answered *yes* and *yes*
to a question neither could recall. (5)

In All Their Animal Brilliance is intelligent but not at all haughty. The poet can certainly find words to take on the mortal experience, and yet can make fun of his old sports coat or his own moustache; who confesses having thrown up on his prom suit; who calls himself a dolt; who, as an exchange student, is anything but an ugly American; and who lauds his wife's talents and respects her and their relationship.

The strongest example of Larsen's humility is the lack of reduction and easy conclusions in the poetry. If the poems are inspired re-creations of a fallen world, they also avoid making explicit commentaries on the nature of that world. While I wish the poems had more memorable lines for me to add to my poetic emergency kit, I respect them for what they give me: a large impression from which I must draw my own conclusions. Such a strategy of show-don't-tell is a humble trusting of the reader to read and think.

In All Their Animal Brilliance requires its readers to believe in its poetry from the outset. Readers who come to the book ready to accept it will enjoy it. My only concern is whether readers will give this book the pondering it requires. Nobel Prize laureate Czeslaw Milosz contends that "elemental humanity's openness to science and art is only potential, and much time will pass before it becomes a fact everywhere. A poet, however, presupposes the existence of an ideal reader, and the poetic act both anticipates the future and speeds its coming."¹ Larsen's collection, with its humbly brilliant blends of life, death, and animality, believes in its readers.

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1. Czeslaw Milosz, *The Witness of Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 109.

Brian D. McLaren. *The Secret Message of Jesus: Uncovering the Truth That Could Change Everything*.
Nashville, Tenn.: W Publishing Group, 2006

Reviewed by Gary Gillum

Scholarly friends of the Church have become increasingly numerous in recent years: Jan Shipps, Margaret Barker, Richard J. Mouw, and Douglas J. Davies, to name a few. Other friends resonate with some truths of the gospel unwittingly: Bart D. Ehrman, James Charlesworth, Elaine Pagels, Karen Armstrong, and many others. Pastors as friends are much more rare, however, given the problems Joseph Smith and many Latter-day Saint missionaries have had with men of the cloth since the Church was restored. Brian D. McLaren, Evangelical pastor of the Cedar Ridge Community Church in the Washington-Baltimore area, is an exception who fits the bill very well, although he may not be aware that many of the ideas in *The Secret Message of Jesus* have been taught by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for many decades.

While the title implies that the book is a controversial one (like Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*) or at least a newly discovered pseudepigraphical work, it is neither. I found *The Secret Message of Jesus* more edifying and important than either possibility. Pastor McLaren assumes a mission of attempting to bring Christians and non-Christians together—despite their theological differences—by elucidating for us the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus Christ in Matthew chapters 5–7. He points out that even though all Christians are familiar with what he calls “the Manifesto of the Kingdom,” they miss the practical message of how the words of the Savior can be literally carried out in everyday life. He reminds us that “Jesus is calling people to a higher way of life that both fulfills the intent of the Law and exceeds the religious rigor of the religious scholars and Pharisees who focus on a merely external conformity and technical perfection” (122) by substituting “God’s perfection [which] is a compassionate perfection” (127). “The secret message of Jesus isn’t primarily about ‘heaven after you die.’ It doesn’t give us an exit ramp or escape hatch from this world; rather,

it thrusts us back into the here and now so we can be part of God's dreams for planet Earth coming true" (183).

The section in the book that offers the most interest to Latter-day Saints is actually appendix 1, "Why Didn't We Get It Sooner," in which McLaren outlines seven "fateful turns" in Christianity's history. Most of these approximate a few of the elements of our own belief in a great apostasy, but with some added turns. Here is a brief summary of McLaren's list:

First, Christianity went from being a Jewish sect to a "Gentile religion with persistent anti-Semitic tendencies" (211). Second, "the church's early divorce from Jewish roots was accompanied by a corresponding love affair with Greek philosophy" (211–12). Third, in the fourth century, Christianity was embraced by the emperor Constantine and became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Fourth, with this "alliance between church and empire came an endorsement of the use of violence in the service of the kingdom of God" (213). Fifth, "after the Middle Ages, when Protestants broke with the Western church," Christendom "metamorphosed into various new forms of civil religion, each a willing servant of nationalism" (214). Sixth, "new documents from the ancient world were discovered and translated, including the Dead Sea Scrolls" (214). And seventh, "like a team in the middle of a winning season or a rock band ascending to superstardom, a religion expanding in partnership with colonization does not find itself in a highly reflective mode, especially about the injustices associated with colonization itself" (215).

At the end of the appendix, McLaren attaches an account which parallels several prophecies of the Restoration found in the North Visitors' Center at Temple Square in Salt Lake City—and was actually quoted by Elder Levi Edgar Young in the *Improvement Era*.¹ Edward Winslow, the third signer of the Mayflower Compact, recorded these words of Pastor John Robinson, as Robinson said goodbye to the Pilgrims who were setting sail from Holland for America aboard the Mayflower in 1620:²

I charge you before God . . . that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. If God reveals anything to you by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as you were to receive any truth by my ministry, for I am verily persuaded the Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of *His Holy Word* [emphasis mine]. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of those reformed churches which . . . will go, at present, no further than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; whatever part of His will our God had revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it; and the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. This is a misery much to be lamented. (217–18)

The book's message says much about the messenger, Pastor McLaren, whom *Time* magazine calls one of the twenty-five most influential Evangelicals in America. A sincere, honest, and clever seeker after the real truth of the Savior's messages, he offers many instructive thoughts to prove his genuine attitude of seeking, as his following observations show:

What if, properly understood, the canonical (or accepted) Gospel of Matthew is far more radical and robust than the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, or the canonical Gospel of John is far more visionary and transformative than the apocryphal Gospel of Peter—if only we “had ears to hear,” as Jesus says? (xi)

I sit in those great cathedrals and grieve this terrible loss of identity and direction, this sad adventure in missing the point. It may sound strange to say, but I feel sorry for Jesus, sorry for the way we've dumbed down, domesticated, regimented, or even ruined what he started. (85)

Like the late Elder Neal A. Maxwell (and many other Latter-day Saints), McLaren relishes the thoughts of C. S. Lewis. He quotes him five times in chapter 20, “The Harvest of the Kingdom.” McLaren's own colorful style is neither scholarly nor professional, however. It is meant for the common layman, who may be listening to his sermons on any given Sunday—and in fact, many of his thoughts in this book probably germinated at his pulpit. He has written at least two other books that precede *The Secret Message of Jesus*, and they are meant to prepare readers for it. Both, like *The Secret Message of Jesus*, are remarkable for their forthrightness, clarity, and high-altitude understanding in ascertaining the essence of the Savior's message.³

Pastor McLaren attempts, like the Apostle Paul, to be all things to all men, yet within Pastor Robinson's exhortation quoted above are three words that summarize the difficulties that prevent Evangelicals from understanding Latter-day Saints and vice versa: “His Holy Word.” How does one interpret these three words? Is the holy word limited to canonical scripture? Or can it include continuing revelation, portions of the apocrypha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls? I see the question of interpretation as the roadblock to true understanding among all believers. Perhaps all those who believe in the true message of Jesus Christ, “pure religion and undefiled” (James 1:27), should seriously reflect on the closing words of Terryl Givens in his article on Mormons in the recent *Encyclopedia of Christianity*: “Recent decades especially have seen Mormons participate vigorously in interdenominational efforts aimed at humanitarian ends, and initiatives to further interfaith dialogue, tolerance and understanding.”⁴ Some Latter-day Saints criticize other religions for their criticism of us, but do they really take the time to read what other religions have to say and truly

embrace truth wherever it can be found? Brian McLaren's *The Secret Message of Jesus* is a good place to begin, for McLaren aids in our own cause of proclaiming the rediscovery and restoration of the truth that, even now, is changing everything in the hearts of millions throughout the world.

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1. Levi Edgar Young, "They Prepared the Way," *Improvement Era* 46 (January 1943): 43.
2. One of the earliest references to this quote is in Daniel Neal, *History of the Puritans*, 2 vols. (London: J. Buckland, 1754), 1:269.
3. Brian D. McLaren, *A New Kind of Christian: A Tale of Two Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001); and McLaren, *A Generous Orthodoxy* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2004).
4. Terryl Givens, "Mormons," in *Encyclopedia of Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 800-803.

Errata in Recent Issues of *BYU Studies*

In the review of Janet Bennion's *Desert Patriarchy: Mormon and Menonite Communities in the Chihuahua Valley*, *BYU Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 177-80, neither *BYU Studies* nor the reviewer, Mark Sawin, intended to imply that the people of Colonia Juarez currently practice polygamy or are in any way affiliated with the LeBaron group at Colonia LeBaron.

On the cover of *BYU Studies* 45, no. 2 (2006), the title "Willie Handcart Pioneer Remembered" referred to the article about Francis Webster, who was in fact a member of the Martin Handcart Company.

In "Two Ancient Roman Plates," *BYU Studies* 45 no. 2 (2006): 54-76, the word *constituto* should read *constitutio*, and on page 56, David Swinger's name is misspelled once.

In "A Metallurgical Provenance Study of the Marcus Herennius Military Diploma," *BYU Studies* 45, no. 2 (2006): 80, figure 2, the y axis should have been labeled Sn, not Su.

The Founders on Religion: A Book of Quotations, edited by James H. Hutson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005)

This book presents a collection of spiritual insight from some of early America's most brilliant minds. Typically, we associate the Founders' religious views only with the laws they created about church and state relationships, but Hutson opens a panorama of quotations that show the prominence of many areas of religious thought and discussion during the nation's beginnings. *The Founders on Religion* is subject driven, rather than being arranged by speaker. This method successfully highlights the depth and breadth of religious topics of concern to the Founding Fathers. Subjects include addiction, the afterlife, children, divorce, education, Islam, prayer, profanity, war, women, and many more. The quotes come from fifteen men, several of whom were signers of the Declaration of Independence, and also from Abigail Adams and Martha Washington—two deeply influential wives of two politically important men.

As Chief of the Manuscript Division at the Library of Congress, Hutson has access to endless primary sources from which he draws his quotes, thus eliminating the propagating errors in many well-known quotations as well as statements taken out of context. His strength is objectivism. Topical arrangement removes as much as possible the tendency to regurgitate oft-quoted passages that have been passed merely from one secondary source to another. Hutson has pulled these statements from primary sources in the Princeton, Yale, and Columbia University Libraries, along with the historical societies of Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Maryland—making his collection more in-depth than other quote compilers before him.

Hutson's awareness of the Latter-day Saint community is strong. During the 2002 Winter Olympics, he brought the Library of Congress exhibition entitled *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic* to Provo, which resulted in the subsequent BYU publication of a lecture series associated with the exhibition. He also was on the organizing committee that hosted the two-day Library of Congress conference entitled "The Worlds of Joseph Smith" in May 2005. Rising above his many personal interests in religious subjects, Hutson is chiefly concerned that this collection of quotations accurately and objectively portrays the mature views of the Founding Fathers and wives. Latter-day Saint readers will be particularly interested in James Hutson's work and commitment to preserving this nation's great spiritual heritage. The only way we can appreciate America's foundational values is to understand the minds and hearts of those who shaped the nation's formation.

—Kelsey Lambert

The Mormon History Association's Tanner Lectures: The First Twenty Years, edited by Dean L. May and Reid L. Neilson (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2006)

In 1979, Richard Bushman proposed the idea of inviting eminent non-LDS scholars whose work paralleled the research being conducted by historians of Mormonism to spend a year researching a Mormon topic and present their findings at the annual conference of the Mormon History Association. It was hoped that an outsiders' perspective would bring fresh, critical, and engaging analysis that might be overlooked by those inside the Mormon fold. As Bushman writes, "By bringing fresh eyes to Mormonism, historians with less personal attachment identify the oversights" (1). The

idea for the lectures was well received, and Obert C. and Grace Tanner agreed to provide financial support for the annual lecture, thus the title.

This volume is a collection of the first twenty-one Tanner Lectures, bringing difficult-to-find papers into one volume. The lectures are organized into three broad categories: first, Beginnings; second, Establishing Zion; and third, Mormonism Considered from Different Perspectives. The three divisions are prefaced with essays by Richard Bushman, Thomas Alexander, and Jan Shipps, respectively. The introductory essays provide a discussion of the general topic and summaries and critiques of each lecture. Each lecture brings a different perspective, a different lens to the Mormon past. Reading the essays in order, Shipps points out, reveals not only the findings of the studies but also something of “the history of the doing of Mormon history across twenty years” (270).

—Josh E. Probert

The Marrow of Human Experience: Essays on Folklore, by William A. Wilson and edited by Jill Terry Rudy (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2006)

William A. (Bert) Wilson, professor emeritus from Brigham Young University, has become the preeminent scholar of Mormon folklore since publishing his first article on Mormon cultural traditions in 1969. This book, which is a collection of his major articles on folklore, is divided into three sections: the first explains why folklore takes seriously a wide range of artistic expression, the second explores the role folklore plays in nationalism, and the third details the dynamics of Mormon folklore and family history. Ably edited by Jill Terry Rudy, associate professor of English at BYU, the book not

only presents Wilson’s work, but it also situates that work in the field of folklore. Rudy has solicited from Wilson’s colleagues introductions that describe how the ideas in each article have influenced other scholars. The authors of these introductions include some of the most prominent folklore scholars in the nation and illustrate the wide-ranging effects of Wilson’s thought.

Even for those familiar with Wilson’s work, the collection of essays will provide new insights. The previously published articles come from various published sources that are helpfully brought together under one cover. Additionally, the collection includes three never-before-published essays.

For readers not familiar with Wilson’s work, the third group of essays will be especially interesting. Readers looking for detailed examples and insightful analysis of the lore about the Three Nephites and J. Golden Kimball will be rewarded. However, Wilson’s focus on Mormon folklore is fuller, and readers of his collection will also learn about Mormon folklore that is more common and more central: the initiation rituals of missionaries; stories about miracles doing temple work; jokes about a priest, a rabbi, and a Mormon bishop; family history narratives; and so on. In dealing with these everyday aspects of cultural Mormonism, Wilson sheds light on “those things that Mormons feel most deeply” (235).

This volume of essays represents the best scholarship of a respected student of Mormon culture and narrative and will both entertain and enlighten those interested in Mormonism as it is lived. Additionally, what arises out of the volume is an articulate and vividly illustrated argument for the humanities—broadly defined to include the artistic expressions of all individuals.

—David A. Allred



Mazmuur Naafi: *The Arabic Psalm of Nephi* by Jamal Qureshi (b. 1976). Digital Print on Paper. 16" x 16", 2003. Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art.

Understanding *Mazmuur Naafi*

The Arabic Psalm of Nephi

Josh E. Probert

Arabic calligraphy is arguably the defining form of Islamic art. Jamal Qureshi has combined this centuries-old tradition and the geometric forms of Ottoman architecture with one of the richest passages from the Book of Mormon, the Psalm of Nephi (2 Nephi 4:16–35), to create an artwork rich in meaning. The artwork is visual praise; and it represents the way in which religious artforms are fluid, transgenerational, and adaptable to new meanings. This short essay explains the artwork by contextualizing it in both Islamic and Mormon traditions.

Qureshi has navigated the worlds of the East and the West throughout his life. His father is Pakistani and Islamic, his mother Norwegian and Mormon. Today he lives and works in New York City, where his children are growing up Mormon and learning Arabic from their Yemeni babysitter and Laotian from their mother. Taking the artist's background into account, *Mazmuur Naafi* (Arabic for "Psalm of Nephi") can be understood as autobiographical. It reflects the artist making space for his faith within his world of mixed family traditions.

On a broader scale, his work illustrates well the borrowing of forms by artists of a new faith from the forms of an older one. For Qureshi, the process is one of artistic syncretization. It represents the way that artforms flow through and across different cultures and are repackaged and adopt new and syncretized meanings. In looking at *Mazmuur Naafi*, one sees what Thomas Tweed would call the confluence of cultural flows.¹ Qureshi affirms as much when he says that he is "trying to do something that shows a blending of cultures and forms."²

One of the best examples of this idea of cultural blending—and one stylistically related to Qureshi's use of Eastern Mediterranean artforms for



Salt Lake Temple with original annex (c. 1892). Courtesy LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Mormon purposes—is the original annex of the Salt Lake Temple (1892). The annex was designed by Joseph Don Carlos Young in Byzantine style with possible Moorish influences. Byzantine was a popular form of early Christian architecture that was used throughout the empire for cathedrals, baptisteries, and palaces, and was later adopted by Muslims, who overtook many of the Christian structures throughout the Middle Ages and turned them into mosques.³ The style experienced a revival in the late nineteenth-century domestic and religious architecture when exoticism was popular. The 1866 Plum Street Temple in Cincinnati even has minarets.⁴ This is all said to illustrate the way in which an artistic vocabulary can travel through three religions and across numerous nations, with several nonreligious uses in between, and then be used by Mormons for their sacred architecture.

Arabic Calligraphy

Islamic tradition strictly prohibits the production of anthropomorphic or zoomorphic images in religious contexts. To illustrate living creatures is seen as pretending to the creative power reserved by God alone.⁵ Therefore, Islamic artists use abstract art to understand, estimate, and approach the Unseen God. “The sacred history of the Muslims may only be told in words,” writes Piotrovsky. “Thus it is accurate to state that Islamic art is

in essence abstract and not figurative.”⁶ Islamic artisans have traditionally used three types of abstract ornamentation for centuries: calligraphy, geometric forms, and Arabesque (floral) forms. These are combined in repetitive patterns that to echo the eternal nature of God.⁷ *Mazmuur Naafi* uses calligraphy and geometric forms to represent God’s eternal nature.

Although Jews, Christians, and Buddhists have used calligraphy to write and decorate sacred texts for centuries, Islamic and LDS traditions elevate sacred writing even further.⁸ Qur’anic calligraphy is more than just decoration to the Muslim eye; it is sacred writing that originated in heaven. The word of God contained in the Qur’an is understood to be a text written first in heaven then delivered by God to Muhammed. In the first revelation to Muhammed, the Qur’an says that God “teaches by means of the pen [*qalam*].”⁹ And in many Islamic poems, Allah is called “the Eternal Calligrapher.”¹⁰

In *Mazmuur Naafi*, the artist used two types of Arabic script popular among Ottoman Muslims. He wrote the text of 2 Nephi 4:16–35 in *Thuluth*, one of the six traditional types of Arabic script commonly referred to as the “six feathers.”¹¹ *Thuluth* was the first perfected form of Arabic in cursive and is attributed to Khalil ibn-Ahmad al-Farahidi, an eighth-century lexicographer from Basra.¹²

The name Allah (meaning “God”) is written in the center of the artwork in a simple, cursive *Diwani* script. Ibrahim Munif, an Ottoman Turk of the late fifteenth century developed this script. It became a chancery script that was well suited for official documents and decoration.¹³ The beauty and popularity of the Turkish fonts used by Qur’an copyists led to an oft-repeated tradition that “the holy Qur’an was revealed in Mecca, recited in Egypt, and written in Istanbul.”¹⁴

The artist’s use of blue and gold to write the Psalm of Nephi also has precedents in Islamic art. In the Maghreb region of North Africa, for example, a popular type of Qur’an called a *Kairouan* was produced, in which golden letters were written on a dark blue background.¹⁵ Persian Lajvardina porcelain is characterized by “gold over-painting set against a deep, royal blue glaze.” And tin-glazed faience earthenwares were developed in the Middle East. Blue became the most popular color used to decorate the tiles, especially tiles from Iznik that were used to decorate the interiors of mosques, the Blue Mosque in Istanbul with its 21,000 Iznik tiles being the most famous.¹⁶

Nephi’s Prayer of Praise

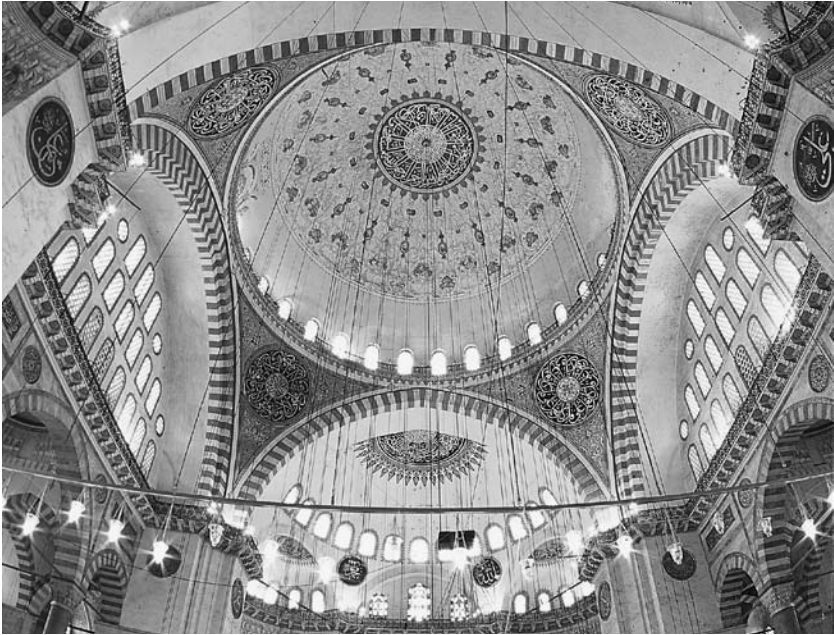
Qureshi selected the Psalm of Nephi because of its resonance to him personally, but also because he thought the translation rendered nicely in Arabic. “It is certainly a general form which sits quite comfortably in an

Arabic context,” he says.¹⁷ Hugh Nibley would have agreed. He argued that Nephi’s cultural background was influenced by Arabic desert peoples as much as or even more than the Jews.¹⁸

The similarity of the Psalm of Nephi to the psalms of the Old Testament Psalter has been studied, and the text fits well within Hermann Gunkel’s category of individual lament.¹⁹ But the text also shares characteristics with Islamic psalmody, including “the Lord’s Prayer of Islam,” the *Fateha* found in the first chapter of the Qur’an.²⁰ Both the Psalm of Nephi and the *Fateha* are prayers that are praiseful and pleading. At the outset, Nephi declares the “great goodness of the Lord” (2 Nephi 4:17), while the *Fateha* praises God as “the Beneficent, the Merciful” (Qur’an 1:1). Nephi pleads for redemption, while the *Fateha* praises God as “Master of the Day of Judgment” (Qur’an 1:4). Nephi prays, “Wilt thou make my path straight before me!” (2 Nephi 4:33), and the *Fateha* prays, “Guide us (O’ Lord) on the Right path” (Qur’an 1:6). And as Nephi prays, “I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever” (2 Nephi 4:34), a later Qur’anic passage declares, “In God do we put our trust” (Qur’an 10:85–86).

Roundels and the Rightly Guided Caliphs

Surrounding the large, central circle in *Mazmuur Naafi* are four circles with names written inside each. The names are Lehi, Nephi, Moroni, and Joseph. The artist selected these four because they were major figures in the preservation and transmission of the Book of Mormon plates. The format is a borrowing from Ottoman mosque domes. Four large roundels were traditionally hung under the dome in the pendentives. If one were to stand in the center of one of the great mosques of Turkey and Egypt and look up, one would see an arrangement of forms quite similar to those used in *Mazmuur Naafi*—a large circle surrounded by smaller circles with calligraphic inscriptions. The names written in the roundels of mosques vary but are usually the four successors to Muhammed, called the Rightly Guided Caliphs: Abu Bakr (632–34 AD), Umar (634–44 AD), Uthman (644–56 AD), and Ali (656–61 AD). These men were all colleagues of the prophet who were instrumental in the preservation and transmission of the revelation to him. Thus, the parallel that Qureshi artistically draws between the four Rightly Guided Caliphs and Lehi, Nephi, Moroni, and Joseph Smith is apt as the latter were instrumental in the preservation and transmission of the “prophesyings and revelations” of the Book of Mormon (Words of Mormon 1:6). Christianity has a similar quadrature form in the Tetramorph—a man, an ox, a lion, and an eagle representing the



Suleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey. © Gordon Galbraith.

four Evangelists, which swirl around the throne of Christ in the apses of countless churches as interpreted from the vision of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:10).

The tradition of four circles surrounding a large central circle is not restricted to mosque architecture. Illuminated manuscripts also adopt this schema, especially the *hilyes* of Ottoman Turkey, which are descriptions on paper of important figures in Islam. The most famous *hilye* is that of Muhammed. Transmitted by Ali, Muhammed's son-in-law, it has been artistically rendered in sumptuous colors and patterns incorporating calligraphy, floral decoration, and geometric patterns.²¹ Therefore, *Mazmuur Naafi* might be seen as a type of Mormon *hilye*, although its content is more prayer and praise than it is a description of a person's physiognomy and mannerisms.

Geometric Forms

Concentric circles set in a square is a popular motif of Islamic architecture altogether, reaching its apogee during the Ottoman period. As Robert Hillenbrand has written, "Ottoman architecture is unique in the Islamic world for its unswerving fidelity to a single central idea—that of the domed square unit."²² Mosque domes often rest upon a square, the

courtyard fountain is often rounded and set in a square courtyard, and the four minarets of the great mosques form a square surrounding the round sanctuary. The composition of concentric circles surrounding a central axis is repeated on the interior as bands of calligraphy demarcate the areas of the dome. Several mosques in Istanbul use this composition, including the Hagia Sophia, which has “The Light Verse” (Qur’an, 24:35) inscribed around the interior of the central cupola.²³ And the interior dome of the Mosque of Bayezid II, in Edirne, Turkey, is inscribed with the Most Beautiful Names and verses from the Qur’an in a central circle and a larger concentric circle.²⁴

The prominence of the concentric circle in *Mazmuur Naafi* and in Islamic artforms is reflective of premodern Islamic cosmology. The Islamic mind saw the world as round and bounded. As Samer Akkach writes, the cosmos “was conceived in the form of concentric circles, at the center of which humans dwelled and at the outer limit stood the all-encompassing divine Throne.”²⁵ This cosmology is not so different from that of ancient Jews and Christians, for whom the earth was also round and bounded, a flat disk floating upon an eternal expanse of water.²⁶ Later Jewish and Christian thought saw the heavens as a series of ten concentric spheres mimicking the spheres of holiness radiating from the Holy of Holies in the temple.²⁷ Linking the Book of Mormon text with the form of *Mazmuur Naafi*, it is important to note the concentric sayings and ring compositions found throughout the Book of Mormon.²⁸

Conclusion

Mazmuur Naafi is an aesthetically powerful artwork that offers viewers rich strata of meaning. The work is an autobiographical reflection of the life of the artist and of his desire to help build a bridge between East and West. “I’m trying to bring two things together that are to each side common,” Qureshi says. “2 Nephi 4 is a commonly known Book of Mormon text, and calligraphy is very common in the Middle East. Place one of them in the other’s world by itself, and it will be out of place. But together, a bridge is built.”²⁹

The ease with which Qureshi places Book of Mormon text of 2 Nephi 4:16–35 into an artform traditionally reserved for text from the Qur’an reveals a certain similarity between the two books of scripture. In the words of Boyd K. Packer, Islam and Mormonism are both “religions of the book.”³⁰ Both were revealed by prophets who claimed firsthand transmission from deity. Both contain teachings about right living, the afterlife, and the nature of God. Both are central to the faith of each.

To Muslims the Qur'an is the foundation. To Mormons the Book of Mormon is the "keystone." Both volumes are seen as "most correct" books by their adherents.

The mixing of Ottoman art forms with Mormon scripture illustrates the way in which the forms of architecture, painting, and calligraphy are not static, forever assigned to one artistic school, one religious tradition, or one ethnic locale. Instead, artforms, like religious ideas, have legs—they travel. They are adopted, modified, given new meanings, and exported for the purposes of believing individuals and believing communities. Mormon art and architecture has a long tradition of borrowing from its cultural environment, but the forms of Western Europe and the United States have dominated Mormon artistic vocabularies much more than any Eastern ones have. Because of this, *Mazmuur Naafi* is paving new roads in the Mormon art tradition. Non-Western artistic styles have become more common in Mormon art over the past century, and they will be used more and more as the Church continues to grow internationally. This multicultural artistic diversity will further complicate an already complicated question: What is Mormon art?

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1. Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 54.

2. Jamal Qureshi, interview by Josh Probert, February 6, 2007, Brigham Young University.

3. C. Mark Hamilton, *The Salt Lake Temple: A Monument to a People* (Salt Lake City: University Service, 1983), 182, 198–99.

4. Henry and Daniel Stolzman, *Synagogue Architecture in America: Faith, Spirit, and Identity* (Mulgrave, Victoria, Australia: Images Publishing, 2004), 108–109.

5. Mikhail B. Piotrovsky, *Earthly Beauty, Heavenly Art: Art of Islam* (Amsterdam: Lund Humphries, 2000), 35.

6. Piotrovsky, *Earthly Beauty, Heavenly Art*, 33.

7. Piotrovsky, *Earthly Beauty, Heavenly Art*, 26–32.

8. On sacred writing in ancient cultures, see Hugh Nibley, "Genesis of the Written Word," *Temple and Cosmos* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1992), 450–90.

9. Gabriel Mandel Khan, *Arabic Script: Styles, Variants, and Calligraphic Adaptations*, trans. Rosanna M. Giammanco Frongia (New York: Abbeville, 2001), 7.

10. Annemarie Schimmel, *Islamic Calligraphy* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), 1.

11. Piotrovsky, *Earthly Beauty, Heavenly Art*, 28.

12. Khan, *Arabic Script*, 11–14.
13. Khan, *Arabic Script*, 11, 19, 118–19.
14. Khan, *Arabic Script*, 19.
15. Piotrovsky, *Earthly Beauty, Heavenly Art*, 27.
16. Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 204. On Iznik tiles, see 269–72.
17. Qureshi, interview by Josh Probert.
18. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert and the World of the Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952), 36–46, reprinted in vol. 5 of *The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1988).
19. Matthew Nickerson, “Nephi’s Psalm,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6, no. 2 (1997): 26–42. See also Steven P. Sondrup, “The Psalm of Nephi: A Lyric Reading,” *BYU Studies* 21, no. 3 (1981): 357–72.
20. *The Holy Qur’an*, trans. S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali, 4th ed. (Elmhurst, N.Y.: Takrike Tarsile Qur’an, 2004), 4.
21. Mohammed Zakyria, “The Hilye of the Prophet Muhammed,” *Seasons* (Autumn–Winter 2003–2004): 15–16. For examples of Ottoman *hilyes*, see J. M. Rogers, *Ottoman Art from the Khalili Collection* (Alexandria, Va.: Art Services International, 2000), 269–77.
22. Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, 257.
23. Khan, *Arabic Script*, 142.
24. Schimmel, *Islamic Calligraphy*, Plate XXVI.
25. Samer Akkash, *Cosmology and Architecture in Premodern Islam* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 2005), xviii.
26. Robert A. Oden Jr., “Cosmogony, Cosmology,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman, 6 vols. (New York: Anchor, 1992), 1:1167–68.
27. John W. Welch, “Counting to 10,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 2 (2003): 57.
28. See Steven C. Walker, “More than Meets the Eye: Concentration of the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies* 20, no. 2 (1980): 199–205; John W. Welch, “Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies* 10, no. 1 (1969): 69–84.
29. Qureshi, interview by Josh Probert.
30. Boyd K. Packer, “Building Bridges of Understanding: The Church and the World of Islam. Introduction of Dr. Alwi Shihab,” Brigham Young University Forum, October 10, 2006, printed in this issue. See also *Mormons and Muslims*, rev. ed., ed. Spencer J. Palmer (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2002), 87–92; and *BYU Studies* 40, no. 4 (2001), a special issue on LDS interaction with Islamic thought.