



2015

## Full Issue

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq>



Part of the [Mormon Studies Commons](#), and the [Religious Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

(2015) "Full Issue," *BYU Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 54 : Iss. 1 , Article 23.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol54/iss1/23>

This Full Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in *BYU Studies Quarterly* by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact [scholarsarchive@byu.edu](mailto:scholarsarchive@byu.edu), [ellen\\_amatangelo@byu.edu](mailto:ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu).

### Advisory Board

Alan L. Wilkins, chair  
James P. Bell  
Donna Lee Bowen  
Douglas M. Chabries  
Doris R. Dant  
R. Kelly Haws  
Robert L. Millet  
Noel B. Reynolds

### Editor in Chief

John W. Welch

### Church History Board

Richard Bennett, chair *19th-century history*  
Brian Q. Cannon *20th-century history*  
Kathryn Daynes *19th-century history*  
Gerrit J. Dirkmaat *Joseph Smith, 19th-century Mormonism*  
Steven C. Harper *documents*  
Frederick G. Williams *cultural history*

### Liberal Arts and Sciences Board

Barry R. Bickmore, co-chair *geochemistry*  
Eric Eliason, co-chair *English, folklore*  
David C. Dollahite *faith and family life*  
Susan Howe *English, poetry, drama*  
Neal Kramer *early British literature, Mormon studies*  
Steven C. Walker *Christian literature*

### Reviews Board

Eric Eliason, co-chair *English, folklore*  
John M. Murphy, co-chair *Mormon and Western*  
Trevor Alvord *new media*  
Herman du Toit *art, museums*  
Angela Hallstrom *literature*  
Greg Hansen *music*  
Emily Jensen *new media*  
Megan Sanborn Jones *theater and media arts*  
Gerrit van Dyk *Church history*

### Specialists

Casualene Meyer *poetry editor*  
Thomas R. Wells *photography editor*  
Ashlee Whitaker *cover art editor*



INVOLVING READERS  
IN THE LATTER-DAY SAINT  
ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

## ARTICLES

- 4** From the Editor
- 6** Discovering a Surgical First:  
Russell M. Nelson and Tricuspid Valve Annuloplasty  
Austin A. Robinson and Curtis T. Hunter
- 29** Narrative Atonement Theology in the Gospel of Mark  
Julie M. Smith
- 42** Santa Biblia: The Latter-day Saint Bible in Spanish  
Joshua M. Sears
- 85** Muslims among Mormons: Perspectives on Muslim Students  
Attending Brigham Young University  
Shon D. Hopkin and Ray L. Huntington
- 105** Viracocha: Christ among the Ancient Peruvians?  
Scott Hoyt

## ESSAYS

- 77** Magnitude  
Elizabeth Knight
- 135** Shaping the Earth  
Erika Price

## POETRY

- 76** Leaving Egypt  
Tyler Chadwick
- 140** Reprise  
Tyler Chadwick

## REVIEW ESSAY

- 141** Toward a Mormon Systematic Theology:  
Essay on *Wrestling the Angel* by Terryl L. Givens  
Stephen H. Webb

## THEATER REVIEW

- 149** “The Season of Eric” at Plan-B Theatre:  
A Milestone in Mormon Drama  
Callie Oppedisano

## BOOK REVIEWS

- 171** *Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844* edited by Karen Lynn Davidson, David J. Whittaker, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen; and *Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847* edited by Karen Lynn Davidson, Richard L. Jensen, and David J. Whittaker  
Reviewed by James B. Allen
- 190** *Called to Teach: The Legacy of Karl G. Maeser* by A. LeGrand Richards  
Reviewed by Heather M. Seferovich
- 197** *Nels Anderson’s World War I Diary* edited by Allan Kent Powell  
Reviewed by Kenneth L. Alford
- 201** *The Mormon Image in the American Mind: Fifty Years of Public Perception* by J. B. Haws  
Reviewed by Sherry Pack Baker
- 205** *Kirtland Temple: The Biography of a Shared Mormon Sacred Space* by David J. Howlett  
Reviewed by Elwin C. Robison
- 209** *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only* edited by Andrei Orlov and Gabriele Boccaccini  
Reviewed by David J. Larsen

## BOOK NOTICES

- 222** *For Zion: A Mormon Theology of Hope*  
*Plain and Precious Things*  
*Nauvoo & Hancock County, Illinois: A Guide to Family History and Historical Sources*

## From the Editor



The motto on the title page in each issue of *BYU Studies Quarterly* reads: “Involving readers in the Latter-day Saint academic experience.” As this issue goes to press and to you, our readers, all over the world, I am excited about all that our experienced authors bring to you. How do their articles and other materials involve you in an LDS academic experience?

As the breadth and depth in the content of this issue represents, an LDS mind strives to embrace all truth found in a variety of disciplines and approaches while remaining grounded in the body of the canonical works of LDS scripture. An academic approach utilizes exhaustive research, careful attention to detail, clear formulation of hypotheses, and responsible evaluation of evidence. Involvement results from embracing meaningful insights relevant to significant values of the full experience of life, intellectually and spiritually, individually and collectively, temporally and eternally, and so much more. Each of the items in this issue instantiates various facets of this experience.

Austin Robinson and Curtis Hunter take you virtually into the operating room to experience the drama and the inspiration involved in the landmark heart surgery performed by Russell Nelson, then surgeon and now Apostle, in 1960. Filled with rigorous professional insights and anatomical detail, this impressive documentary account brings to life Nelson’s experience in a manner that is accessible to all.

Julie Smith uses narrative theology as a hermeneutical tool to harvest unexpected meaning from the Gospel of Mark about discipleship and atonement, subjects of central interest to Latter-day Saints. By exquisitely extracting understanding from three brief stories that follow the

crucifixion of Jesus, all people—Jew and Gentile, men and women—find themselves experientially drawn into a closer relationship with God.

The down-in-the-details article by Joshua Sears about the new Spanish LDS edition of the Bible helps readers appreciate the monumental importance of this international scriptural publication. Each page of this meticulous article helps English speakers comprehend this gigantic step forward advancing the unity of faith among the large Spanish-speaking population of the Church.

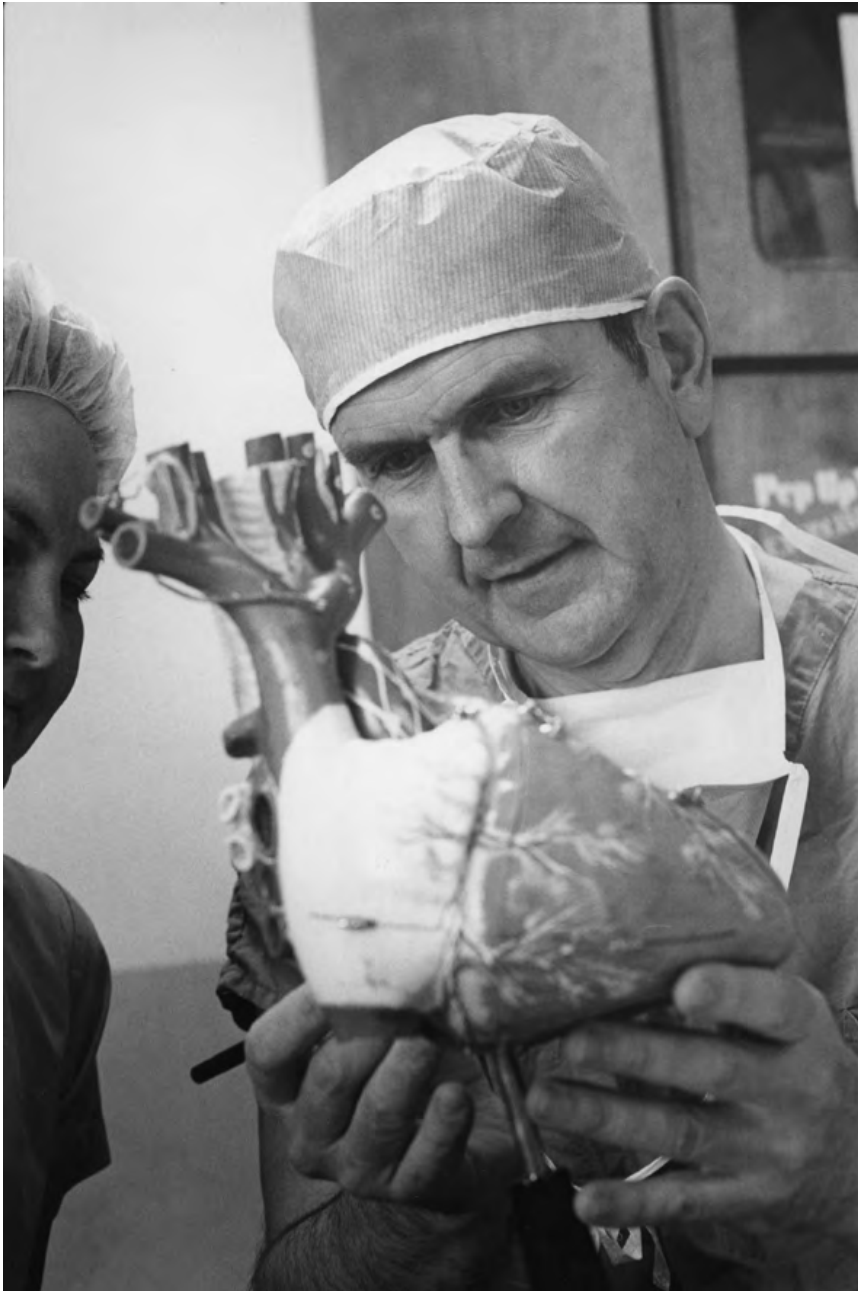
Shon Hopkin and Ray Huntington allow all to walk a few miles on the BYU campus in the shoes of the Muslim students at Brigham Young University. Aided by objective sociological surveying, these authors give readers reliable information about meaningful religious experiences of non-LDS students in an LDS academic setting.

Scott Hoyt's passion for marshalling detailed information about the Inca god Viracocha and his legendary visit in ancient Peru will be an eye-opener to many. His examination of early Spanish records with their archaeological and academic substantiations offers captivating information relevant in testing a potential relationship with the Book of Mormon's report that Jesus would show himself to many people besides those gathered at the temple in Bountiful (3 Ne. 17:4).

In addition to presenting two personal essays and a poem, this issue raises the curtain on what Callie Oppedisano's theatre essay calls "a milestone in Mormon drama." Celebrating a full season of five stage productions of plays by playwright and former BYU professor Eric Samuelsen, this expert assessment of these dramatizations of subjects of interest to Latter-day Saints makes readers into more than merely amused observers.

Insightful reviews of a batch of new publications will help keep readers up to date on subjects of interest to teachers, citizens, historians, and scriptorians. Stephen Webb's theologically engaging review of *Wrestling the Angel* applauds and pushes forward Terryl Givens's presentation of foundational LDS concepts. James Allen's review of two more volumes in the *Joseph Smith Papers* introduces readers to important early Church historical documents that many people have never heard of before.

These are pages you can get involved with. They bring you research and insights into topics of deep interest to Latter-day Saints. Like most academic pursuits, these studies add new information to our reservoirs of knowledge, while at the same time raising fascinating riddles yet to puzzle over. And that too is typical of a true academic experience, in which new things are found, forgotten things are remembered, and familiar things take on added significance. So, enjoy the experience!



Dr. Russell M. Nelson examines a model of the human heart. As a surgeon, he was instrumental in creating the first heart-lung machine and performed many open-heart operations, including one of the first successful tricuspid valve repairs. Courtesy Church History Library.

# Discovering a Surgical First

## Russell M. Nelson and Tricuspid Valve Annuloplasty

*Austin A. Robinson and Curtis T. Hunter*

In an April 2003 general conference address, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles recounted an experience of receiving sudden inspiration on how to perform surgery during his medical career. The epiphanic image that came to the young surgeon in 1960 led to the repair of a previously inoperable valve defect in the heart of E. L., a Latter-day Saint stake patriarch. As a novel surgical approach, the case is remarkable. However, Nelson did not publish a report of the experience in the medical literature at the time, and, as a result, its place in surgical history of the twentieth century has not been fully described. The primary purposes of this article are to: (1) document the circumstances surrounding that operation, (2) describe in detail the operative technique, and (3) place the surgery in its proper medical and historical context.

In addition to his public comments on the topic, Nelson has generously supplied additional information to make this publication possible. In exploring the historical and secular context of the experience, this article attempts to foster wider appreciation for an event that carried great surgical as well as personal and spiritual meaning for Nelson. In doing so, we follow the approach of LeRoy S. Wirthlin, whose influential article in this journal first identified nineteenth-century doctor Nathan Smith as the surgeon behind Joseph Smith's boyhood operation.<sup>1</sup> Wirthlin's work illuminated our understanding of Joseph Smith's life story

---

1. LeRoy S. Wirthlin, "Nathan Smith (1762–1828) Surgical Consultant to Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies* 17, no. 3 (1977): 319–37.



as well as the career of Nathan Smith, who went on to found medical schools at both Dartmouth and Yale.<sup>2</sup>

Nelson's operation on E. L. is similarly situated at the intersection of faith and medicine. The general conference address provides one of only a few descriptions of the event:<sup>3</sup> "During the early pioneering days of surgery of the heart," a stake patriarch from southern Utah

suffered much because of a failing heart. He pleaded for help, thinking that his condition resulted from a damaged but repairable valve in his heart.

Extensive evaluation revealed that he had *two* faulty valves. While one could be helped surgically, the other could not. Thus, an operation was *not* advised. He received this news with deep disappointment.

Subsequent visits ended with the same advice. Finally, in desperation, he spoke to me with considerable emotion: "Dr. Nelson, I have prayed for help and have been directed to you. The Lord will not reveal to me *how* to repair that second valve, but He can reveal it to you. Your mind is so prepared. If you will operate upon me, the Lord will make it known to you what to do. Please perform the operation that *I* need, and pray for the help that *you* need."

His great faith had a profound effect upon me. How could I turn him away again? Following a fervent prayer together, I agreed to try. In preparing for that fateful day, I prayed over and over again, but still did not know what to do for his leaking tricuspid valve. Even as the operation commenced, my assistant asked, "What are you going to do for that?"

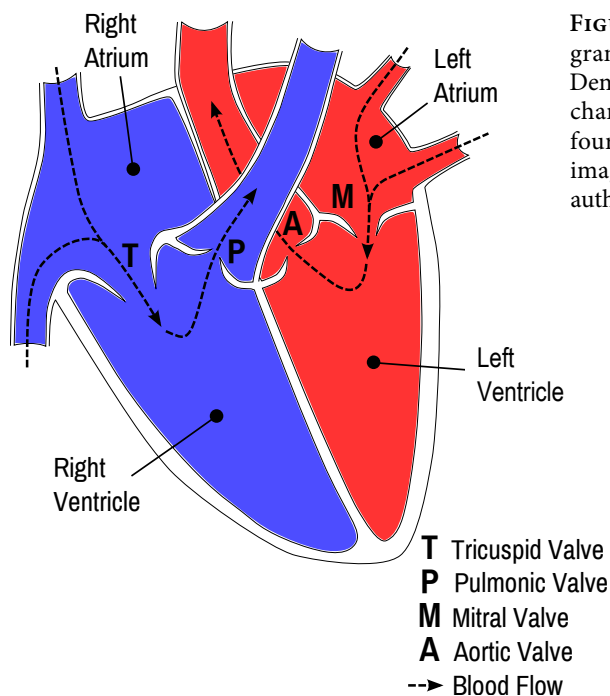
I said, "I do not know."

We began the operation. After relieving the obstruction of the first valve, we exposed the second valve. We found it to be intact but so badly dilated that it could no longer function as it should. While examining this valve, a message was distinctly impressed upon my mind: *Reduce*

---

2. Oliver S. Hayward and Constance E. Putnam, *Improve, Perfect, and Perpetuate: Dr. Nathan Smith and Early American Medical Education* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1998). Wirthlin's work still continues to foster interest and goodwill within the Latter-day Saint and medical communities. One manifestation is the funding of a medical student scholarship by the descendants of Joseph Smith Sr. in honor of Nathan Smith at Dartmouth. See Lucy Schouten, "Race Marks Bicentennial of Surgery That Saved Joseph Smith's Leg," *DeseretNews.com*, August 4, 2013, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865584072/Race-marks-bicentennial-of-surgery-that-saved-Joseph-Smiths-leg.html?pg=all>.

3. Russell M. Nelson, "Sweet Power of Prayer," *Ensign* 33, no. 5 (2003): 7–9. Similar reports are given in Russell Nelson, *From Heart to Heart* (Salt Lake City: Nelson, 1979); Spencer J. Condie, *Russell M. Nelson: Father, Surgeon, Apostle* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003).



**FIGURE 1.** Simplified diagram of a healthy heart. Demonstrated are the four chambers, as well as the four cardiac valves. The image was created by the authors.

*the circumference of the ring.* I announced that message to my assistant. “The valve tissue will be sufficient *if* we can effectively reduce the ring toward its normal size.”

But how? We could not apply a belt as one would use to tighten the waist of oversized trousers. We could not squeeze with a strap as one would cinch a saddle on a horse. Then a picture came vividly to my mind, showing how stitches could be placed—to make a pleat here and a tuck there—to accomplish the desired objective. I still remember that mental image—complete with dotted lines where sutures should be placed. The repair was completed as diagrammed in my mind. We tested the valve and found the leak to be reduced remarkably. My assistant said, “It’s a miracle.”

I responded, “It’s an answer to prayer.”<sup>4</sup>

### The Clinical Problem

A brief review of relevant cardiac anatomy and physiology may complement a discussion of the situation faced by Nelson. The heart consists of four chambers divided among two sides, a right and a left (see fig. 1). Each side is composed of a smaller chamber, or atrium, through which blood

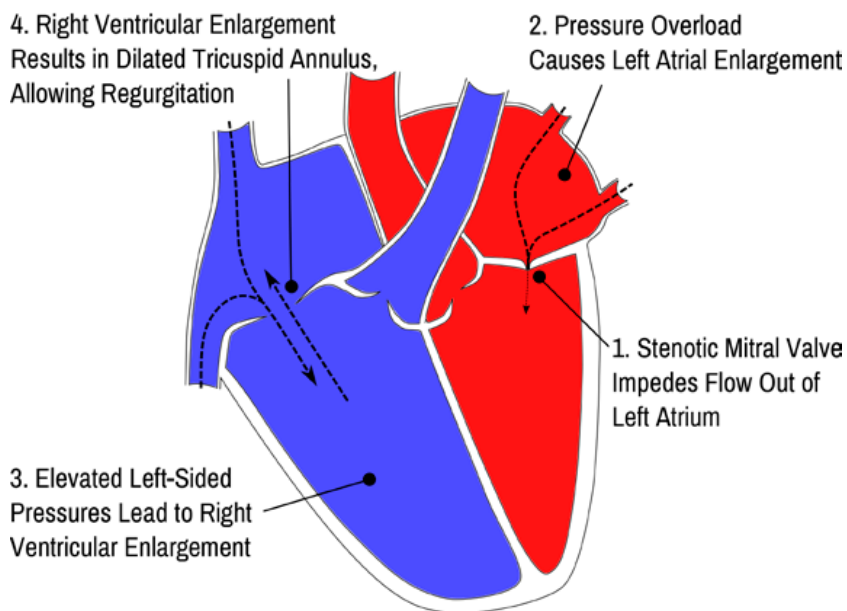
4. Nelson, “Sweet Power of Prayer,” 7–8.



FIGURE 2. Cross-section of the heart. Viewed from above with the atria removed, the four cardiac valves are visualized: tricuspid, pulmonary (pulmonic), aortic, and bicuspid (mitral). From Henry Gray's *Anatomy of the Human Body* (Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1918).

is funneled into a larger ventricle, where the bulk of the pump function is performed. The heart's right side is responsible for circulation of oxygen-poor blood through the lungs for reoxygenation and then back to the left atrium. The left side of the heart, in turn, generates the high pressures necessary to transmit the freshly oxygenated blood to the body and organs.

A system of four valves ensures proper forward flow of blood (see fig. 2). The outflow tracts of the ventricles are capped by valves named for the next circulatory destination: the pulmonic valve in the right, and the aortic valve in the left heart. More important to this case are the two atrio-ventricular valves that divide each atrium from its corresponding ventricle. Between the right atrium and right ventricle lies the tricuspid valve, named for the three leaflets that distinguish it from the bicuspid valve on the left. The bicuspid valve is more commonly known as the mitral valve,



**FIGURE 3.** Simplified diagram of the patient's diseased heart. Schematic representing the changes resulting in functional tricuspid regurgitation due to mitral stenosis, as experienced by E.L. Outflow obstruction due to mitral stenosis causes pressure overload in the left atrium, resulting in left atrial enlargement and eventually transmission of elevated pressures to the right ventricle. Consequent enlargement of the right ventricle leads to distortion of the tricuspid valve apparatus, misalignment of leaflets, and functional tricuspid regurgitation. The image was created by the authors.

owing to its supposed resemblance to the mitres of Catholic clergy. The mitral and tricuspid valves have the same constituent parts: the valve leaflets are rooted at their base in a fibrous ring, called an annulus, and attached at their apices to bandlike cords, called chordae tendineae. The chordae tendineae connect to strong papillary muscles in the ventricles to prevent valve prolapse during contraction.

There are two general patterns of disease in heart valves—either the valve becomes too tight or too loose. In the first problem, the valve leaflets may become stiffened, impairing their ability to open and allow blood to cross the threshold between chambers. This state is referred to as valvular stenosis. The second condition is a problem with valve closure, where an effective seal fails to form. Such valvular insufficiency, also known as regurgitation, allows retrograde flow of blood that directly opposes the heart's primary pump function. E.L. was afflicted by both

such maladies, one in each of his atrioventricular valves. He had stenosis of his mitral valve that, according to Nelson, resulted from rheumatic fever earlier in life.<sup>5</sup> This relatively common illness was complicated by severe regurgitation of his tricuspid valve.<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that these two conditions were not unrelated occurrences, but that one arose as a consequence of the other (see fig. 3).

Mitral valve stenosis provides a functional obstruction to the flow of blood, preventing equalization of pressures between the left atrium and the left ventricle. As a result, less blood flows into the left ventricle with each cardiac cycle, and the pressures in the left atrium rise in proportion to the degree of mitral stenosis.<sup>7</sup> The result is a cascade of increasing volumes, pressures, and distention backward along the circulatory route. After increased pressures in the left atrium, the next successive complication is elevated hydrostatic pressure in the pulmonary vessels that increases fluid transfer into the airspaces of the lungs, leading to breathlessness. The maladaptive cycle continues in the right ventricle, with rising pressures and, ultimately, enlargement of the chamber itself.<sup>8</sup> Ventricular dilation causes distortion of the tricuspid valve annulus and misalignment of the valve leaflets.<sup>9</sup> The net result of this

---

5. Nelson, "Sweet Hour of Prayer," 8, 9 n. 23.

6. For more information on this complication, see Roy M. Acheson, "The Epidemiology of Acute Rheumatic Fever 1950–1964," *Journal of Chronic Diseases* 18, no. 8 (1965): 723–34, doi:10.1016/0021-9681(65)90016-0.

7. Eugene Braunwald and others, "The Hemodynamics of the Left Side of the Heart as Studied by Simultaneous Left Atrial, Left Ventricular, and Aortic Pressures; Particular Reference to Mitral Stenosis," *Circulation* 12, no. 1 (July 1, 1955): 69–81, doi:10.1161/01.CIR.12.1.69; "ACC/AHA 2006 Guidelines for the Management of Patients with Valvular Heart Disease: Executive Summary: A Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines (Writing Committee to Revise the 1998 Guidelines for the Management of Patients with Valvular Heart Disease): Developed in Collaboration with the Society of Cardiovascular Anesthesiologists: Endorsed by the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions and the Society of Thoracic Surgeons," *Circulation* 114, no. 5 (August 1, 2006): 450–527, doi:10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.106.177303.

8. François Haddad and others, "Right Ventricular Function in Cardiovascular Disease, Part II: Pathophysiology, Clinical Importance, and Management of Right Ventricular Failure," *Circulation* 117, no. 13 (April 1, 2008): 1717–31, doi:10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.107.653584.

9. Shahzad G. Raja and Gilles D. Dreyfus, "Basis for Intervention on Functional Tricuspid Regurgitation," *Seminars in Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery* 22, no. 1 (2010): 79–83, doi:10.1053/j.semthvs.2010.05.005.

complex pathophysiology is imprecise valve closure and regurgitant flow of blood backward into the veins of the neck and abdomen with each contraction of the ventricles.

In this manner, E. L.'s mitral valve disease was causing the failure of his tricuspid valve—a situation referred to as functional tricuspid insufficiency. By 1960, surgeons had observed that isolated repair of mitral stenosis without correction of functional tricuspid regurgitation was associated with high perioperative mortality.<sup>10</sup> More recent studies have shown that severe tricuspid regurgitation, whether alone or secondary to left-sided valve disease, is associated with poor quality of life and high mortality.<sup>11</sup> Ideally, E. L.'s tricuspid valve could be repaired at the same time as the mitral valve. However, at that time, there was no known way of doing so, and the tricuspid valve's inoperability rendered E. L.'s condition ultimately incurable.

### The State of Cardiac Surgery

Nelson aptly describes the era as “the early pioneering days of surgery of the heart.”<sup>12</sup> It was a period of rapid expansion in our repertoire of cardiac surgeries. At the time Nelson was approached by E. L., open-heart surgery was less than a decade old. Prior to that time, operative correction of valvular stenosis was limited and performed blindly with a finger-guided knife, or in some cases, using the finger itself to force open valve commissures in a procedure referred to as “finger fracture commissurotomy.”<sup>13</sup>

---

10. Jerome Harold Kay, Giuseppe Maselli-Campagna, and Harold K. Tsuji, “Surgical Treatment of Tricuspid Insufficiency,” *Annals of Surgery* 162, no. 1 (1965): 53–58.

11. Jayant Nath, Elyse Foster, and Paul A. Heidenreich, “Impact of Tricuspid Regurgitation on Long-Term Survival,” *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* 43, no. 3 (February 4, 2004): 405–9, [doi:10.1016/j.jacc.2003.09.036](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacc.2003.09.036); Anita Sadeghpour and others, “Impact of Severe Tricuspid Regurgitation on Long Term Survival,” *Research in Cardiovascular Medicine* 2, no. 3 (2013): 121–26, [doi:10.5812/cardiovascmed.10686](https://doi.org/10.5812/cardiovascmed.10686); Rick A. Nishimura and others, “2014 AHA/ACC Guideline for the Management of Patients with Valvular Heart Disease: A Report of the American College of Cardiology/American Heart Association Task Force on Practice Guidelines,” *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* 63, no. 22 (June 10, 2014): e57–185, [doi:10.1016/j.jacc.2014.02.536](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jacc.2014.02.536).

12. Nelson, “Sweet Power of Prayer,” 7.

13. Marco Picichè, ed., *Dawn and Evolution of Cardiac Procedures—Research Avenues in Cardiac Surgery and Interventional Cardiology* (Italia: Springer, 2013),

Such blind surgery precluded more complicated procedures on the heart. Nelson was especially aware of this, having been part of the team that developed the first successful heart-lung bypass machine at the University of Minnesota, work that formed the basis of his PhD dissertation.<sup>14</sup> The technique quickly caught on among surgeons. After its first use in Minnesota in 1951, bypass was successfully employed to support open-heart surgery at Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia by May 6, 1953.<sup>15</sup> Upon returning from training at Harvard's Massachusetts General Hospital, Nelson brought the technique to Salt Lake in 1955. His operation in November of that year gave Utah the distinction of being only the third state in the entire country with open-heart surgery capabilities.<sup>16</sup>

### Surgical Advances for the Mitral and Tricuspid Valves

Cardiopulmonary bypass allowed for the development of the open field, so necessary for more complex cardiac surgical procedures. After initial successes in repairing congenital structural defects, surgeons set their sights on the problem of diseased heart valves. The open field finally allowed surgeons an *in vivo* view of heart valve function and insight into how each of the valve components interacts during the phases of the cardiac cycle. Such intricate understanding of valve physiology had eluded prior researchers who had to rely on autopsy studies of lifeless hearts.<sup>17</sup>

---

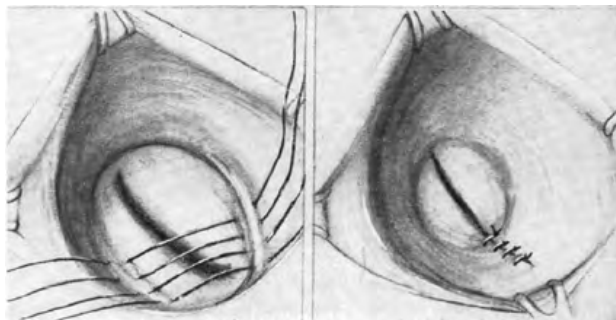
<http://www.springer.com/medicine/surgery/book/978-88-470-2399-4>; J. C. Dávila, "The Birth of Intracardiac Surgery: A Semicentennial Tribute (June 10, 1948–1998)," *The Annals of Thoracic Surgery* 65, no. 6 (1998): 1809–20; Dwight E. Harken and others, "The Surgery of Mitral Stenosis: III. Finger-Fracture Valvuloplasty," *Annals of Surgery* 134, no. 4 (1951): 722–41.2013.

14. Russell M. Nelson, "Metabolic Effects of Paracolon Bacteremia," *Annals of Surgery* 134, no. 5 (1951): 885–96; Condie, *Russell M. Nelson*.

15. Clarence Dennis and others, "Development of a Pump-Oxygenator to Replace the Heart and Lungs: An Apparatus Applicable to Human Patients and Application to One Case," *Annals of Surgery* 134, no. 4 (1951): 709–21; J. H. Gibbon, "Application of a Mechanical Heart and Lung Apparatus to Cardiac Surgery," *Minnesota Medicine* 37, no. 3 (1954): 171–85, *passim*.

16. Condie, *Russell M. Nelson*, 132.

17. C. W. Lillehei and others, "Surgical Correction of Pure Mitral Insufficiency by Annuloplasty under Direct Vision," *The Journal-Lancet* 77, no. 11 (1957): 446–49.



**FIGURE 4.** Early repair of mitral regurgitation. Merendino's early repair technique for mitral insufficiency, first performed October 1956 and published July 1959. (Merendino and others, "The Open Correction of Rheumatic Mitral Regurgitation and or Stenosis," 11.)

The mitral valve commanded much of the initial attention, and the latter half of the 1950s saw several surgeons develop new procedures for the correction of mitral insufficiency. In 1956, C. Walton Lillehei, one of Nelson's former colleagues at the University of Minnesota, employed cardiopulmonary bypass to directly visualize an incompetent mitral valve and then introduced a method of closing it by suturing into the annulus on each side. Lillehei placed sutures across the incompetent portion of each valve, leaving a residual, functional valve.<sup>18</sup> He termed the procedure mitral valve annuloplasty, applying the suffix *-plasty*, meaning to form or mold.<sup>19</sup> Others devised different surgical solutions, including Geoffrey Wooler at Leeds General Infirmary, H. William Scott at Vanderbilt University, Earle Kay at St. Vincent Hospital in Cleveland, and another cardiac surgeon with a PhD from the University of Minnesota, K. Alvin Merendino (see fig. 4).<sup>20</sup>

18. Lillehei and others, "Surgical Correction of Pure Mitral Insufficiency," 446-49.

19. Sandra R. Patterson, *Medical Terminology from Greek and Latin* (Troy, N.Y.: Whitston Publishing, 1978), 54.

20. G. H. Wooler and others, "Experiences with the Repair of the Mitral Valve in Mitral Incompetence," *Thorax* 17, no. 1 (1962): 49-57; E. B. Kay and F. S. Cross, "Surgical Treatment of Mitral Insufficiency," *Surgery* 37, no. 5 (1955): 697-706; H. William Scott and others, "Surgical Correction of Mitral Insufficiency under Direct Vision: Report of Clinical Cases," *Annals of Surgery* 147, no. 5 (1958): 625-33; K. Alvin Merendino and others, "The Open Correction of



By the late 1950s, tricuspid valve therapy lagged significantly behind the mitral valve. Few researchers studied the tricuspid valve, and it was “never specifically targeted by any one surgeon during this time period.”<sup>21</sup> Such inattention was possibly due to the fact that rheumatic fever, one of the most common causes of valvular disease, typically affected left-sided valves, or potentially because valve failure amid the higher pressures of the heart’s left side produced more dramatic clinical pathology. Regardless of the reason, however, it is clear that Nelson did not have the benefit of others’ prior experience as he set out to operate on what has been called “the forgotten valve.”<sup>22</sup>

### Nelson in His Career

Nelson’s life had brought him into personal acquaintance with the damage to heart valves caused by rheumatic fever. During surgical residency, Nelson and his wife found close friends in Don and Netta Davis, another medical couple in their twenties. Netta developed rheumatic mitral stenosis, which, during their time in Minnesota, progressed into florid heart failure. As he and his young wife watched Netta waste away physically and ultimately succumb to the effects of her valve disease, Nelson resolved to commit his professional career to treating such profound heart disease. The experience was perhaps the pivotal moment in diverting Nelson’s career from general surgery to cardiac surgery.<sup>23</sup>

Nelson’s career up through 1960 had afforded him the opportunity of treating such patients, and, by the time he was approached by E. L., Nelson had accumulated some professional experience with rheumatic heart disease. At the time of his operation for the stake patriarch, Nelson had performed seventy-three operations in the open field and a total of sixty mitral valve operations—not insignificant numbers for less than five years in the newest of medical fields.<sup>24</sup> However, by today’s standards, his surgical experience would be considered rather limited.

---

Rheumatic Mitral Regurgitation and or Stenosis,” *Annals of Surgery* 150, no. 1 (1959): 5–22.

21. P. A. Iaizzo and others, eds., *Heart Valves: From Design to Clinical Implantation* (New York: Springer), 91, <http://www.springer.com/biomed/book/978-1-4614-6143-2>.

22. Picichè, *Dawn and Evolution of Cardiac Procedures*, 207.

23. Condie, *Russell M. Nelson*, 107.

24. Russell M. Nelson to authors, “Personal Correspondence—Provided to Editors,” July 10, 2014.

Modern cardiothoracic surgeons typically have already performed three hundred cardiac surgeries when they start their careers after the conclusion of surgical training during residency.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, Nelson's particular work on conditions relevant to E.L.'s case was even more limited. His open-field operations on the mitral valve, the closest surgical correlate to the tricuspid valve, numbered only eight, and he had performed just two repairs of mitral valve insufficiency.<sup>26</sup> Nelson was hardly embarking on a routine procedure, even if the mitral valve were his only surgical objective. However, targeting a tricuspid valve defect was venturing entirely into the unknown.

### Description of the Procedure

In spite of such inexperience, Nelson knew that without correction of E.L.'s valvular problems, his symptoms would continue to deteriorate and his life expectancy would be limited. He agreed to attempt surgery, and a date of May 24, 1960, was set for the operation. Surgical exploration would confirm Nelson's preoperative diagnosis. The patient indeed had rheumatic mitral stenosis: "On viewing the interior of the heart, first of all with regard to the mitral valve, there was pure mitral stenosis with the valve orifice being about 1 cm. I could get my index fingertip into the orifice down to the end of my fingernail but could get it no further. There was no mitral regurgitation. . . . The valve edge was thickened and rough."<sup>27</sup>

Nelson first performed mitral valve commissurotomy, breaking adhesions between the mitral leaflets at the commissures and liberating associated structures. After this procedure, he was able to pass two full fingers through the valve and into the left ventricle. Satisfied that the mitral stenosis had been corrected to the point of allowing good valvular function, he turned his attention to the heart's right side and the tricuspid valve. One can imagine the nervous expectancy of opening the right atrium widely to find the severe functional tricuspid regurgitation Nelson had expected.

---

25. Rafe Connors and others, "Effect of Work-Hour Restriction on Operative Experience in Cardiothoracic Surgical Residency Training," *The Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery* 137, no. 3 (March 2009): 710–13.

26. Nelson, "Personal Correspondence—Provided to Editors."

27. Russell M. Nelson, "Mitral Commissurotomy; Tricuspid Commissurotomy Employing Extracorporeal Circulation," Operative Report, Salt Lake City, LDS Hospital, May 27, 1960.

Findings at the tricuspid valve were those of complete incompetence of this valve. I could thrust all five digits on my right hand through the valve into the right ventricle. I did not think that there had been any valvulitis from rheumatic fever to this valve, as actually the valve leaflets were thin and supple. However, there had been gross dilatation of the annulus of the valve, so that on the right lateral border of the annulus, there was no valve tissue present. With each ventricular systole, there was a total reflux of blood up into the right atrial chamber. . . . There was no tricuspid stenosis whatsoever.<sup>28</sup>

It was at this moment of considering the problem that Nelson received the critical impression—reduce the circumference of the ring.<sup>29</sup> The idea that the valve tissue would be sufficient must have been surprising at the time, given Nelson’s observation that there was “no valve tissue present” at the right lateral annulus.<sup>30</sup> Nonetheless, he proceeded to focus on the directive to reduce the annular circumference. The description provided in his general conference address is informative about the options Nelson felt he had available to him: “We could not apply a belt as one would use to tighten the waist of oversized trousers. We could not squeeze with a strap as one would cinch a saddle on a horse.”<sup>31</sup>

Nelson recognized that external constricting ligatures had failed spectacularly before in work on the mitral and aortic valves. Purse-string sutures placed into external heart tissue around incompetent mitral valves eventually tore through the heart’s muscular layer.<sup>32</sup> When the eminent surgeon Charles Bailey had attempted a similar approach for aortic valves, the band migrated out of place, sometimes occluding flow through the coronary arteries and causing heart attacks.<sup>33</sup> Belt and strap approaches had been tried before and the outcome was not good. Nelson would have to look to another approach to reverse such gross dilation.

---

28. Nelson, “Mitral Commissurotomy.”

29. Nelson, “Sweet Power of Prayer,” 8.

30. Nelson, “Mitral Commissurotomy.”

31. Nelson, “Sweet Power of Prayer,” 8.

32. Iaizzo and others, *Heart Valves*, 101.

33. Robert P. Glover and Julio C. Davila, “Surgical Treatment of Mitral Insufficiency by Total Circumferential ‘Purse-String’ Suture of the Mitral Ring,” *Circulation* 15, no. 5 (May 1, 1957): 661–81, doi:10.1161/01.CIR.15.5.661; Iaizzo and others, *Heart Valves*, 101; Charles P. Bailey and William Likoff, “The Surgical Treatment of Aortic Insufficiency,” *Annals of Internal Medicine* 42, no. 2 (February 1, 1955): 388–416, doi:10.7326/0003-4819-42-2-388.

What remained was to directly manipulate the valve annulus, a difficult and complicated approach. Nelson could not replicate what other surgeons had done in the development of mitral valve annuloplasty by reversing methods of mitral stenosis repair, since there existed no analogous procedure for tricuspid stenosis. Furthermore, he could not simply extrapolate mitral valve annuloplasty techniques to the tricuspid valve: The triple-leaflet structure of the tricuspid valve meant that there were three commissures, compared to the dual commissures of the mitral valve, as well as a distinct three-dimensional contour with a unique process of distortion compared to mitral valve insufficiency.<sup>34</sup>

Rather than replicate a prior process, Nelson operated according to the image in his mind. His immediate postoperative dictation (see fig. 5) describes the procedure:

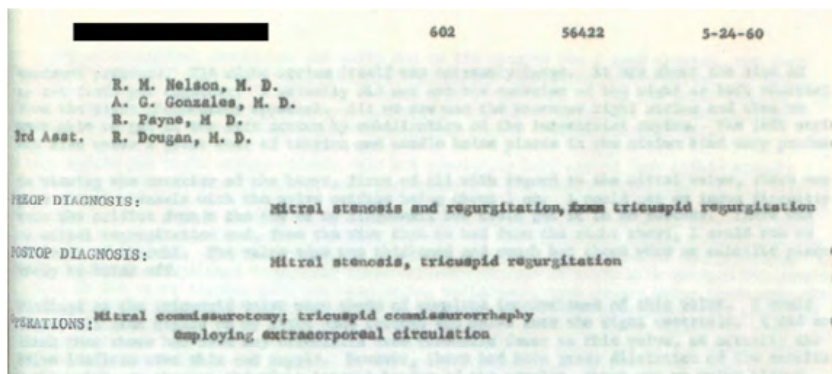
It became evident that there was valve tissue that would function, were it in approximation, one leaflet to another, and so this was allowed to happen by constriction of the diameter of the annulus by mattress suture plication of the annulus of the valve. This was accomplished by placing . . . mattress sutures of heavy silk through the annulus. . . . Each suture was placed through a pillow of ivalon sponge as a reinforcing buttress into which the stitch might rest. After placement of the third stitch . . . we had completely abolished all of the leak and still left an opening of the tricuspid valve through which my second and third fingers might easily pass, with room to spare.<sup>35</sup>

Nelson placed strong sutures into the tricuspid valve annulus across from each other, which he used to plicate—or fold—the annulus. In doing so, he brought the anterior and posterior annulus together. He placed two sutures at the commissure between the anterior and posterior leaflets at the valve's lateral edge and another set of sutures at the commissure between the anterior and septal leaflets, along the opposite border. In drawing together the valve at its edges, he constricted the annulus enough to restore leaflet closure. The operation had transformed the configuration of the tricuspid valve (see fig. 6). More importantly, its function was altered as well: when Nelson allowed blood to

---

34. Renan Sukmawan and others, "Geometric Changes of Tricuspid Valve Tenting in Tricuspid Regurgitation Secondary to Pulmonary Hypertension Quantified by Novel System with Transthoracic Real-Time 3-Dimensional Echocardiography," *Journal of the American Society of Echocardiography* 20, no. 5 (May 1, 2007): 470–76, doi:10.1016/j.echo.2006.10.001.

35. Nelson, "Mitral Commissurotomy."



Findings at the tricuspid valve were those of complete incompetence of this valve. I could thrust all five digits on my right hand through the valve into the right ventricle. I did not think that there had been any valvulitis from rheumatic fever to this valve, as actually the valve leaflets were thin and supple. However, there had been gross dilatation of the annulus of the valve, so that on the right lateral border of the annulus, there was no valve tissue present. With each ventricular systole, there was a total reflux of blood up into the right atrial chamber, which is fully what we had expected to find inasmuch as the pressure in the pulmonary artery was nearly that of the right atrium, indicating the right ventricle was imposing approximately equal pressures both before and after entrance of blood into this chamber. There was no tricuspid stenosis whatsoever. No thrombi were visible in the right atrial cham-

FIGURE 5. Excerpt from Nelson's operative report.

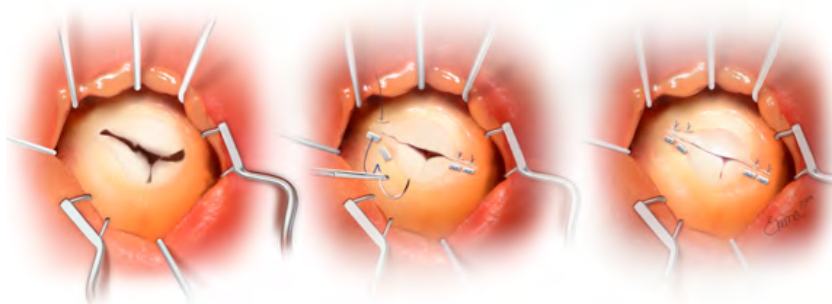


FIGURE 6. Graphical depiction of Nelson's surgical technique. Nelson employed four sutures to accomplish annular constriction. He placed two sutures at the lateral edge of the valve, over the anteroposterior commissure; and two sutures at its medial edge, across the anteroseptal commissure. In drawing together the annulus at two edges, he constricted the annulus enough to restore leaflet closure. Final configuration is shown in the far right panel. © 2014 Lynsey Ekema, MSMI, all rights reserved.

enter the right ventricle, it was pumped forward without any evident regurgitation into the right atrium. The tricuspid insufficiency was gone. The operation was a success.

The significance of the moment would not have been lost on the operating room staff. Nelson's first assistant likely gave voice to the feelings of all present, including the scrub nurse and two other surgical residents, with his spontaneous exclamation, "It's a miracle."<sup>36</sup> For his part, Nelson seemed taken by the experience as well. In his postoperative dictation, he was unsure of even the name of the procedure, opting for the term tricuspid commissurorrhaphy, using the suffix *-rrhaphy* to denote suturing at the commissures.<sup>37</sup> Future surgeons would adopt a different term to maintain consistency of nomenclature among valves. It would be called tricuspid valve annuloplasty.

### Significant Elements

Our modern vantage point yields interesting insights on Nelson's tricuspid valve annuloplasty and its place in surgical history. Novel procedures are often preceded by careful experimentation before they see the daylight of clinical practice. C. Walton Lillehei and colleagues performed research on animal heart valves for several years before they attempted their first mitral valve annuloplasty in a human patient.<sup>38</sup> Nelson and his research team in Minnesota had done the same with the pump oxygenator on dogs before it was used to sustain a hospital patient.<sup>39</sup> In fact, Nelson's own research focused on infectious complications of pump oxygenator use that had to be resolved before a trial in humans would ever be feasible.<sup>40</sup> By contrast, Nelson attempted a first-ever tricuspid valve annuloplasty without preparatory research of any kind. Nelson's on-the-spot tricuspid valve repair contrasts sharply with his own prior medical experience and the standard practice of his surgical contemporaries.

Given such circumstances, the technique he employed seems all the more remarkable. For example, Nelson did not justify his reason for starting at the valve's right lateral border, but later studies would validate this approach. Functional tricuspid annular dilation is now understood

---

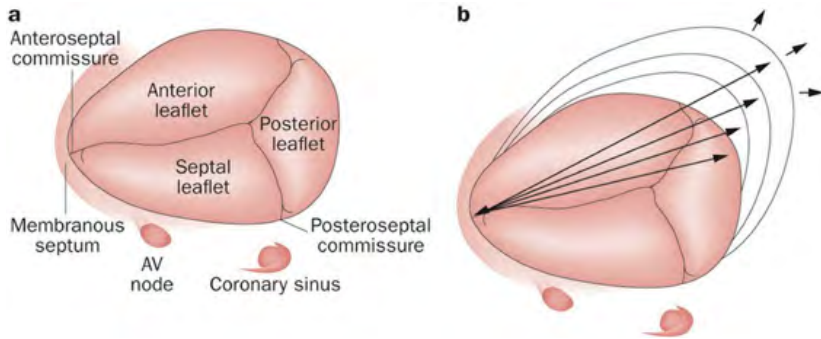
36. Nelson, "Sweet Power of Prayer," 8.

37. Patterson, *Medical Terminology from Greek and Latin*, 115.

38. Lillehei and others, "Surgical Correction of Pure Mitral Insufficiency," 446.

39. Dennis and others, "Development of a Pump-Oxygenator," 714.

40. Nelson, "Metabolic Effects of Paracolon Bacteremia," 885.



**FIGURE 7.** Asymmetric tricuspid annular dilation. Image demonstrating a healthy tricuspid valve (left), and the pattern of asymmetric dilation of the tricuspid annulus in functional tricuspid insufficiency (right). Note that dilation occurs in two directions: laterally (represented by rightward arrow) as well as anteriorly (upward arrow). Reprinted by permission from Macmillan Publishers, Ltd.: Shinn and Schaff, “Evidence-Based Surgical Management of Acquired Tricuspid Valve Disease,” *Nature Reviews Cardiology* (2013).

to progress in an asymmetric fashion, with selective lengthening of the segments corresponding to the anterior and posterior leaflets; the septal leaflet, by contrast, remains relatively unchanged (see fig. 7).<sup>41</sup> The junction of the anterior and posterior leaflets, located near the right lateral extreme of the annulus, is therefore an ideal target for annular reduction.

Nelson’s tricuspid annuloplasty was notable for more than just its technique. New cardiac surgical procedures of that era often proved dangerous as they were first being implemented. Charles Bailey, the man behind the first correction of mitral stenosis, experienced four consecutive fatalities before achieving success with his fifth attempt at mitral valve commissurotomy.<sup>42</sup> The first patient sustained by cardiopulmonary bypass also died of surgical complications.<sup>43</sup> Even after the first successful operation by Gibbon in 1953, the next four attempts at

41. Gilles D. Dreyfus and others, “Secondary Tricuspid Regurgitation or Dilatation: Which Should Be the Criteria for Surgical Repair?” *The Annals of Thoracic Surgery* 79, no. 1 (2005): 127–32, doi:10.1016/j.athoracsur.2004.06.057.

42. Charles Philamore Bailey, “The Surgical Treatment of Mitral Stenosis (Mitral Commissurotomy),” *CHEST Journal* 15, no. 4 (April 1, 1949): 377–93, doi:10.1378/chest.15.4.377.

43. Dennis and others, “Development of a Pump-Oxygenator,” 719.

open-heart surgery ended in patient deaths.<sup>44</sup> In November 1958, a year and a half before Nelson's surgery, a group of Philadelphia surgeons reported an 80 percent fatality rate in their attempts at open repair of the mitral valve.<sup>45</sup> That E. L. not only survived but did well, experiencing symptomatic relief and living for "many more years" after Nelson's foray into tricuspid valve repair, is fortunate and quite remarkable.<sup>46</sup>

It is important to note that, despite the obvious innovation involved in Nelson's annuloplasty, he certainly drew on elements of his surgical experience in order to perform the surgery. For example, Nelson knew that annular plication was a possibility only because of his familiarity with colleagues' work on other valves, particularly the mitral valve. His choice of materials, too, would have been guided by experience. Use of heavy silk to suture into the annulus and Ivalon sponge reinforcements to prevent annular tearing were undoubtedly informed by Lillehei's use of these same items in his work on mitral valve annuloplasty.<sup>47</sup> Nelson was, after all, a heart surgeon, and it was this rare combination of knowledge and inspiration that allowed him to perform the surgery. E. L. had known this, having sought him out because his mind was "so prepared."<sup>48</sup> Novel though it was, Nelson's tricuspid annuloplasty was no *ex nihilo* operation.

Nelson was not the only surgeon attempting to correct tricuspid insufficiency at the time. In 1965, his close personal friend and colleague at the University of Southern California, Jerome Kay, published his own repair technique for tricuspid insufficiency (see timeline in fig. 8).<sup>49</sup> Unknown to Nelson, Jerome Kay had been developing his technique of tricuspid valve annuloplasty since 1960 (see fig. 9). Kay performed his first case in March of that year, only two months before Nelson had done the same in Utah. Because Kay waited five years to publish his results, Nelson had no knowledge of the Californian's work on tricuspid valves in 1960. As Newton and Leibniz had done with calculus centuries

---

44. Picichè, *Dawn and Evolution of Cardiac Procedures*, 314.

45. E. B. Kay and others, "Surgical Treatment of Mitral Insufficiency," *The Journal of Thoracic Surgery* 36, no. 5 (November 1958): 677–90.

46. Nelson, "Sweet Power of Prayer," 8.

47. Lillehei and others, "Surgical Correction of Pure Mitral Insufficiency," 449.

48. Nelson, "Sweet Power of Prayer," 8.

49. Kay, Maselli-Campagna, and Tsuji, "Surgical Treatment of Tricuspid Insufficiency," 53.



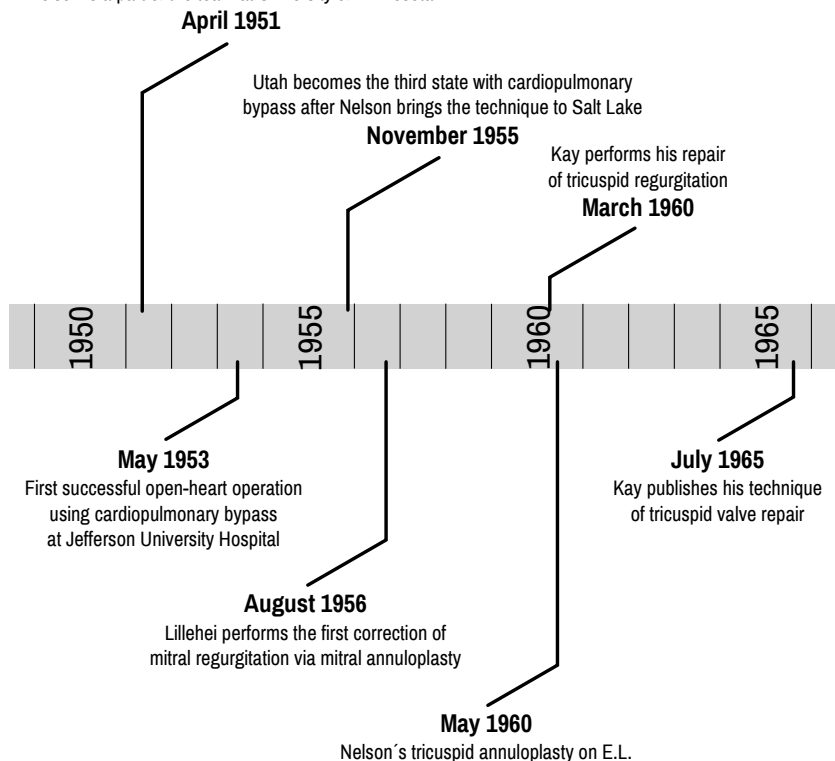


FIGURE 8. Timeline of selected surgical milestones.

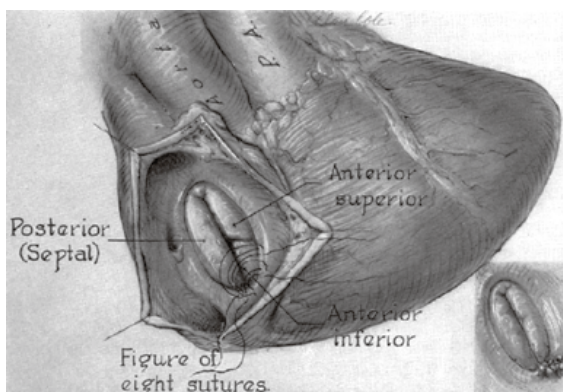


FIGURE 9. Kay's tricuspid valve repair (Kay, Maselli-Campagna, and Tsuji, "Surgical Treatment of Tricuspid Insufficiency," 54). The Kay repair involved surgical obliteration of the posterior leaflet, effectively converting a tricuspid valve to a bicuspid. Note that the names for the leaflets have been standardized since Kay's original labels: "Anterior superior" = anterior; "Posterior (Septal)" = septal; "Anterior inferior" = posterior.

earlier, Nelson and Kay had independently and concurrently developed the first-ever surgical repair for tricuspid regurgitation.

The Kay annuloplasty is similar in several respects to Nelson's: both operations involve annular plication via lateral placement of sutures. However, Kay omitted medial plication and focused only on the lateral annulus around the posterior leaflet. Instead of Nelson's sutures centered over the anteroposterior commissure, Kay placed several sutures across the posterior leaflet which, when tightened, effectively obliterated this leaflet. The net result was exclusion of the posterior leaflet and effective bicuspidization of the tricuspid valve.

Over the ensuing years, physicians would discover that one of the major problems of the Kay technique was that it prevented annular dilation only at the valve's lateral border and did not address the problem of dilation along the anterior annulus.<sup>50</sup> If anterior dilation continued, the repair would eventually fail. The Nelson annuloplasty technique, by contrast, incorporated elements to reinforce against this problem. Nelson's lateral sutures reversed dilation along the posterior leaflet in a similar manner to the Kay annuloplasty. Meanwhile their combination with plication sutures at the antero-septal commissure would have buttressed against anterior dilation. In ways beyond what Nelson could have appreciated at the time, he was reversing regurgitation by targeting the vectors of distortion that had caused the problem.

Ahead of its time though it was, Nelson's technique was not widely disseminated outside his immediate circle of affiliates, and the Kay annuloplasty became known as the first repair technique for tricuspid insufficiency after its publication in 1965.<sup>51</sup> Others would propose modifications,<sup>52</sup> but the annular plication techniques of Nelson and Kay

---

50. Picichè, *Dawn and Evolution of Cardiac Procedures*, 208.

51. Picichè, *Dawn and Evolution of Cardiac Procedures*, 208; Sapan S. Desai and Andrew J. Lodge, "Surgery of the Tricuspid and Pulmonary Valves," in *Valvular Heart Disease*, ed. Andrew Wang and Thomas M. Bashore, Contemporary Cardiology (Humana Press, 2009), 337, [http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-59745-411-7\\_15](http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-1-59745-411-7_15); Jan Dominik and Pavel Zacek, *Heart Valve Surgery: An Illustrated Guide*, 318, <http://www.springer.com/medicine/surgery/book/978-3-642-12205-7>.

52. Pierre Grondin at the Montreal Heart Institute, for example, proposed an interesting hybrid technique that combined Kay's bicuspidization with antero-septal plication sutures like Nelson. See P. Grondin and others, "The Tricuspid Valve: A Surgical Challenge," *The Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery* 53, no. 1 (January 1967): 7–20.

remained the primary method of correcting tricuspid insufficiency until 1972, when Norberto De Vega published a technique involving semi-circular suture placement circumferentially *along* the annulus over the anterior and posterior leaflets.<sup>53</sup> The field has continued to evolve, and modern strategies rely on use of commercially available synthetic rigid or semirigid rings to reshape a dilated annulus, rather than sutures alone.<sup>54</sup>

### Nelson's Technique Never Published

One may ask why Nelson never published a report of the new procedure. Despite maintaining detailed surgical records of the case that corroborate the event, Nelson was prevented by several practical barriers from publishing the new repair. By 1960, the standard for describing new surgical techniques typically involved reporting a series of patients. Lillehei included four patients in his initial description of mitral valve annuloplasty, but subsequent reports would involve greater numbers: Wooler and Earle Kay reported thirty-eight and twenty-eight cases, respectively.<sup>55</sup> The series of twenty tricuspid valve annuloplasties published by Jerome Kay had taken Kay and two other collaborators nearly five years to accumulate.<sup>56</sup> It would have required Nelson, working as a single surgeon in a smaller population center than southern California, much longer to accrue a series of surgical cases large enough to report in the literature.

Nelson also had no special professional focus on functional tricuspid regurgitation, and in the year 1960 alone he was engaged in several other surgical and academic projects. He had presciently begun to concentrate on the increasing problem of coronary artery atherosclerosis. That same year he joined a small group of surgeons at the leading edge

---

53. N. G. De Vega, "Selective, Adjustable and Permanent Annuloplasty. An Original Technic for the Treatment of Tricuspid Insufficiency," *Revista Española De Cardiología* 25, no. 6 (1972): 555–56.

54. Sung Ho Shinn and Hartzell V. Schaff, "Evidence-Based Surgical Management of Acquired Tricuspid Valve Disease," *Nature Reviews Cardiology* 10, no. 4 (2013): 190–203, doi:10.1038/nrcardio.2013.5; Desai and Lodge, "Surgery of the Tricuspid and Pulmonary Valves," 339.

55. Lillehei and others, "Surgical Correction of Pure Mitral Insufficiency," 449; Wooler and others, "Experiences with the Repair of the Mitral Valve," 49; Kay and others, "Surgical Treatment of Mitral Insufficiency," 677.

56. Kay, Maselli-Campagna, and Tsuji, "Surgical Treatment of Tricuspid Insufficiency," 56.

of the field when he performed coronary arteriography and coronary thromboendarterectomy.<sup>57</sup> In 1960, he also prepared or published several academic articles on cardiovascular physiology, including on anti-arrhythmic medications and hormonal regulation of vascular tone.<sup>58</sup> All this came in addition to his busy clinical workload, a substantial educational and administrative burden as the director of Utah's only cardiothoracic surgical training program, and ecclesiastical responsibilities that included serving as a counselor in his ward bishopric and as a Temple Square missionary every Thursday afternoon.<sup>59</sup> In 1960, Nelson was not well positioned to embark on a case series of tricuspid valve repair.

## Conclusion

From Netta Davis to E. L., Nelson's first tricuspid annuloplasty carried a rare confluence of personal, professional, and spiritual significance for the young surgeon. It was the realization of a personal commitment he had made while watching a dying friend that came as a uniquely tangible answer to prayer. The operative repair that resulted was a first-of-its-kind correction for a previously untreatable and potentially fatal defect in the heart's tricuspid valve. More than just a novel approach, however, Nelson's annuloplasty technique would prove a remarkably effective solution to the problem of tricuspid regurgitation, one that would anticipate problems with contemporary approaches years before they were appreciated by the surgical community at large.

In the intervening five decades medical science has progressed considerably, introducing new synthetic materials and repair strategies for the correction of tricuspid insufficiency. However, as a group of modern

---

57. Picichè, *Dawn and Evolution of Cardiac Procedures*, 148, 266; Nelson, *From Heart to Heart*, 318.

58. E. Englert and others, "Effects of Changing Hepatic Blood Flow on 17-Hydroxycorticosteroid Metabolism in Dogs," *Surgery* 47 (June 1960): 982–86; R. M. Nelson and others, "The Anti-Arrhythmia Properties of the Tranquilizer Drugs," *Surgical Forum* 10 (1960): 525–27; R. M. Nelson, J. W. Henry, and J. H. Lyman, "Influence of 1-Norepinephrine on Renal Blood Flow, Renal Vascular Resistance, and Urine Flow in Hemorrhagic Shock," *Surgery* 50 (July 1961): 115–25.

59. Condie, *Russell M. Nelson*, 142.

surgeons recently noted,<sup>60</sup> the message impressed on the mind of a scrubbed-in, nervous surgeon as he peered into a dilated right atrium in 1960 has remained a fundamental principle in surgical correction of tricuspid insufficiency through the present day: reduce the circumference of the ring.

---

Austin A. Robinson is a resident in the Department of Internal Medicine at Yale University School of Medicine and Yale–New Haven Hospital. He received his MD from the UCLA School of Medicine in 2013.

Curtis T. Hunter is Associate Clinical Professor of Surgery in the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery at UCLA as well as Co-Director of Cardiac Surgery at St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica, California. After earning his MD from the University of Utah School of Medicine, he completed a residency in general surgery at the University of North Carolina Hospitals, followed by a fellowship in Thoracic Surgery at Boston University Medical Center.

The authors would like to thank the following:

Jeffrey Robinson, Hal Boyd, Rachel Robinson, and Robyn Robinson for invaluable help in sharpening the focus of this work and bringing clarity to the discussion.

Lynsey Ekema for lending her talents to the creation of the beautiful image of Nelson's operative technique.

The Cushing/Whitney Medical Library at Yale for assistance in obtaining access to mid-twentieth-century surgical publications.

Elder Russell M. Nelson and Wendy Larson for generosity of time and resources essential to understanding the context and details of Nelson's operation.

---

60. P. M. Correia, G. F. Coutinho, and M. J. Antunes, "Tricuspid Valve: A Valve Not to Be Forgotten," *European Society of Cardiology E-Journal of Cardiology Practice* 11, no. 19 (April 23, 2013), <http://www.escardio.org/communities/councils/ccp/e-journal/volume11/Pages/prophylactic-treatment-tricuspid-regurgitation.aspx#.VO4jeEs8oeV>.

# Narrative Atonement Theology in the Gospel of Mark

*Julie M. Smith*

Since each of the four New Testament Gospels contains an account of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, it is perplexing that they receive so little attention in discussions of the Atonement: thinkers both ancient and modern are more likely to turn to Leviticus, Isaiah, or Paul's letters than they are to the actual accounts of Jesus's death. But the Gospels—particularly Mark's Gospel as the oldest canonized account of the life and death of Jesus Christ—surely deserve attention when thinking about the concept of atonement. Yet at the level of discourse,<sup>1</sup> Mark is almost silent on the meaning of Jesus's death: save a line here or there,<sup>2</sup> reasons for the death—and the impact of that death on humanity—are barely mentioned in the text, and these scant wisps of discourse-level

---

1. By “discourse,” I refer to words spoken by the narrator, Jesus, or other characters in the text. I use “narrative” to refer to the stories in the text. Sometimes, truths can be revealed on the level of narrative that are not mentioned on the level of discourse. For example, when Jesus multiplies loaves and fishes in Mark 6:30–44, the narrative implicitly identifies Jesus with the Lord who provides manna during the Exodus (see Ex. 16). But there is nothing in the discourse in Mark 6:30–44—no words by the narrator, by Jesus, or by others in the story—that says anything about Jesus's identity. By contrast, we can imagine a discourse where Peter responds to the feeding by saying to Jesus, “You are like the Lord who fed his people in the wilderness.” In that case, the discourse would make the connection specific. Part of Mark's literary art is to reveal on the level of narrative many things that remain concealed on the level of discourse.

2. See Mark 10:43–45, which can be read as support for the ransom theory and the moral exemplar theory. See also Peter J. Scaer, “The Atonement in Mark's Sacramental Theology,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 72 (July 2008): 227–42.

atonement theology are inadequate to the importance of the topic, especially since on the three occasions<sup>3</sup> when Jesus predicts his suffering and death and shows their necessity, neither Jesus himself nor Mark explains their meaning.

But that does not signify that Mark is barren ground for efforts to harvest meaning from Jesus's death. We just need to orient our gaze away from discourse and toward narrative. In the last few decades, scholars have increasingly examined Mark's Gospel as a narrative, looking for ways in which his message is conveyed through the stories that he tells about Jesus.<sup>4</sup> Recent research emphasizing the origin of Mark's Gospel as an oral performance designed for storytelling<sup>5</sup> has further invigorated the idea that this text should be interpreted with close attention to its narrative. One advantage of a narrative approach is that it acknowledges that Mark is primarily a storyteller and not a systematic theologian.

This essay applies a narrative focus specifically to the meaning of Jesus's death and seeks to identify narrative atonement theology in the Gospel of Mark. Mark describes Jesus's death quite briefly: "And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost" (Mark 15:37). But then Mark recounts three events that take place immediately after Jesus dies. By looking closely at these three brief stories, we will see how Mark uses each one to explain the meaning of Jesus's atoning death. And we will find that each story yields greater light when refracted through the prism of Jesus's baptism.

### First Reaction: The Temple Veil

Immediately after Jesus dies, the veil of the temple is torn in two from top to bottom (Mark 15:38).<sup>6</sup> This veil was the barrier between the main area

---

3. See Mark 8:31; 9:31; and 10:33–34; compare Mark 9:12 and 14:49.

4. See David M. Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).

5. See Richard A. Horsley, Jonathan A. Draper, John Miles Foley, and Werner H. Kelber, *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark: Essays Dedicated to Werner Kelber* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006).

6. There is some debate as to whether Mark is describing the inner or outer curtain of the temple. The weight of evidence implies that it is the inner curtain (see Daniel M. Gurtner, "LXX Syntax and the Identity of the NT Veil," *Novum Testamentum* 47 [January 1, 2005]: 344–53): (1) the letter to the Hebrews takes the rent curtain to be the inner one (see Heb. 6:19, 9:3, and 10:19–20), and (2) the fact that there is no theological symbolism in the outer curtain also

of the temple and the Holy of Holies (see Ex. 26:33), which was the sacred space that could be entered only once per year and only by the high priest. It was the appointed site where the Lord would visit his people, sitting on the mercy seat (see Ex. 25:22). Its rending signifies that this most sacred of spaces is now accessible to all people because of Jesus's death. The barrier between God and humans has been torn asunder. Access to the divine is no longer limited to one person and to one day of the year, but is now available to all as a direct result of the death of Jesus. The fact that the rending of the veil is the very first thing that Mark mentions after Jesus's death highlights its importance.

The one day when the high priest was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies was on the Day of Atonement (see Lev. 16). Via the ripping of the veil, Mark implies that Jesus's death is the day of atonement<sup>7</sup> and that his death has an atoning effect. Because there were cherubim woven onto the temple curtain (see Ex. 36:35) and because the Holy of Holies was the place where the Lord could be present, it is possible to think of those cherubim as the embroidered equivalent of the fiery cherubim who guarded the Garden of Eden after the Fall (see Gen. 3:24). The rending of the veil thus suggests that the cherubim are no longer performing that function. On that interpretation, because of the death of Jesus, humans can once again enter the presence of God. To be sure, this development is something of a double-edged sword: entering the Holy of Holies was regarded as dangerous (Ex. 19:12, 21; 20:18–19; 28:43; Lev. 16:2, 13; and Isaiah 6:5 describe the danger inherent in the divine presence); surely the unworthy would be in grave danger if they attempted to approach the Lord. It is unlikely that the average Israelite would have desired to enter the Holy of Holies. While the concept of entering the symbolic presence of the Lord might have been terrifying, this way of reading Mark's message shows that the death of Jesus with its concomitant atonement makes it possible. Following Jesus can be terrifying in Mark's Gospel (see Mark 5:17, 5:30, 6:49, and especially 13:9), but the implicit promise is that Jesus will support his disciples and

---

makes it more likely that the inner curtain is in view. However, to the extent that the curtains are symbolically similar (both restrict access to the worthy only and both suggest the heavens/creation), then choosing between the two may not matter.

7. In Mark 2:19–20, Jesus taught that his disciples did not fast, but they would fast on the day when he was taken from them. Given that the only mandated fast in the law of Moses was on the Day of Atonement, this would have been Mark's audience's first hint that Jesus's death would be a figurative Day of Atonement.



that his death will make it possible for them to enter into the divine presence without fatal effect; Isaiah 6:5–7 presents the idea that atoning action allows the unworthy to endure the divine presence. The invitation for all to enter the Holy of Holies—which, presumably, is not an invitation that will endanger their lives—itself implies an atoning aspect to Jesus’s death.

The symbolic nature of the rending of the veil is readily apparent not only because of the symbolism of the veil itself, but as a result of how Mark weaves the ripping into the story: telling the audience about the veil requires Mark to abruptly shift the narrative to a different geographical location and then just as quickly to bring the audience back to the foot of the cross. Further, no one in the story is aware of the rending of the veil—this is information for the listening or reading audience only. Mark may imply that God has ripped the veil because the rip starts at the top of the curtain and because it is described with a passive verb form, something often used to connote divine action.<sup>8</sup> The idea that Jesus’s death permits access to God’s presence is a key component of Mark’s theology of the Atonement.<sup>9</sup> So through the ripping of the veil, Mark presents a profound insight into the meaning of Jesus’s death and its atoning action, particularly considering that it is narrated in a mere dozen Greek words.

One of those words is the verb *schizō*, which Mark uses to describe what happens to the veil. He uses this rare verb,<sup>10</sup> which is vivid and violent,<sup>11</sup> only one other time—to characterize the opening of the heavens immediately after Jesus is baptized. The opening of the heavens also removes a barrier between God and humanity. The two occurrences of *schizō* invite us to compare the baptism and the death,<sup>12</sup> with further encouragement coming from the fact that the only time in Mark’s

---

8. See Matthew L. Bowen, “‘Thy Will Be Done’: The Savior’s Use of the Divine Passive,” in *The Sermon on the Mount in Latter-day Scripture: The 39th Annual BYU Sydney B. Sperry Symposium*, ed. Gaye Strathearn, Thomas A. Wayment, and Daniel L. Belnap (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010), 230–48.

9. This idea is also taken up in other texts: see especially Hebrews 9 but also Hebrews 6:19–20 and 10:19–20. Also, see Revelation 11:19 and 15:5, which picture the opening of the temple.

10. *Schizō* is used only nine times in the New Testament; by way of comparison, *anoigō*, the common word for “open,” occurs seventy-five times in the New Testament. Both Matthew and Luke change *schizō* to *anoigō* in their accounts of the baptism (see Matt. 3:16 and Luke 3:21); in so doing, they lose the link to the rending of the temple veil (for which they still use *schizō*).

11. See Robert G. Bratcher and Eugene A. Nida, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Gospel of Mark* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 28.

12. See Daniel M. Gurtner, “The Rending of the Veil and Markan Christology: ‘Unveiling’ the HUIOS THEOU (Mark 15:38–39),” *Biblical Interpretation* 15,

Gospel where Jesus mentions his baptism, he uses it as a metaphor for his death (see Mark 10:38). Mark encourages his audience to interpret the rending of the temple veil in light of the rending of the heavens, and thus the death in light of the baptism. By presenting masses of people (“all”) coming from the south for baptism (Mark 1:5), while Jesus comes for baptism as a lone figure from the north (Mark 1:9), Mark presents Jesus as the embodiment of all of Israel,<sup>13</sup> as a representative for all of humanity. In Mark’s Gospel, the postbaptismal vision appears to be experienced by Jesus alone, so the fact that the death of Jesus literally opens up access to the divine presence for all people, and not just Jesus, teaches something about Mark’s understanding of the Atonement.

The entire scene can similarly be read as a “rewinding” of history with Jesus as the new Adam. So this suggests that at his death, he is also acting on behalf of all people. Both the baptism and the death have the same narrative pattern, with the main event narrated only briefly and greater attention given to the results. The several reactions to the baptism parallel the several reactions to the death.<sup>14</sup> Echoing backwards through Mark, the rent veil echoes Jesus’s torn flesh, echoes the heavens ripped after Jesus’s baptism—all instances where old wineskins ripped under the pressure of new wine.<sup>15</sup> Jesus’s death ends the need for a high priest, now that everyone has access to the Holy of Holies—and a good thing, too, since the high priest just rent his own clothes in fury at Jesus’s blasphemy (Mark 14:63). Similarly, at Jesus’s baptism, the rent heavens dethrone the old order of things under John, who had recognized that a stronger one was coming (Mark 1:7). Both rendings are divine actions: after the baptism, the Spirit tears through the heavens to descend upon Jesus (Mark 1:10); after the death, God’s action rends the veil, implying that neither the baptism nor the death were random events but divinely orchestrated ones,<sup>16</sup> a point further emphasized by how the death follows the pattern set by the baptism.

---

no. 3 (2007): 292–306. See also David Ulansey, “The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark’s Cosmic Inclusio,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 110 (Spring 1991): 123–25.

13. See Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 73.

14. Hebrews 10:20 takes the concept further than Mark does by identifying the veil with Jesus’s flesh.

15. Mark 2:21 uses the noun form of *schizō* (Greek: *schisma*; KJV: “rent”) in the context of the inability to mix the new with the old.

16. Some recent interpretations of Mark’s Gospel suggest that the entire text should be regarded as an effort to show that there is nothing embarrassing about Jesus’s death and that a key way in which this is accomplished is through

After Jesus's baptism, the Spirit descends upon him. Jesus's death scene is full of references to descent, the most significant being the rent in the veil which runs from top to bottom, but with no fewer than six other references to downward motion at his death scene.<sup>17</sup> In the baptism scene, it is clear that the descent of the Spirit represents a new bestowal of God's power, and at the death, the rip in the veil makes possible increased access to that power. But this time, the new power is not restricted to Jesus: it extends to all people. His death broadens the access to God's Spirit that he alone enjoyed previously. In both stories, Isaiah's plea "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down" (Isa. 64:1) is fulfilled as the presence and power of God are accessible on earth in new ways.

The manner in which Mark narrates Jesus's temptations in the wilderness implies that they are a direct result of his baptism; the Spirit that descended into Jesus immediately casts him into the wilderness (Mark 1:12), using the same verb found in the Septuagint (second-century BC Greek translation of the Old Testament) when Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden after the Fall (Gen. 3:24). So the result of Jesus being baptized is that he suffers the same consequence that Adam and Eve suffered,<sup>18</sup> despite the fact that he did not sin as they had. Similarly, he dies on the cross because of charges that do not apply to him (Mark 14:56)—charges that stem from his effort to restore to other people the wholeness that he already enjoys. Jesus's willingness to experience suffering that he has not merited is emphasized in both stories. And because his death restores access to God's presence, his death overcomes the effects of the Fall that buffeted him after his baptism, and thus we have come full circle. Jesus is baptized, which opens the heavens, and Jesus dies, which opens symbolic access to the presence of God, but both of these happen only because he is willing to suffer to benefit others.

---

evidence of Jesus's and God's foreknowledge of Jesus's death. See Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993).

17. The references include: the mockery that Jesus would tear *down* the temple (Mark 15:29; KJV: "destroyeth"), the taunt that he should come *down* from the cross (this is referenced twice; see Mark 15:30 and 15:32; KJV: "descend"), the reference to Elijah taking Jesus *down* (Mark 15:36), the Greek word for the veil (which means something spread *down*; Mark 15:38), and the tear in the veil going from top *down* (Mark 15:38; KJV: "bottom"), with all six instances employing the same Greek root *kata*. See Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's World in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 282.

18. The idea of Jesus as the "new Adam" is also suggested by Romans 5:12–21.

## Second Reaction: The Centurion

Immediately after the temple veil is ripped,<sup>19</sup> Mark returns to the scene of the crucifixion and relates a response of incredible narrative importance—the first human reaction to Jesus’s death. Here is where we would expect a significant statement from Mark about what difference Jesus’s death makes to human beings. Instead, Mark has a centurion<sup>20</sup> announce, “Truly this man was the Son of God.” (Mark 15:39).<sup>21</sup> This statement is a remarkable reaction to Jesus’s death for several reasons, not the least of which is that the man was a Gentile, so for him to understand that Jesus was the Son of God would be extraordinary in any case, but even more so in this context because he did not reach this conclusion after watching Jesus walk on water or raise the dead, but rather after seeing him die as a condemned criminal. For that event to result in a recognition of Jesus’s true identity speaks volumes about the impact of Jesus’s death on a bystander: it makes it possible for the least likely person to gain vital knowledge that has previously been unattainable. In fact, up to this point in Mark’s narrative, no human being has been able to articulate that Jesus was the Son of God. After Jesus’s baptism, the voice from heaven said, “Thou art my beloved Son” (Mark 1:11), and the demons recognized Jesus as the Son of God (see Mark 3:11, 5:7, 9:7, and 13:32), but even Jesus’s closest disciples struggled, and largely failed,<sup>22</sup> to understand who he was. So the idea that a centurion could recognize the Son of God extends the theme established in the rending of the veil, namely, that access to and knowledge about God was being extended. The ripped

---

19. While some have argued that the centurion is reacting to the ripped veil, this is not likely the case. First, he would not have been able to see it from the cross. Second, Mark specifically tells us in 15:39 that the centurion’s comment is motivated by his having seen “that [Jesus] so cried out,” not that the veil was rent. So the rending makes his statement possible, but he is not making the statement because he saw the rending.

20. It is possible that this centurion was just a random passerby, but it is more likely that he had been the person in charge of the crucifixion.

21. It is sometimes suggested that the centurion’s statement should be read ironically, as mockery of Jesus. While this is possible, this paper suggests that, in context, the statement is better interpreted as genuine. See Kelly R. Iverson, “A Centurion’s ‘Confession’: A Performance-Critical Analysis of Mark 15:39,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 130 (Summer 2011): 329–50.

22. See Mark 8:31–33. The exception to this general trend is found in Mark 14:3–9; see Julie M. Smith, “‘She Hath Wrought a Good Work’: The Anointing of Jesus in Mark’s Gospel,” *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 5 (2013): 31–46.

veil symbolized the ability of people to “see” God; the announcement of the centurion is an example of that insight—he could recognize Jesus’s true identity, despite all appearance to the contrary. Two thousand years of Christian tradition have probably made it impossible for us to appreciate how odd it was for a soldier to look at the corpse of a criminal and announce that the dead man was God’s Son.

The previously discussed parallel with the baptism, where the voice from heaven pronounces Jesus to be God’s Son,<sup>23</sup> makes the centurion’s exclamation all the more profound because he is echoing the narrative role of God as the voice that attests to Jesus’s identity. Just as the rending of the heavens comes immediately before the divine announcement that Jesus is God’s Son at the baptism, the rending of the temple veil comes immediately before the centurion’s announcement that Jesus is God’s Son. In other words, Mark’s narrative teaches that the death of Jesus makes it possible for a centurion to do what God does. Even a hated pagan soldier can be elevated to a godlike status and possess a godlike knowledge because of the death of Jesus. It required the severing of the heavens and the temple veil, but the removal of these barriers has made possible the transmission of God’s knowledge to humans in a new way.

### **Third Reaction: The Women**

After the centurion’s statement, Mark narrates the third and final reaction to Jesus’s death: “There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem” (Mark 15:40–41).

The primary role of the women here is watching; they are witnesses to Jesus’s death. Because most strains of Jewish thought interpreted the Torah to forbid female witnesses, the implication here in Mark is that Jesus’s death has opened new roles and responsibilities for women. And not only does this affect the women, but the entire community. One literally cannot be a Christian without accepting their witness because their testimony is crucial to the story of Jesus’s death; it is how the story was likely preserved—remember that, in the Gospel of Mark, all of the male disciples have fled by this point (see Mark 14:50). The same verb used

---

23. The voice from heaven at the baptism is quoting Psalm 2:7, which is understood to be an enthronement psalm. By extension, the scene at the cross shows Jesus enthroned through death.

here for their looking will be used for the women again in 15:47 and 16:4, both instances where the women's witness will be crucial to preserving and transmitting the knowledge of Jesus's death and resurrection.

The comment about the women following Jesus and ministering to him is somewhat odd in that it provides the audience with information that was true in the past, but which was unknown to them until this moment in the narrative. The fact that the women's ministry is presented out of chronological order suggests that Mark wants to emphasize its role after the death of Jesus so that in its literary setting the death of Jesus is viewed as extending ministry opportunities to women or, at least, making possible their public recognition. Note that what happens here underscores the importance of the narrative art of Mark: it is through manipulating the time sequence that Mark is able to make his point about the women's ministry. The text rewards the reader's careful attention to narrative. It is only now, after Jesus's death, that we find out that there were women present all along, being disciples and engaging in ministry,<sup>24</sup> a reality that Mark had largely hidden from the audience's view. Jesus's death allows the women's actions to become public knowledge. The women aren't acting in this moment—the point of this text is not what they are doing but what they have already done. And so the audience, like the centurion, gains new knowledge—this time, knowledge about the effect that Jesus's death has on women's opportunities to minister and witness.

While there are hints throughout Mark's Gospel that Jesus has female disciples (see Mark 3:31–35), the idea is not developed. But this verse tells us boldly that Jesus has had female disciples all along. Not only that, but the women “ministered” unto him. This verb (Greek: *diakoneō*) was first used in Mark to describe the actions of the angels to Jesus after the temptation (Mark 1:13), creating a strong parallel to this passage since the temptations immediately followed the baptism. So just as his baptism led directly to the angels' ministry, his death leads directly to the women's ministry. This verb for “ministered” is used two times elsewhere in Mark: for Simon's mother-in-law after Jesus has healed her (see Mark 1:31) and by Jesus to describe his own mission (see Mark 10:45). Simon's mother-in-law's ministry is one of the undeveloped hints in the narrative; Jesus's ministry sets the template for what ministry should be. In the women at the foot of the cross, we see an example of Christlike ministry made possible through his death.

---

24. See Susan Miller, *Women in Mark's Gospel* (New York: T and T Clark International, 2004).

Mark also notes that, in addition to the women he has named, many other unnamed women also came up to Jerusalem with Jesus and were present at the crucifixion. This large group of women creates a compelling contrast to the single centurion in the narrative and suggests that the effects of Jesus's ministry are not limited to select individuals or even to people whose names we know, but rather to all who are willing to follow Jesus.<sup>25</sup>

## Conclusions

I draw three conclusions from Mark's narrative of the reactions to Jesus's death. First, each one of the three is tightly interwoven with the story of Jesus's baptism. From the ripping and opening of the barriers between God and humans, to the recognition that Jesus is God's Son, to the role of ministering, each of the reactions to Jesus's death is better understood when refracted through the story of the baptism. The similarities between these two scenes invite a closer consideration of their other parallels. Both scenes use the same Greek word for "voice" (*phōnē*): at the baptism, the voice from heaven quotes a psalm when speaking to Jesus (Mark 1:11, quoting Ps. 2:7), and at the cross, Jesus quotes a psalm when speaking to God (Mark 15:34, quoting Ps. 22:1). It is remarkable that in both instances, psalms are the medium for communication between God and Jesus. Even more remarkable is the inversion of the sentiment, with the first psalm announcing, "Thou art my beloved Son" (Mark 1:11), and the second psalm asking, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). The similarity of the form heightens the clash in content and thus the rupture in the relationship. And yet the note of triumph and universal worship at the end of the psalm that Jesus quotes also holds out hope for reconciliation and ultimate victory. The fact that the psalm quoted at the baptism was likely used for the enthronement of kings is also evocative, inasmuch as it implies that Jesus is enthroned through his death.

Both the baptism and the death allude to Elijah: the baptism scene, because John the Baptist is dressed as Elijah (see Mark 1:6), and, as Mark

---

25. This verse is also strong evidence that women were present at the Last Supper, since that Passover meal was the reason that Jesus went to Jerusalem (see also Mark 16:1–8). Their presence would not have been surprising to ancient audiences but comes as news to many modern readers.

shows us, fulfills the role of Elijah.<sup>26</sup> At the death scene, bystanders think that Jesus is calling Elijah (Mark 15:35). What is interesting about this is the misunderstanding: Jesus is calling God, not Elijah (the crowd confuses *Eloi* ["God"] with *Eliyahu* ["Elijah"]). Elijah is not, in fact, present at the cross—what is present is Jesus's unanswered plea to God that sounds like a call to Elijah. Because Elijah's return was associated with turning "the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers" (Mal. 4:6), his absence at the cross once again highlights the rupture in the relationship between Jesus and God at this moment. The links between the baptism and the death lead to a somber conclusion: in Mark, baptism is intertwined with death. Jesus's baptism sets the pattern—in this narrative, quite literally—for his death.

The parallels between the baptism and the death encourage the audience to read these stories as the bookends around Jesus's life story. Bracketing Jesus's life by his baptism and death emphasizes the theme of breaking barriers and implies that the granting of access to God's powers and presence is also a key element in the story of Jesus's life. This narrative structure can then guide our interpretation of the text. For example, some scholars argue that the rending of the temple veil is an expression of God's displeasure with the temple system or of his mourning at Jesus's death. In isolation, these readings are possible, but when read in light of the baptism, a discerning reader would infer that the rending of the heavens at the baptism did not express God's displeasure or mourning. Reading the baptism and death stories together channels our interpretation of the death scene. The narrative structure might also explain why Mark includes neither nativity nor resurrection appearances.<sup>27</sup>

Second, the three reactions show that Mark's approach is outcome-oriented, not process-oriented, as he constructs the meaning of Jesus's death. In not one of the three cases does Mark describe precisely how it is that Jesus's death was able to rend the veil, enlighten the centurion, or empower the women; he simply tells us that it was so. The focus is on the outcome, not the process; the result, not the method. Mark's approach

---

26. See Robert H. Stein, *Mark* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 48.

27. There is very strong evidence that Mark 16:9–20 was not originally part of the text; there is dispute as to whether 16:8 was the original ending or whether the original ending has been lost. See Robert H. Stein, "The Ending of Mark," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 18 (Winter 2008): 79–98.



contrasts with most Christian thought about the Atonement, which examines the way the Atonement worked instead of its results.

Christian tradition has had a penchant for analogizing the Atonement in order to explain it. Mark's narrative suggests not that these analogies are misguided; after all, each of the three reactions could be understood as an analogy, that is, as a parabolic enactment of the meaning of the Atonement. Rather, Mark's example suggests that analogies are more productive when focused on the end and not the means of the Atonement. Mark makes no effort to explain precisely how Jesus's death changes things; rather, he shows the ways in which it does in fact change things. So a narrative atonement theology for Mark departs from the classical approaches to the Atonement, which focus on Jesus's death as substitution, redemption, ransom, or example. All of these theories attempt to explain the mechanism by which the Atonement happens but are relatively silent about its results.

Third, the three results of Jesus's death can all be unified under the banner of increased access to God. The rent veil, the centurion, and the women all show that what was previously restricted—the divine presence, knowledge, and ministry—is now available to all. Mark cleverly manipulates narrative space in order to show how this is so. Because the temple veil was not visible from the cross, Mark must transport the audience and therefore grants them a heavenly perspective on events.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the centurion is described as being “over against” Jesus, suggesting opposition.<sup>29</sup> But his proclamation shows that his position has changed—he may have begun “over against” Jesus, but after Jesus's death, the centurion knows who Jesus is—he is, in other words, now for him. Along the same lines, the women are described as “looking on afar off,” a distance that they overcome as their contribution to Jesus's ministry can now be observed and described in the narrative at close hand. Mark has carefully constructed narrative space in each of the three reactions to Jesus's death in order to suggest that distance is overcome by Jesus's death—the distance between the audience and the temple, the distance between the centurion and Jesus, and the distance between the women and the audience.

---

28. In the Old Testament, one of the functions of God's Spirit is to transport people from one location to another. See 1 Kings 18:12; 2 Kings 2:16; and Ezekiel 3:12, 14.

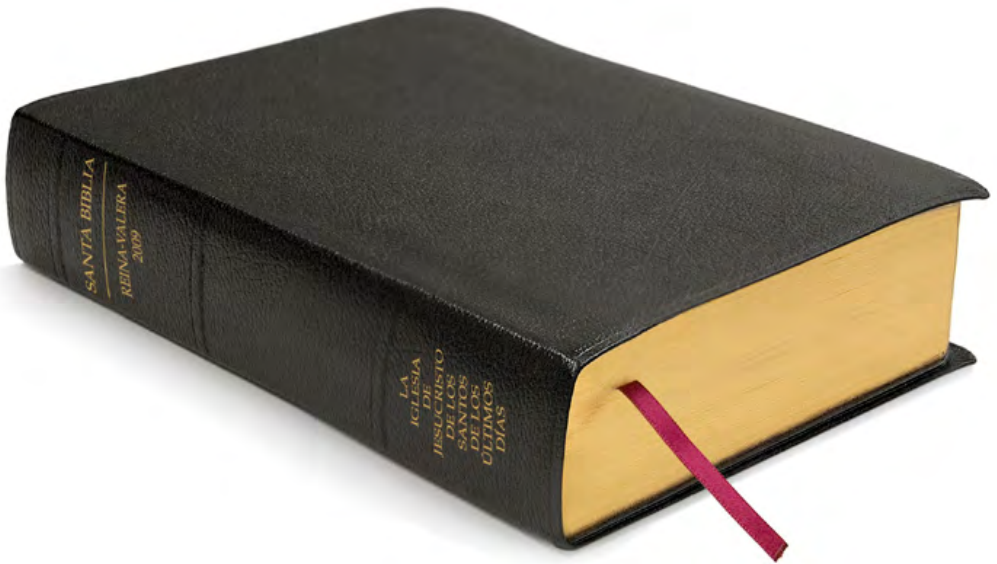
29. Compare Mark 12:41. (Note that while the KJV wording is identical, the Greek text is not, although the same point is made.)

In addition to narrative space, Mark employs careful characterization to show that access to God is extended through Jesus's death. By featuring a Gentile and women, Mark makes clear that the previously restricted access to God has now been expanded. In Jesus's time, the temple complex included a "court of the Gentiles" and a "court of women." So it is perhaps no surprise that Mark has chosen a Gentile and women to showcase the human responses to Jesus's death, since these were the people who had been formally excluded from the symbolic presence of the Lord. Now, as a result of Jesus's death, they can be symbolically invited into the presence of the Lord, where they can share God's knowledge and have a role in Jesus's ministry.

The powerful symbolism of the open heavens (at the baptism) and the rent veil (at the death) as an invitation into God's presence is extended by the reference to the centurion, which makes clear that this invitation is not just for the Israelites. Then it is further extended by the mention of the women, which makes clear that this invitation is not just for men. In a remarkably compact narrative, Mark teaches that not only has the possibility of access to God increased as a result of Jesus's death, but it has increased for all people.

---

Julie M. Smith has a degree in biblical studies from the Graduate Theological Union. She is on the executive board of the Mormon Theology Seminar and the steering committee of the BYU New Testament Commentary; she is the author of *Search, Ponder, and Pray: A Guide to the Gospels* (2003; reprint 2014). She lives near Austin, Texas, where she homeschools her children. She would like to thank James Faulconer for his helpful feedback on this paper.



**FIGURE 1.** *Santa Biblia: Reina-Valera 2009* was the first edition of the Bible prepared by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in a language other than English. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

# Santa Biblia

## The Latter-day Saint Bible in Spanish

*Joshua M. Sears*

After the release of the first Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible in 1979 and a new edition of the Triple Combination containing the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price in 1981, Elder Boyd K. Packer declared:

With the passing of years, these scriptures will produce successive generations of faithful Christians who know the Lord Jesus Christ and are disposed to obey His will. . . . The revelations will be opened to them as to no other in the history of the world. . . . They will develop a gospel scholarship beyond that which their forebears could achieve. They will have the testimony that Jesus is the Christ and be competent to proclaim Him and to defend Him.

Decades of experience have proven the value of those scripture editions for millions of Latter-day Saints, and yet, as Elder Packer went on to relate, “even all of this is but a beginning, for we have it only in English.”<sup>1</sup> Although the Triple Combination has been translated into forty-four languages, for many years only English-speaking Saints could enjoy the advantages of reading the Old and New Testaments in a Church-sponsored edition. That changed in September 2009 with the publication of the *Santa Biblia: Reina-Valera 2009*, a Spanish edition of the LDS Bible and the first new language edition to be published since the English version thirty years earlier (fig. 1). The *Santa Biblia*<sup>2</sup> marks a significant

---

1. Boyd K. Packer, “Scriptures,” *Ensign* 12 (November 1982): 53.

2. *Santa Biblia* means simply “Holy Bible,” but in this article the phrase will refer exclusively to the LDS edition of the Bible in Spanish.

milestone in the history of Latter-day Saint scripture both because of its contents and because of what it indicates about the internationalization of the Church. In this article, I will attempt to capture some of that significance by analyzing the Santa Biblia's translation, textual basis, study aids, and impact.

## History

The English LDS Bible published in 1979 featured the traditional King James translation with innovative formatting and study aids including interpretive chapter headings, cross-references to other LDS scripture, citations from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, explanatory notes, a Bible dictionary, a concordance called the Topical Guide, and maps.<sup>3</sup> (In 2013 an updated edition appeared that makes several improvements but closely follows the overall form and content of the 1979 edition.) That Bible edition set the formatting standard for a new English Triple Combination in 1981, which in turn became the template for subsequent foreign-language editions of the Triple Combination, including a new Spanish edition in 1993.<sup>4</sup>

In the years following, President Packer initiated the idea of having an LDS edition of the Bible in Spanish similar to what was available in English.<sup>5</sup> Church leaders weighed the advantages and disadvantages of creating an entirely new translation of the Bible themselves, but after a lengthy review it was decided to use an existing translation. The question then became which version to adopt, and attention naturally

---

3. See Robert J. Matthews, "The New Publications of the Standard Works—1979, 1981," *BYU Studies* 22, no. 4 (1982): 387–424; Fred E. Woods, "The Latter-day Saint Edition of the King James Bible," in *The King James Bible and the Restoration*, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2011), 260–80; and *That Promised Day: The Coming Forth of the LDS Scriptures*, a documentary broadcast on BYUtv on October 3, 2010, available at <http://www.byutv.org/watch/2039-100>.

4. "Study Aids Enhance Spanish Scriptures," *Church News*, published by *Deseret News*, December 11, 1993, 5.

5. As recounted by Richard G. Scott during an interview with Carlos Amado and Ted Brewerton, in "La edición Santo de los Últimos Días de la Santa Biblia en español," an orientation video about the Spanish Bible available at <https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2009-03-000-latter-day-saint-edition-of-the-holy-bible-in-spanish?category=escrituras&lang=spa>. Statements from Elder Scott, Elder Amado, and Elder Brewerton quoted in this article are taken from the subtitles provided in an English version of the video that was previously available.

turned to the translation Latter-day Saints had already been using, a traditional and acclaimed Bible called the Reina-Valera.

Like the King James Version in English, the Reina-Valera Version is very much a Protestant translation and traces its history to the religious upheavals of the sixteenth century. Casiodoro de Reina, much like his English counterpart William Tyndale, spent much of his life abroad trying to avoid authorities who were none too pleased with him. In 1569, Reina published his greatest work: history's first complete Spanish Bible based on the original biblical languages. Reina spent twelve years at his task, working from Hebrew and Greek texts while consulting previous Spanish translations, such as a 1543 New Testament translated by Francisco de Enzinas. Reina's Bible came to be known as *la Biblia del Oso*, "the Bible of the Bear," due to a distinctive picture on its title page (fig. 2). Many of the first copies were confiscated and burned. Another reformer-in-exile, Cipriano de Valera, later revised Reina's work and republished it in 1602. The Reina-Valera Version, as it would later be called, eventually established itself as the standard Bible for Spanish-speaking Protestants.<sup>6</sup> This Spanish translation of the Bible has even influenced English speakers. The translators who worked on the King James Version consulted Valera's revision—published only two years before they began their own work—and various examples of common phrasing make it "fairly certain that in the quarry which formed the King James Bible may be heard echoes of the Reina-Valera."<sup>7</sup>



FIGURE 2. The title page of Casiodoro de Reina's Spanish Bible published in 1569.

6. Eduardo Balderas, "How the Scriptures Came to Be Translated into Spanish," *Ensign* 2 (September 1972): 26–29; Jorge A. González, "Las Traducciones de Reina y Valera," in *La Biblia en español: Cómo nos llegó*, ed. Justo L. González (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008), 85–103; and Rafael A. Serrano, "La historia de la Biblia en español," in *El Origen de la Biblia*, ed. Philip Wesley Comfort (Carol Stream, Ill.: Tyndale House, 2008), 341–73.

7. Joan F. Adkins, "The Reina-Valera Bible and the King James Version (1569–1611)," *Cithara* 14, no. 1 (1974): 74. See also David Daniell, *The Bible in English: Its History and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 443–44.

The original Reina-Valera Version has been updated several times in the past four centuries in order to keep pace with changes in the Spanish language and advances in biblical scholarship. For many years the Church used the 1960 edition, which is published by the American Bible Society and remains the most popular version of the Reina-Valera today. Efforts were made to obtain copyright permission to reprint that edition with the unique LDS study aids inserted around the biblical text. Permission was denied. A search was then made through older editions that were in the public domain, and the Church decided to make its own update to the predecessor of the 1960 version.<sup>8</sup> This edition was published in 1909 and is commonly known as *la Versión Antigua*, “the Old Version”—an allusion to its status as the traditional Bible of choice for conservative Protestants.<sup>9</sup> Although copyright challenges initiated the search that led to the 1909 Reina-Valera, Elder Richard G. Scott explained that “the Spirit identified the edition that we ought to use and has guided [our] efforts in every detail.”<sup>10</sup>

In 2004, Jay E. Jensen and Lynn A. Mickelsen of the First Quorum of the Seventy were called to co-chair the Spanish Bible project. This project involved both modernizing the 1909 text and preparing Spanish translations of the appropriate study aids. The entire project was carried out under the direction of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. In March 2009, the Church formally announced the new Bible and its release in September of that year. The timing coincided with the centennial anniversary of the *Reina-Valera Antigua*, and the new edition’s tie to the traditional text was celebrated in its official title, *Santa Biblia: Reina-Valera 2009*.<sup>11</sup>

---

8. Jay E. Jensen, interview on Mormon Channel, available at <http://www.mormonchannel.org/conversations/45-elder-jay-e-jensen?v=1756076529001>.

9. The 1909 edition of the Reina-Valera was prepared using revisions made in the years prior by Juan B. Cabrera and Cipriano Tornos. See Eric M. North, *The Book of a Thousand Tongues* (New York: American Bible Society, 1938), 305; and Hazael T. Marroquín, *Versiones Castellanas de la Biblia* (Mexico City: Casa de Publicaciones “El Faro,” 1959), 15, 62–63, 100, 200. Their work was in turn based on an 1862 revision by Lorenzo L. Pedrosa. See Jaime Memory, “Lorenzo Lucena Pedrosa (1807–1881): Recuperando una figura señera de la Segunda Reforma española,” *Anales de Historia Contemporánea* 17 (2001): 224–25.

10. “La edición Santo de los Últimos Días de la Santa Biblia en español.”

11. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Spanish Bible to Benefit Millions of Mormons,” *Newsroom*, March 30, 2009, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/spanish-bible-to-benefit-millions-of-mormons>; The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Church Edition of Spanish Bible Now

## Language and Translation

The language of the 1909 Reina-Valera presented some challenges. This version of the Bible is a Spanish classic, traditionally worded and beautifully expressed. However, the vocabulary is often incomprehensibly antiquated, the syntax is sometimes awkward, and abandoned verbal forms appear alongside nouns and prepositions whose spelling or accentuation would raise eyebrows in any modern Spanish classroom. One option would have been to preserve the 1909 version as it stood, much like how English-speaking Saints read the similarly archaic language of the King James Version.<sup>12</sup> Instead, explained Jeffrey C. Bateson, then director of the Church's Translation Division, the decision was made to make "very conservative changes" so that the language would be more accurate and understandable.<sup>13</sup>

Church translators began by updating archaic language, spelling, and accentuation until a reviewable manuscript was ready. Next, Elder Jensen and Elder Mickelsen led an intensive review process that involved a repeating cycle of feedback and revision from some two hundred Spanish-speaking priesthood leaders and their wives in nearly a dozen countries.<sup>14</sup> Because the new translation would serve Spanish-speaking Church members from Spain to Texas to Chile, it was important that

---

Published," *Newsroom*, September 14, 2009, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/church-edition-of-spanish-bible-now-published>; and "Church Publishes LDS Edition of the Holy Bible in Spanish," *Ensign* 39 (September 2009): 77–78.

12. The most recent official Church statement on the King James Version acknowledges that modern translations are "easier to read" but affirms the KJV's superiority "in doctrinal matters." See *Handbook 2: Administering the Church, 2010* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2010), 21.1.7. For a brief discussion of other reasons why the Church uses the KJV, see D. Kelly Ogden, "Bible: King James Version," in *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:109–10. For a historical review of the Church's use of the KJV, see Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 162–98.

13. "Spanish Bible to Benefit Millions."

14. Elder Brewerton explained that the translation was "guided by the Spirit through the Melchizedek Priesthood" but also stressed the important contribution of the "many women in the Church who have helped us. They have given their opinions . . . regarding many points, and we have seen that the Lord inspires all men and women." "La edición Santo de los Últimos Días de la Santa Biblia en español."



## The Santa Biblia and Localization

Localization is an important new paradigm in translation theory. The term comes from the language industry, and it reflects the idea of a locale: “a set of linguistic, economic, and cultural parameters for the end-use of a product” (Anthony Pym, *Exploring Translation Theories* [New York: Routledge, 2010], 121). Locales may include communities such as Argentine Spanish speakers or Mexican Spanish speakers. Localization is the process of preparing a product for a given locale.

Localization represents a significant change from prior translation paradigms because it abandons the idea of one-to-one correspondence between a completed source text and a target text. An example of such one-to-one correspondence would be a translation of Hamlet into Arabic or French. In that case, a target text results directly from a source. Rather than moving directly from source to target, localization employs an intermediate stage known as internationalization. In the case of an American computer product, an internationalized version would be one in which American cultural elements are removed. This internationalized version—an intermediate, generic version—can be quickly translated for many different locales simultaneously.

Essentially, an internationalized product seeks to be as universal as possible. In some industries, this universal product may even be distributed along with its more culturally detailed localized versions. Indeed, the film industry regularly combines localized and internationalized products. In the DVD version of Disney/Pixar’s animated film *The Incredibles* (*Los Increíbles*, 2005), for example, Spanish-speaking viewers can watch either a localized Mexican or Argentine version while reading subtitles written in “neutral” Spanish. This neutral or internationalized Spanish is a Spanish spoken by no one but supposedly understandable to everyone.

The new LDS Santa Biblia presents an interesting combination of internationalized and localized Spanish. Joshua Sears notes that the Santa Biblia translators sought to create an internationalized language that would appeal to Spanish speakers everywhere, in all countries, by minimizing “regional or dialectal differences”

(Sears, 49). At the same time, translators employ language localized for LDS Spanish speakers in several ways: (1) by conserving familiar archaic scriptural terms such as “aconteció” or “he aquí”; (2) by employing well-known biblical phrases that are “important in LDS discourse or that help link biblical passages to linguistic echoes in modern revelation” (Sears, 52); and (3) by providing explanatory notes, many of which are specifically designed for LDS readers. This combination of internationalized and localized language represents an important step in the Church’s efforts to promote scriptural literacy among its members.

—Daryl Hague

*Associate Professor of Spanish, Brigham Young University*

regional or dialectal differences be minimized. The wording was compared to Hebrew and Greek texts, other Spanish versions, and the King James Version in English. The challenge was to craft a reading that is textually accurate, doctrinally sound, beautiful to the ear, and understandable to modern readers.<sup>15</sup> Achieving these several goals required more than just dictionaries and lexicons. As Elder D. Todd Christofferson explained, “It is not just a technical undertaking to translate the scriptures. It’s important that the Spirit be there, that the meaning be there, that the intent of the Spirit be reflected in the translation.”<sup>16</sup>

Some examples help demonstrate the kinds of revisions that were necessary:

---

15. See the Mormon Channel interview with Elder Jensen; and Scott Taylor, “LDS Spanish Bible Praised for Adding Clarity and Depth,” *Deseret News*, September 14, 2009. The American Bible Society went through a very similar process when it updated the same 1909 text to create the 1960 edition of the Reina-Valera. See Eugene A. Nida, “Reina-Valera Spanish Revision of 1960,” *The Bible Translator* 12, no. 3 (1961): 107–19. Indeed, the wording of several passages in the Santa Biblia indicates that the Church’s translators consulted the 1960 edition during the course of their work.

16. *That Promised Day*.

### *Spelling and Accentuation*

1909 Reina-Valera	Santa Biblia	English meaning
á	a	to
fué	fue	was
Bethlehem	Belén	Bethlehem
Ruth	Rut	Ruth

### *Archaic or Obscure Terms*

1909 Reina-Valera	Santa Biblia	English meaning
criar	crear	to create
parir	dar a luz	to give birth
la haz	la faz	face
la conversación	la conducta	behavior
muy mucho	muchísimo	very much

### *Simplified Language*

1909 Reina-Valera	Santa Biblia
“Señoree en los peces de la mar” (Gen. 1:26) [Lord it over the fish of the sea]	“Tenga dominio sobre los peces del mar” [Exercise dominion over the fish of the sea]
“Confortaron las manos de ellos” (Ezra 1:6) [They comforted their hands]	“Les ayudaron” [They helped them]
“Estaba acostada con calentura; y le hablaron luego de ella” (Mark 1:30) [She lay hot in bed; and they told Jesus afterwards about her]	“Estaba acostada con fiebre; y en seguida le hablaron de ella” [She lay in bed with a fever; and they told Jesus about her right away]
“Mas el que es rico, en su bajeza” (James 1:10) [Yet he that is rich, in his baseness]	“Pero el que es rico, en su condición humilde” [But he that is rich, in his humility]

Certain terms were changed to avoid incorrect or potentially misleading doctrinal interpretations:

### *Doctrinal Vocabulary*

1909 Reina-Valera	Santa Biblia
pontífice [pontiff]	sumo sacerdote [high priest]

la salud [salvation/health (in modern use usually the latter)]	la salvación [salvation (in appropriate contexts)]
“Febe . . . la cual es diaconista” (Rom. 16:1) [Phoebe, who is a (female) deacon]	“Febe . . . quien está al servicio” [Phoebe, who gives service]

Sometimes the 1909 Reina-Valera is a defensible translation from Hebrew or Greek (and similar phrasing will appear in other Bible translations), but does not match the meaning as translated in the King James Version in English.<sup>17</sup> In many cases these differences were allowed to stand, as in the following examples:

### *Santa Biblia Passages That Read Differently Than the KJV*<sup>18</sup>

King James Version	Santa Biblia (compare other modern translations)
“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” (Job 19:25)	“Yo sé que mi Redentor vive, y que al final se levantará sobre el polvo” [I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the dust]
“. . . and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God” (Dan. 3:25)	“. . . y el aspecto del cuarto es semejante a un hijo de los dioses” [. . . and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods]
“If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John 7:17)	“El que quiera hacer la voluntad de él conocerá . . . la doctrina” [He who desires to do his will shall know . . . the doctrine]

17. For an overview of why different versions of the Bible sometimes read differently, see Ben Spackman, “Why Bible Translations Differ: A Guide for the Perplexed,” *Religious Educator* 15, no. 1 (2014): 30–65.

18. Regarding the second example, the Spanish translation of Daniel 3:25, “a son of the gods,” does not interpret the passage as an allusion to Christ as the KJV does. The chapter heading in the 1979 English LDS Bible interpreted the passage as a reference to Christ (“The Son of God preserves them”), but the 2013 edition deliberately avoids an interpretation (“They are preserved”).

Regarding the third example, the KJV translation of John 7:17 sounds like it focuses on one’s actions because modern readers interpret the first “will” as indicating the future of “do,” but the meaning of the Greek *thelē* is “wishes/wants.” The Santa Biblia, like most modern translations, focuses instead on one’s desires.

In other cases, especially when the KJV contains phrases that are important in LDS discourse or that help link biblical passages to linguistic echoes in modern revelation, the 1909 Reina-Valera was modified to read more like the KJV. The following are a few examples:

***Santa Biblia Passages Harmonized with the KJV***

<b>1909 Reina-Valera (cf. modern translations)</b>	<b>Santa Biblia (cf. the KJV)</b>
“Por tanto, he aquí que nuevamente excitaré yo la admiración de este pueblo con un prodigio grande y espantoso” (Isa. 29:14) [Therefore, behold, once again I will astonish this people with a great and terrible wonder]	“por tanto, he aquí que nuevamente haré una obra maravillosa entre este pueblo, una obra maravillosa y un prodigio” [Therefore, behold, once again I will do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder] (cf. 2 Ne. 27:26; D&C 4:1)
“Él convertirá el corazón de los padres a los hijos” (Mal. 4:6) [He will direct the heart of the fathers to the children]	“Él hará volver el corazón de los padres hacia los hijos” [He will turn the heart of the fathers toward the children] (cf. 3 Ne. 25:6; D&C 2:2; 110:15; 128:17)
“Por tanto, cuando viereis la abominación del asolamiento, que fué dicha por Daniel profeta, que estará en el lugar santo . . . , entonces los que están en Judea, huyan á los montes” (Matt. 24:15–16) [Therefore, when you see the abomination of devastation, which was spoken of by the prophet Daniel, which will be in the holy place . . . then let those in Judea flee to the mountains!]	“Por tanto, cuando veáis la abominación desoladora de la cual habló el profeta Daniel, quedaos en el lugar santo . . . , entonces los que estén en Judea huyan a los montes” [Therefore, when you see the abomination of desolation of which spoke the prophet Daniel, stand in the holy place! . . . then let those in Judea flee to the mountains!] (cf. D&C 87:8; 101:22; JS—M 1:12)
“Y á los ángeles que no guardaron su dignidad” (Jude 1:6) [And the angels who did not keep their office]	“Y a los ángeles que no guardaron su estado original” [And the angels who did not keep their original estate] (cf. Abr. 3:26, 28)

Another important decision Bible translators or editors must make is which Hebrew or Greek words to translate and which to transliterate. *Translation* expresses the word’s meaning in a new language while *transliteration* simply spells out the foreign word. For example, the revelatory device used by the Israelite high priest could be translated into English as “Lights and Perfections” or transliterated as *Urim* and *Thummim*.<sup>19</sup>

19. “Lights and Perfections” is a traditional translation, but scholars still debate the exact meaning.

Transliterating a word can be advantageous when it is a technical term that has no exact equivalent in the target language and a translation would mask the foreign nature or specific nuance of the word. For example, the Hebrew term for the place where the dead dwell is *Sheol* (compare D&C 121:4), but because the KJV translates it variously as “grave” (31 times), “hell” (31), “pit” (3), and “depth” (once, Isa. 7:11), English readers miss both the specific cultural meaning and the connection between the various references. The 1909 Reina-Valera similarly uses eight different Spanish terms to represent this one Hebrew word. In contrast, the Santa Biblia changes all but one of these references to the transliterated word *Seol*. The disadvantage of transliterating is that it introduces a foreign word that readers may not be familiar with, but in the case of *Seol*, the editors helped by placing a footnote on some of the references that explains, “HEB[REW] world or dwelling of the dead, grave, hell.”

The King James Version, the 1909 Reina-Valera, and the Santa Biblia take different approaches in transliterating other words as well. The chart below displays several examples of the choices made in each version, with translated words highlighted in gray and transliterated words in white:

### *Differences in Translation/Transliteration*

Hebrew/Greek	KJV	1909 Reina-Valera	Santa Biblia
'ābaddôn	destruction	Abadón	Abadón
apostasia	falling away	apostasía	apostasía
'āšērâ	grove	bosque	Asera
'āza'zēl	scapegoat	Azazel	macho cabrío expiatorio
bēliyya'al	Belial	perverso, Belial	perverso
dēnariion	penny	denario	denario
magoi	wise men	magos	magos
mamōnas	mammon	riquezas, Mammón	riquezas
nētīnīm	Nethinims	Nethineos	servientes del templo
sabaōth	Sabaoth	ejércitos	ejércitos
šabbāt	sabbath	sábado	día de reposo
šē'ōl	grave, hell, pit	sepulcro, sepultura, infierno	Seol
yahweh	the LORD	Jehová	Jehová

These differences mean that Spanish-speaking Latter-day Saints may become more familiar with certain Hebrew or Greek terms than their English-speaking counterparts (and conversely, certain other terms will

be more familiar to English speakers). Consider the final example in the chart, *yahweh*/Jehovah, the name of God.<sup>20</sup> The KJV usually replaces the name with the euphemistic title “the LORD,” while the Reina-Valera line of Bibles preserves it as a proper name. Spanish speakers thus interact with the name Jehovah much more often than English speakers and will more readily recognize Jesus Christ as “the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament.”<sup>21</sup>

Name “Jehovah” in . . .	English	Spanish
Old Testament	4	6,842
Book of Mormon	2	3
Doctrine and Covenants	6	8
Pearl of Great Price	2	2
Total	14	6,855

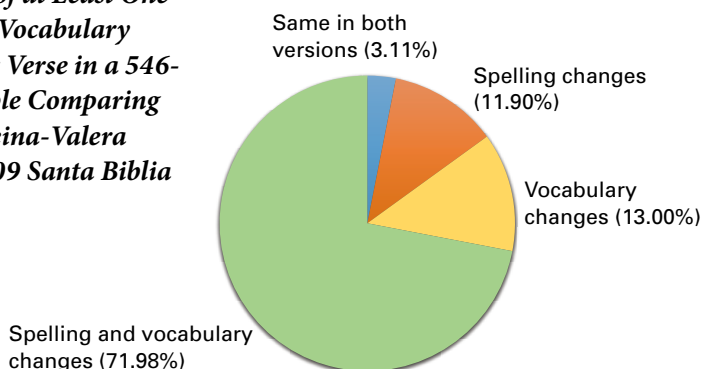
Considering all the reasons why the 1909 Reina-Valera may have been modified in particular cases—outdated spelling, vocabulary, or grammar; doctrinal concerns; linguistic disharmony with other LDS scripture; and transliteration—how extensive *are* the revisions? The chart below displays a sampling of twenty chapters totaling 546 verses for which I compared the 1909 and 2009 versions word for word.<sup>22</sup> It turns out that only 17 verses in the sample, or 3.11 percent, remain exactly the same in both versions; the rest feature at least one change in spelling/accenuation (11.90 percent of the verses), at least one change in vocabulary (13.00 percent), or at least one change to both spelling *and* vocabulary (71.98 percent).

20. Modern LDS vernacular typically employs “Jehovah” as the name of the premortal Jesus Christ and “Elohim” as the name of God the Father. In biblical usage, *’elohim* is the generic Hebrew word for “God/god/gods” and *yahweh* (Jehovah) is the proper name of the Israelites’ God. For a review of how Latter-day Saints have used these terms over their history, see Ryan C. Davis and Paul Hoskisson, “Usage of the Title *Elohim*,” *Religious Educator* 14, no. 1 (2013): 109–27.

21. “The Living Christ: The Testimony of the Apostles,” *Ensign* 30 (April 2000): 2.

22. The chapters include Genesis 1; Deuteronomy 1; Ruth 1; 1 Kings 1; Ezra 1; Psalm 1; Isaiah 1; Daniel 1; Micah 1; Malachi 1; Mark 1; Luke 1; Acts 1; Romans 1; 1 Corinthians 1; 1 Thessalonians 1; Hebrews 1; James 1; 1 John 1; and Revelation 1.

***Frequency of at Least One Spelling or Vocabulary Change per Verse in a 546-Verse Sample Comparing the 1909 Reina-Valera and the 2009 Santa Biblia***



These data suggest that the “very conservative changes” made to the 1909 edition must be understood as conservative in *kind*, but not *number*. While the editors rarely made changes that substantially alter the basic meaning of the 1909 Reina-Valera, the changes are bounteous, and the result is a Bible that is considerably more readable. The Santa Biblia is by no means colloquial and certainly retains the dignity of language that Latter-day Saints expect from their scriptures, but the modernization of its grammar, syntax, spelling, and vocabulary make a profound difference in reading comprehension.<sup>23</sup>

### **Textual Makeup**

The wording of any particular verse in the Santa Biblia depends not only on how it was translated from Hebrew or Greek into Spanish but also on which particular Hebrew and Greek manuscripts were utilized as the basis for translation. Because multiple manuscript copies of the scriptures exist and most do not read exactly the same way in every instance, Bible translators and editors must employ *textual criticism*, the process of comparing variant readings and deciding, based on all the evidence, which reading is to be preferred.

Both the King James and Reina-Valera Old Testaments are based on a medieval manuscript family called the Masoretic Text, and thus their textual base is very similar. The English and Spanish LDS Bibles occasionally

23. I should stress that the language is not *completely* modernized. For example, the Santa Biblia retains the second person plural pronoun *vosotros* (which has mostly disappeared from spoken Spanish outside of Spain) as well as traditional scriptural terms like *he aquí* (“behold”) and *y aconteció* (“and it came to pass”).



contain footnotes suggesting alternate readings based on the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, and other non-Masoretic sources.<sup>24</sup>

Both the King James and Reina-Valera New Testaments are based on a printed Greek text from the sixteenth century known as the *Textus Receptus* (TR), which itself is based on a few late Greek manuscripts.<sup>25</sup> While the King James Version follows the TR very closely, the Reina-Valera New Testament has always included some passages that incorporate other textual traditions. Reina himself included some variant readings from other sources such as the Latin Vulgate. During the nineteenth century, scholars began publishing new editions of the Greek New Testament that incorporated evidence from Greek manuscripts that are much older than those used for the TR. These “critical editions” of the Greek New Testament are based not on any single manuscript but review all available data and decide on a case-by-case basis which variant reading is the best for any given passage.<sup>26</sup> Different editions of the Reina-Valera have varied in how much they follow these newer editions and deviate from the TR.

Where does the Santa Biblia fit into this picture? The chart below displays a sampling of about two hundred verses I examined that I knew ahead of time read differently in the TR and modern critical editions. I looked up each of these passages in the Santa Biblia and in the editions of

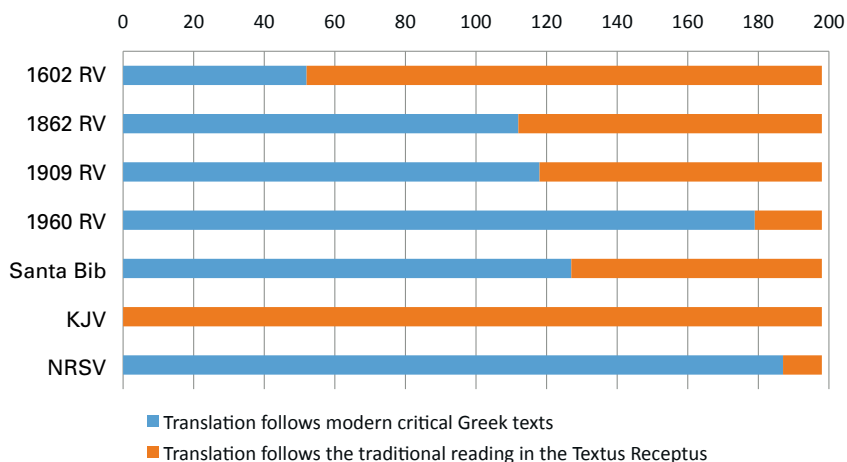
---

24. There are twenty-eight text-critical notes in the LDS English Old Testament and twenty in Spanish, a very small number in comparison with most modern Bibles (the New Revised Standard Version surpasses that count in the book of Genesis alone). The most significant advancements in Old Testament text criticism in the past century have resulted from the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, but unfortunately no LDS edition of the Bible has yet incorporated any insights from those texts. For a brief introduction to what the scrolls contribute to our understanding of the text of the Bible, see Donald W. Parry, “The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible,” *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 2 (2010): 1–27.

25. For more background on the *Textus Receptus* and the various New Testament manuscript families, see Carol F. Ellertson, “New Testament Manuscripts, Textual Families, and Variants,” in *How the New Testament Came to Be*, ed. Kent P. Jackson and Frank F. Judd Jr. (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center and Deseret Book, 2006), 93–108; and Lincoln H. Blumell, “The Text of the New Testament,” in Jackson, *King James Bible and the Restoration*, 61–74.

26. For discussions on New Testament textual criticism from a Latter-day Saint perspective, see Carl W. Griffin and Frank F. Judd Jr., “Principles of New Testament Textual Criticism,” in Jackson and Judd, *How the New Testament Came to Be*, 78–92; and Lincoln H. Blumell, “A Text-Critical Comparison of the King James New Testament with Certain Modern Translations,” *Studies in the Bible and Antiquity* 3 (2011): 67–126.

the Reina-Valera that preceded it to see which reading they follow in each case. For comparison, two English versions are also listed, the King James Version (1611) and the New Revised Standard Version (1989):



As shown above, the original 1602 Reina-Valera follows the *Textus Receptus* in nearly three-quarters of the sample. With the advancement of textual criticism in the nineteenth century, the editors of the 1862 Reina-Valera modified the text to follow additional critical text readings. The 1909 Reina-Valera preserves most of these modifications and adds a few more, and the 1960 update by the American Bible Society seems to have followed a strategy of adopting critical readings on most occasions when the opportunity presented itself. Next, the Santa Biblia appears. For the verses in this sample, the Santa Biblia's editors switched a few critically worded passages back to the TR wording but also amended twenty-two existing TR readings to follow the critical wording instead. This means the Santa Biblia features a net gain of critical readings over its 1909 parent text (although still not as many as its 1960 sister text).

One example of a textual emendation is found in Matthew 5:22. The KJV (following the *Textus Receptus*) reads, "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment." The phrase "without a cause" is a late intrusion into the Greek text.<sup>27</sup> It also appears in the 1909 Reina-Valera ("locamente"), but the phrase was dropped from the Santa Biblia, bringing it into line with both critical Greek texts and,

27. See Daniel K Judd and Allen W. Stoddard, "Adding and Taking Away 'Without a Cause' in Matthew 5:22," in Jackson and Judd, *How the New Testament Came to Be*, 157–74.

significantly, the reading in the Book of Mormon (compare 3 Ne. 12:22). Other examples of passages in which the Santa Biblia New Testament follows a different textual reading than the KJV include the following:<sup>28</sup>

***Textual Differences between the KJV and Santa Biblia***

<b>King James Version (based on the <i>Textus Receptus</i>)</b>	<b>1909 Reina-Valera, Santa Biblia, and modern translations (based on critical Greek texts)</b>
"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Matt. 5:27)	Omit "by them of old time"
"As it is written in the prophets, Behold . . ." (Mark 1:2)	"The prophets" replaced by "Isaiah the prophet"
"The day of Christ is at hand" (2 Thes. 2:2)	"Christ" replaced by "the Lord"
"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2)	Add a missing phrase: "grow thereby unto salvation"

In other cases in which the KJV and the 1909 Reina-Valera are textually distinct, the latter was altered to read like the KJV. These emendations do more than simply translate Greek into Spanish a little differently; they reflect a change in which Greek texts underlie the translation in the first place. For example:

***Santa Biblia Passages Textually Harmonized with the KJV***

<b>King James Version and the Santa Biblia (based on the <i>Textus Receptus</i>)</b>	<b>1909 Reina-Valera and other modern translations (based on critical Greek texts)</b>
"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Mark 2:17)	Omit "to repentance"
"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:16)	Omit "of Christ"
"God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:9)	Omit "by Jesus Christ"
"Hereby perceive we the love of God" (1 John 3:16)	Omit "of God"

Many of these kinds of textual changes reflect a desire to follow the reading that maintains the most emphasis on Jesus Christ, or to preserve

28. For more examples, compare the KJV and Santa Biblia in Matthew 15:8; 24:2; 28:2; Mark 9:24; 11:10; Luke 4:41; 11:29; 23:42; Acts 7:30; 1 Corinthians 9:1; and 2 Corinthians 4:10.

other important doctrinal ideas that may be reflected in one variant reading but not another.

To those unfamiliar with Bible translating, it may seem strangely eclectic to pick and choose readings from disparate textual witnesses. This is a standard practice, however. All translator-editors, be they tied to a university or a church, come to their work with certain goals and viewpoints. These determine how they prioritize evidence while engaging in textual criticism, and how they then balance that evidence with other concerns. An interesting example is how translations treat Mark 16:9–20, the final dozen verses of Mark. These verses do not appear in the earliest manuscripts, and the vocabulary varies somewhat from the rest of the book. The 1952 Revised Standard Version of the Bible does not include this passage because its editors decided that if Mark were not the original author then these verses should be treated differently. In 2001, a group of evangelical Christians published the English Standard Version, an update of the Revised Standard Version that modifies what they considered to be its more liberal editorial choices. They restored the longer ending of Mark. Both groups of editors had access to the same information, but their goals and viewpoints meant they approached this textual decision differently. For its part, an LDS Church manual acknowledges that Mark 16:9–20 “might not have been written by Mark” but concludes that “whatever the reasons for the manuscript variations, the Church accepts all of Mark 16 as inspired scripture. Its value is based not on which human being wrote it, but on its inspired testimony of truth.”<sup>29</sup> The “original” reading, then, is an important but not the only issue when determining how variant readings should be treated.

The textual editing of the Santa Biblia reflects these priorities. The Santa Biblia’s editors, as does any group that engages in biblical translation, used the results of textual criticism but did so in light of their own perspectives and priorities. For Latter-day Saints, it is only natural that textual decisions be made in light of the doctrinal and textual insights available through the restored gospel.

### **Formatting, Chapter Headings, and Appendices**

The basic page layout in the Santa Biblia looks very familiar to those who have used other LDS scriptures (fig. 3). The text is arranged in double columns above a three-column space for footnotes. Headings run along the top of the page, and each chapter begins with a summarizing

---

29. See the commentary under “Mark 16:9–20. The Conclusion of the Gospel of Mark,” in *New Testament Student Manual: Religion 211–212* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2014), 135.

## PRIMER LIBRO DE MOISÉS

LLAMADO

## GÉNESIS

## CAPÍTULO 1

*Dios crea esta tierra y su cielo y todas las formas de vida en seis días — Se describen los hechos de cada día de la Creación — Dios crea al hombre, varón y hembra, a Su propia imagen — Se da dominio al hombre sobre todas las cosas, y se le manda multiplicarse y henchir la tierra.*

**E**N el <sup>a</sup>principio <sup>b</sup>creó <sup>c</sup>Dios los <sup>d</sup>cielos y la <sup>e</sup>tierra.

2 Y la tierra estaba <sup>a</sup>desordenada y vacía, y las tinieblas estaban sobre la faz del abismo, y el Espíritu de Dios se movía sobre la faz de las aguas.

3 Y dijo Dios: Haya <sup>a</sup>luz, y hubo luz.

4 Y vio Dios que la luz era <sup>a</sup>bueno, y separó Dios la luz de las tinieblas.

5 Y llamó Dios a la luz Día, y a las tinieblas llamó Noche. Y fue la tarde y la mañana el <sup>a</sup>día primero.

6 Y dijo Dios: Haya un <sup>a</sup>firmamento en medio de las aguas,

y separe aquél las aguas de las aguas.

7 E hizo Dios el firmamento, y separó las aguas que estaban debajo del firmamento de las aguas que estaban sobre el firmamento. Y fue así.

8 Y llamó Dios al firmamento <sup>a</sup>Cielos. Y fue la tarde y la mañana el día segundo.

9 Y dijo Dios: <sup>a</sup>Júntense las aguas que están debajo de los cielos en un lugar, y descúbrase lo seco. Y fue así.

10 Y llamó Dios a lo seco Tierra, y a la reunión de las aguas llamó Mares. Y vio Dios que era bueno.

11 Y dijo Dios: Produzca la tierra <sup>a</sup>hierba verde, hierba que dé semilla; árbol de fruto que dé fruto según su especie, que su semilla esté en él, sobre la tierra. Y fue así.

12 Y produjo la tierra hierba verde, hierba que da semilla según su naturaleza, y árbol que da fruto, cuya semilla está en él, según su especie. Y vio Dios que era bueno.

[GÉNESIS]

1 1 <sup>a</sup> GEE Principio.  
<sup>b</sup> HEB dio forma, creó, siempre una actividad u obra divina; organizó, formó; véase Abr. 4:1.  
 GEE Creación, crear.  
<sup>c</sup> Mos. 4:2;  
 Morm. 9:11;

DyC 76:20–24;  
 Moisés 2:1.  
 GEE Trinidad.  
<sup>d</sup> GEE Cielo.  
<sup>e</sup> 1 Ne. 17:36.  
 GEE Tierra.  
 2 <sup>a</sup> Abr. 4:2.  
 3 <sup>a</sup> GEE Luz, luz de Cristo.  
 4 <sup>a</sup> Alma 32:35; Abr. 4:4.

5 <sup>a</sup> Abr. 4:5.  
 6 <sup>a</sup> HEB expansión o espacio.  
 Abr. 4:6–8;  
 Facsímile 2, Fig. 4.  
 8 <sup>a</sup> GEE Cielo.  
 9 <sup>a</sup> GEE Tierra—La división de la tierra.  
 11 <sup>a</sup> Abr. 4:11–12.

FIGURE 3. Genesis chapter 1 in the Santa Biblia. The design is based on the English LDS Bible with a few differences, such as larger type. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Decláranos, te rogamos, por qué nos ha venido este mal. ¿Qué oficio tienes y de dónde vienes? ¿Cuál es tu tierra, y de qué pueblo eres?

9 Y él les respondió: Soy hebreo y temo a "Jehová, Dios de los cielos, que hizo el mar y la tierra.

10 Y aquellos hombres temieron sobremanera y le dijeron: ¿Por qué has hecho esto? Porque ellos sabían que huía de la presencia de Jehová, porque él se lo había declarado.

11 Y le dijeron: ¿Qué haremos contigo para que el mar se nos aquiete? Porque el mar se iba embraveciendo más y más.

12 Y él les respondió: Tomadme y echadme al mar, y el mar se os aquietará, porque yo sé que por mi causa ha venido esta gran tempestad sobre vosotros.

13 Y aquellos hombres remaron con todas sus fuerzas para hacer volver la nave a tierra, pero no pudieron, porque el mar se iba embraveciendo más y más contra ellos.

14 Entonces clamaron a Jehová y dijeron: Te rogamos, oh Jehová, te suplicamos que no perezcamos nosotros por la vida de este hombre, ni pongas sobre nosotros sangre inocente, porque tú, Jehová, has hecho como has querido.

15 Y tomaron a Jonás y lo echaron al mar, y el furor del mar se aquietó.

16 Y temieron aquellos hombres a Jehová con gran temor, y

ofrecieron sacrificio a Jehová e hicieron votos.

17 Pero Jehová tenía preparado un gran pez para que se tragase a Jonás; y estuvo Jonás en el vientre del pez "tres días y tres noches.

## CAPÍTULO 2

*Jonás ora a Jehová y el pez lo vomita en tierra.*

ENTONCES oró Jonás desde el vientre del pez a Jehová, su Dios,

2 y dijo:

Clamé en mi "angustia a Jehová,  
y él me oyó;  
desde el seno del <sup>b</sup>Seol clamé,  
y mi voz oíste.

3 Me echaste a lo profundo,  
en medio de los mares,  
y me rodeó la corriente;  
todas tus ondas y tus olas pasaron sobre mí.

4 Entonces dije: Desechado soy  
de delante de tus ojos;  
mas aún veré tu santo "tem-  
plo.

5 Las aguas me rodearon  
"hasta el alma;  
me rodeó el abismo;  
las algas se enredaron en mi  
cabeza.

6 Descendí a los cimientos de  
los montes;

9 a GEE Jehová.

17 a Mateo 16:4.

GEE Jesucristo—Sim-  
bolismos o símbolos

de Jesucristo.

2 2 a GEE Adversidad.

b Alma 36:15–18.

4 a Sal. 5:7.

GEE Templo, Casa  
del Señor.

5 a *Es decir*, hasta que es-  
tuve a punto de morir.

FIGURE 4. Jonah 1:8–2:6 in the Santa Biblia. In contrast to the prose text of chapter 1, the psalm in chapter 2 is arranged in poetic stanzas. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

heading in italics. A few cosmetic details, which are standard in other foreign-language scripture editions, differentiate it from the English Bible, such as a horizontal line separating the text from the header space. The Spanish Bible also uses a larger font than the English edition, requiring over four hundred more pages to cover Genesis through Revelation. On rare occasions, the Reina-Valera versification differs from the KJV.<sup>30</sup> One of the most striking visual differences between the two Bibles are the poetic stanzas that appear in the Psalms and many other sections with poetry, a feature the Santa Biblia preserves from the existing Reina-Valera translation (see fig. 4 for one example).

The chapter headings in the Santa Biblia are for the most part close translations of the headings found in the LDS Bible in English. In several instances the headings differ from the original 1979 headings and more closely resemble those found in the 2013 English edition, following changes that had been incorporated into the online English scriptures years before they appeared in print. And yet even in comparison with the 2013 edition, the Spanish chapter headings sometimes feature their own unique wording that improves the description. Consider a few examples:

### *Improvements in Spanish Chapter Headings*

1979/2013 English headings	Santa Biblia headings
"Abraham marries" (Gen. 25)	"Abraham se casa de nuevo" [Abraham remarries]
"Joseph meets Jacob" (Gen. 46)	"José se reúne con Jacob" [Joseph reunites with Jacob]
"The nearest relative declines, and Boaz takes Ruth to wife—Ruth bears Obed, through whom came David the king" (Ruth 4)	"El pariente más cercano se niega a cumplir con su deber, y Booz toma a Rut por esposa—Rut da a luz a Obed; éste fue padre de Isaí, quien engendró al rey David" [The nearest relative refuses to fulfill his duty, and Boaz takes Ruth to wife—Ruth bears Obed; he was the father of Jesse, who begat King David]
"He opens the ears and loosens the tongue of a person with an impediment" (Mark 7)	"Jesús le abre los oídos y le suelta la lengua a un hombre sordo y tartamudo" [Jesus opens the ears and loosens the tongue of a deaf and stuttering man]

30. Sometimes versification in the Reina-Valera that conflicts with the KJV was allowed to stand in the Santa Biblia (for example, 1 Kgs. 18:33–34; 3 John 1:14–15), and in other places the verses were reordered to match the KJV (for example, Job 38–40). All versification systems were created long after the biblical books were written.

In addition to the footnotes and chapter headings, other Santa Biblia study aids appear in an appendix with three sections: Bible Reference Guide, Selections from the Joseph Smith Translation, and Bible Maps and Photographs. The fourteen-page Reference Guide (“Guía de Referencias”) is a new feature not found in the English LDS Bible. It consists of lists of chapter-and-verse references under the headings of the Godhead, Gospel Topics, People, Places, and Events. It serves as a very basic concordance to substitute for the much more detailed Guide to the Scriptures, which was not included under the covers of the Santa Biblia because most readers would already have it in their copies of the Triple Combination.<sup>31</sup> The Bible Maps and Photographs section updates a similar appendix that previously appeared in the Spanish Triple Combination.

### The Joseph Smith Translation

The section in the appendix titled “Selections from the Joseph Smith Translation” deserves special consideration. As with the English edition, excerpts from Joseph Smith’s revision of the Bible are found in the footnotes or, if the citation is too lengthy, in the appendix. At the time the Santa Biblia was published, the 1993 edition of the Spanish Triple Combination already contained a similar section in its own appendix. The Santa Biblia’s version, however, was rewritten so that the JST changes work around the Santa Biblia’s own text, whereas the Triple Combination’s version was based on the 1960 Reina-Valera.

The text of the JST required some adjusting to account for the syntax and vocabulary differences between English and Spanish.<sup>32</sup> As in the English LDS Bible, italicized words indicate changes made by Joseph

---

31. The Guide to the Scriptures is a simplified combination of both the Bible Dictionary and the Topical Guide, and is included in foreign-language versions of the Book of Mormon and Triple Combination.

32. In most cases these adjustments read smoothly, but in some cases the differences prove difficult to reconcile. For example, KJV Exodus 34:14 reads, “the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God,” and the JST changes the first “Jealous” to “Jehovah.” Since the name *Jehovah* is the Hebrew term behind KJV “the LORD,” and since the Reina-Valera simply uses the proper name, a Spanish translation incorporating the JST would read, “Jehovah, whose name is Jehovah, is a jealous God.” To avoid this awkward construction, the Santa Biblia’s JST footnote reads instead, “the Lord, whose name is Jehovah, is a jealous God,” a fix that inadvertently signals to Spanish readers that the biblical word “Jehovah” was changed by Joseph Smith to “the Lord.”



Smith,<sup>33</sup> but the Santa Biblia innovates with the occasional addition of square brackets that “were added to the Spanish translation to help convey the meaning,” according to the Abbreviations page. These brackets appear thirty-seven times in the footnotes and JST Appendix, and their most common function is to mark phrases that are identical in the KJV and JST but that read differently in the Santa Biblia and the Spanish JST. This helps indicate to Spanish readers that the bracketed phrase in the Spanish JST, while different from the wording in the Santa Biblia, does not represent a change made by Joseph Smith.<sup>34</sup>

In addition to differences in language, sometimes rendering the Joseph Smith Translation into Spanish is a challenge because the JST was created using a specific English translation, the King James Version, as a base text. JST revisions often respond to issues that are not inherent in the Bible but are rather tied to the unique phrasing of the KJV.<sup>35</sup>

---

33. Italicizing unique JST phrasing was an innovation of the 1979 English edition, but unfortunately the explanation for the italicized words found on the Abbreviations page of the 1979 edition disappeared when that page was redesigned for the 2013 edition.

34. The square brackets in the Spanish JST perform a total of four functions: First, to indicate phrases that are common to the KJV and JST but read differently in the Santa Biblia (Gen. 14:18; 24:9; 1 Chr. 21:15; Ps. 11:5; 138:8, first set of brackets; Isa. 42:21, 23; Matt. 21:49; Mark 11:10; Luke 4:2; 8:1; 8:23, both sets of brackets; 9:31, the phrase “las cuales habían”; 11:41; Acts 23:27; Rom. 1:18; 4:5; 1 Cor. 7:9, first set of brackets; 10:11; 14:35; Gal. 2:4; 3:20, both sets of brackets; Heb. 4:3; 6:7; 7:20; and 2 Pet. 3:5, 10; all references follow JST versification). Second, to mark words added for the benefit of Spanish syntax (Ex. 14:7; Luke 12:42; John 11:17; and Heb. 6:10; 10:10). Third, to insert editorial clarifications (Ex. 4:25; Luke 9:31, the phrase “de Jesús”; and 1 Cor. 7:9, second set of brackets). Fourth, to provide an alternate word for the preceding word (Ps. 138:8, second set of brackets). The brackets in the JST footnote to Mark 11:10 mark words missing in the Santa Biblia not because of translational variation between it and the KJV, but because of textual differences in Greek manuscripts (the Santa Biblia, like most modern translations, does not include the KJV line “in the name of the Lord”).

35. Many Latter-day Saints assume that the Joseph Smith Translation represents a restoration of original biblical text, and while parts of it certainly can be, much of the JST seems to represent other kinds of changes. According to Kent Jackson, one of the foremost scholars of the Prophet’s work, most JST revisions appear to be efforts on the part of Joseph Smith to make the Bible more understandable to modern readers, including modernizing archaic King James language. See Kent P. Jackson, “New Discoveries in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible,” *Religious Educator* 6, no. 3 (2005): 152–53; and Kent P.

A common example is the way the JST updates archaic English words to modern English words (such as *wot* to *know* or *which* to *who*). Because of this, the JST sometimes solves difficulties that are nonexistent in other translations of the Bible, including the Reina-Valera in Spanish. In cases where a JST revision contributes little or nothing to the Spanish text, the editors of the Santa Biblia sometimes left out the JST reference and sometimes included it anyway.<sup>36</sup>

When the Santa Biblia was released in 2009, it contained twenty-four JST citations that were not included in the 1979 English Bible, and thus Spanish-speaking Latter-day Saints actually had access to more of the JST than English speakers. The 2013 English edition caught up with the Spanish edition and includes some new JST citations the Spanish edition does not have. The chart below compares the number of verses from the JST cited in whole or in part in the 1979 English Bible, the 1993 Spanish Triple Combination appendix, the 2009 Spanish Bible, and the 2013 English Bible.<sup>37</sup>

---

Jackson and Peter M. Jasinski, “The Process of Inspired Translation: Two Passages Translated Twice in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible,” *BYU Studies* 42, no. 2 (2003): 58–62. See also Robert J. Matthews, “A Plainer Translation”: *Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible: A History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 253.

36. For an example of the latter, in KJV Acts 23:27 the Roman chief captain writes that Paul “should have been killed” by the Jews. The JST amends “should” to “would,” which more clearly expresses in modern English that the chief captain is describing a hypothetical situation and not something that he *desires* to happen. In the Santa Biblia, this English distinction is not an issue (it simply says *iban ellos a matar*, “they were going to kill” him), but a JST footnote rewrites the sentence to include the conditional tense (*ellos habrían [matado]*, “they would have [killed]” him; brackets in original). In cases like this, the Spanish JST does represent what Joseph Smith said, but it is unclear how the Spanish reader benefits from the alternate reading.

37. These counts include JST citations found in only the footnotes or appendix of the Bible and not verses in the Book of Moses or Joseph Smith—Matthew, which also come from the JST but are printed in the Pearl of Great Price. The half-verses (“:5”) displayed under the 1979 English Bible represent JST Luke 21:24, which in that edition appears in part in the footnotes and in part in the appendix (the 2013 edition moves the entire verse to the appendix). Three footnotes (1 Cor. 14:2a; Heb. 9:15c; Rev. 2:1a) explain that a JST change also applies to other verses in the same chapter, and I have counted those additional verses as having been cited.

<b>JST verses cited in . . .</b>	<b>1979 English</b>	<b>1993 Spanish Triple</b>	<b>2009 Spanish</b>	<b>2013 English</b>
Footnotes only	460.5	—	453	478
Appendix only	425.5	368	430	428
Both	1	—	12	12
Total	887	368	895	918

When comparing these numbers, it is important to keep in mind that some JST references were deliberately left out of the Santa Biblia either because the JST change is not relevant in Spanish or because the Santa Biblia already reads like the JST anyway. This exclusion explains why the Spanish edition cites only a few more total verses than the 1979 English edition (895 compared to 887) even though it introduced twenty-four new JST citations. Similarly, even though the 2013 English edition quotes many more JST verses than the Spanish edition (918 compared to 895), all but a handful of the additional verses would not be relevant in Spanish anyway.

The Santa Biblia's JST appendix includes a few other modifications. The chart below compares various features in the "Selections from the Joseph Smith Translation" section in the appendices of the 1979 English Bible, the 1993 Spanish Triple Combination, the 2009 Spanish Bible, and the 2013 English Bible:

<b>JST Appendix Feature</b>	<b>1979 English</b>	<b>1993 Spanish Triple</b>	<b>2009 Spanish</b>	<b>2013 English</b>
Italics to indicate changes	x		x	x
Introductory paragraph		x	x	x
Parallel JST/biblical verse references		x	x	x
Explanatory headings		x	x	
Larger font			x	x

The Santa Biblia's JST footnotes and appendix mark a historic development in how Latter-day Saints use the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. Although selections from the JST had previously been included in the appendices of foreign-language editions of the Triple Combination, a complete foreign-language translation of all the verses available in the English LDS Bible "is something we [previously] had never had in the Church."<sup>38</sup>

38. As phrased by Elder Carlos Amado in "La edición Santo de los Últimos Días de la Santa Biblia en español." It is important to note, however, that even in English the LDS edition of the Bible only includes a selection of all the changes

## Explanatory Footnotes

The footnotes in the Santa Biblia are, like the chapter headings, based on those found in the English LDS Bible. They include cross-references to the Bible and other LDS scripture, alternate translations of Hebrew and Greek words, explanations of difficult idioms, alternate meanings of archaic expressions, citations from the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, and other miscellaneous notes. The Santa Biblia's explanatory notes, however, are not all exact copies of the English originals. They occasionally innovate by adding more detail to existing English notes and by correcting mistakes in them, including mistakes that remain in the English version up through the 2013 edition.<sup>39</sup>

Individuals who look through the Santa Biblia often notice, sometimes with some surprise, how few footnotes there appear to be in comparison with the English edition.<sup>40</sup> This observation may lead to the assumption that because the Spanish notes are fewer, they must represent an abbreviated or “lite” version of the English notes—and thus are inferior. It is a fact that the explanatory footnotes<sup>41</sup> number

---

made by Joseph Smith. The definitive edition of the complete JST is Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004). A more reader-friendly edition of the complete JST may be found in Thomas Wayment, ed., *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the Old Testament: A Side-by-Side Comparison with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012) and *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament: A Side-by-Side Comparison with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005).

39. Some examples where the Santa Biblia adds more detail to or corrects English notes include Isaiah 11:8a; 15:5 (footnote *b* in English and *a* in Spanish); 60:8a; Ezekiel 27:16a; Amos 5:8a; Hosea 2:15a; Mark 13:1 (the incorrect statement in English footnote *a* was dropped in Spanish); and John 4:20a (the cross-reference in English points to the wrong historical reference, but the Spanish note replaces it with an accurate description).

40. For example, Barlow notes that the “explanatory footnotes are somewhat sparser than in the English version” (*Mormons and the Bible*, xl), and Kent Larson writes that he was “surprised when [he] saw noticeably fewer footnotes than in the English edition.” Kent Larson, “Some Notes on the New Spanish LDS Bible,” *Times and Seasons* [blog], September 18, 2009, <http://timesandseasons.org/index.php/2009/09/some-notes-on-the-new-spanish-lds-bible/>. My own anecdotal experience suggests that this is not an uncommon reaction.

41. My analysis here purposefully focuses on what I call “explanatory notes”—those that provide cultural, textual, or linguistic information. In contrast, my figures ignore cross-references and Topical Guide entries. Comparing these kinds of notes in English and Spanish is often an apples-to-oranges

about 40 percent fewer in the Spanish Bible. That figure does not tell the whole story, however. While there are indeed helpful English notes that did not make it into the Santa Biblia, often an English note did not *need* to be included in the Spanish edition because the Spanish translation already read clearly without it. In other cases, as shown in the examples below, the 1909 Reina-Valera originally read like the KJV but the editors of the Santa Biblia, instead of simply translating the English footnote, took the footnote's wording and inserted it directly into the biblical text (strikeouts below show the original wording, bolding compares the English footnote and the Spanish textual revision):

### *English Footnotes Incorporated Directly into the Spanish Text*

<b>KJV text and LDS footnote</b>	<b>Changes from the 1909 Reina-Valera to the Santa Biblia</b>
"in the <sup>a</sup> oracle" (2 Chron. 3:16) <i>a</i> OR <b>inner sanctuary</b>	"en el oratorio <b>santuario interior</b> "
"the snares of death <sup>a</sup> prevented me" (Ps. 18:5) <i>a</i> HEB <b>confronted</b>	" <b>previniéronme</b> los lazos de la muerte <b>me confrontaron</b> "
"thy <sup>b</sup> profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim. 4:15) <i>b</i> GR <b>progress, advancement</b>	"para que tu <b>aprovechamiento progreso</b> sea manifiesto a todos"
" <sup>a</sup> Accounting that God was able" (Heb. 11:19) <i>a</i> GR <b>Considering</b>	" <b>Pensando Considerando</b> que Dios es poderoso"




Because some explanatory notes would be helpful in both the English and Spanish editions, while some notes would be helpful in only one or the other, the number of notes in each edition must be compared with those differences in mind. The charts on page 70 compare the number of explanatory notes of various kinds that appear in the 2013 English edition and the Santa Biblia.<sup>42</sup> (Numbers for the 1979 English edition differ

---

endeavor because the entries in the English Topical Guide and Spanish Guide to the Scriptures are organized differently.

42. The numbers I present here are a little different than what one would find by simply performing an electronic word search to determine how frequently a certain footnote label appears (such as HEB, the label for Hebrew notes, or IE, the label for idioms and difficult wording). There are several reasons for this. (1) For simplicity, the few Aramaic notes are counted as Hebrew notes. (2) Sometimes the English edition assigns one label to a certain note and the Spanish edition assigns another; in such cases, I chose the label I think best

significantly from the 2013 edition only in the case of JST references, so those are displayed separately.) Whether or not a footnote is language-specific or more universally applicable is distinguished according to the key below:

	= Unique footnotes that would not be helpful in the other edition
	= Unique footnotes that would also be helpful in the other edition
	= Footnotes that appear in both language editions

When the numbers in each category are added up, we find that the English edition contains a total of 5,207 explanatory notes. The Spanish edition borrows 2,419 of these, or 46.46 percent. The Spanish edition then adds 908 new explanatory notes, creating a total of 3,327. The Spanish total is 36.12 percent smaller than the English total.

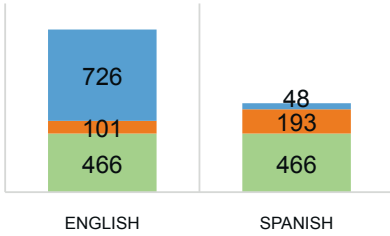
Moving past the raw totals, distinguishing between notes that are edition-specific or that would be helpful in both editions leads to two important observations. First, the data provided in these charts show that although thousands of explanatory notes from the English Bible do not appear in the Santa Biblia, the vast majority—2,474 out of 2,788 missing notes—did not carry over simply because they are *not needed* in Spanish. The fact that the Santa Biblia borrowed fewer than half of the English explanatory notes does not signify that its notes are inferior to the English version's as much as it suggests how much more lucid the Spanish translation is in comparison with the KJV.

The second important observation is that 641 of the 908 new explanatory notes added to the Spanish edition (more than two-thirds) are not uniquely tied to the Spanish text but provide information that would be useful in English as well. Consider, for example, how helpful it might be for the English notes to elaborate on terms like *covenant*, *Sela*, *Leviathan*, or the technical terms that appear at the beginning of many Psalms—all of which the English notes routinely ignore and the Spanish notes routinely comment on. Furthermore, in contrast to these 641 notes

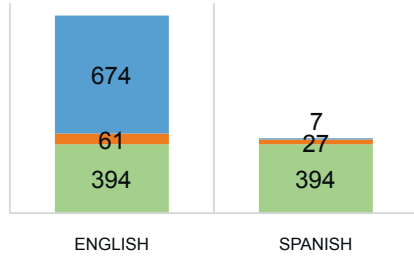
---

represents the note and count them both that way. (3) Some notes that are text critical in nature, meaning they provide an alternate reading from different manuscripts, hide under other labels like OR. In cases where I spotted them, I ignore the printed label and count it as a “Textual” note. (4) Sometimes a footnote will contain what are really two notes together and I split them for the purpose of counting. (5) The Spanish Bible occasionally uses the label *También* (“Also”), but it is so rare and always fits so well with other labels I simply reassign the note to another category.

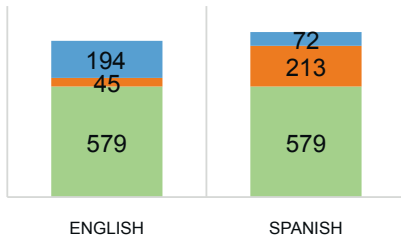
**HEB**  
ALTERNATE TRANSLATIONS FROM  
HEBREW



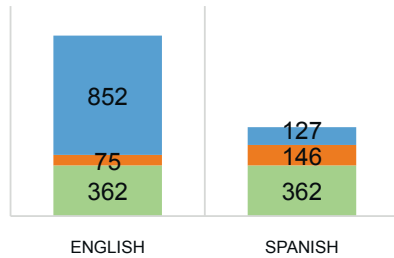
**GR**  
ALTERNATE TRANSLATIONS FROM GREEK



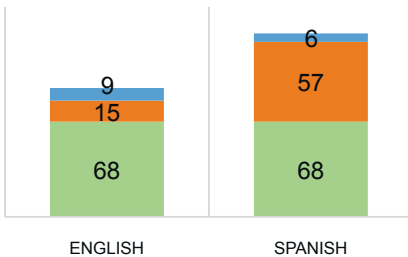
**IE**  
IDIOMS AND  
DIFFICULT WORDING



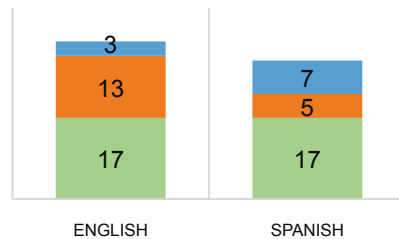
**OR**  
ARCHAIC EXPRESSIONS



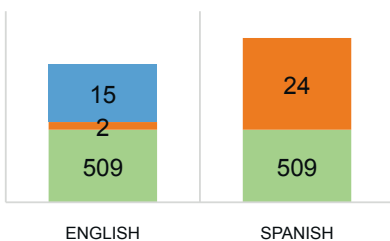
**OTHER**  
EXPLANATORY NOTES WITHOUT LABELS



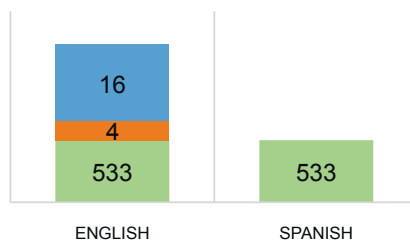
**TEXTUAL**  
COMPARISONS TO SEPTUAGINT, VULGATE,  
ETC.



**JST (1979)**  
JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION  
(not to scale)



**JST (2013)**  
JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION  
(not to scale)



that the English edition is missing out on, there are only 314 notes in the English edition that the Spanish edition does not have but would benefit from. In other words, it turns out that between the two versions, it is the English edition that is missing out on most of the information that is found in one edition but not the other.

The footnotes, then, follow the pattern of the other features of the Santa Biblia: they take what is already good in the English edition and find ways to improve it when possible.

## Impact

Just as the English LDS Bible did in 1979, the Santa Biblia marks a milestone in the history of Latter-day Saint scripture. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints now has over fifteen million members around the world, more than half of whom live outside of the United States. Church materials have been published in more than 170 languages, and Church members who do not speak English outnumber those who do. The publication of its first foreign-language edition of the Old and New Testaments, then, marks an important if natural development in the international growth of the Church.

At the same time, the Santa Biblia reflects more than changes in Mormon demographics. It is important to remember that the Santa Biblia is not only the Church's first Spanish Bible, it was the first Bible translation the Church had published in *any* language. The English edition inherited the King James translation whole, which, even considering the enormous effort that went into the study aids, limited the kinds of questions that needed to be asked of the text. In contrast, although the 1909 Reina-Valera provided the Church with a base text (saving it the difficult task of starting a translation from scratch), the decision to revise the biblical text itself required interacting with the Bible to an extent and level of detail perhaps unmatched since Joseph Smith completed his own revision in 1833. In addition to hundreds of new footnotes, this interaction is reflected in how the translators and editors approached the respected yet archaic language of the 1909 Reina-Valera. They set out to achieve the challenging goal of updating and modernizing in a way that still preserved the sacred flavor of the original, and in my opinion they succeeded. This translational approach represents a different strategy than what has been done with the English Bible, where the perceived benefits of exactly preserving a historically significant translation have, thus far, outweighed any benefits of linguistic modernization, even if this means people must struggle more to understand Hosea or



Paul. The Santa Biblia is also relatively progressive in its attitude toward New Testament textual criticism. By allowing several passages inherited from the Reina-Valera to remain textually distinct from the KJV (and ultimately the Greek of the *Textus Receptus*) and especially by freshly altering existing TR readings to follow other textual readings, the Santa Biblia's editors implicitly acknowledged that multiple textual witnesses exist and that no single one of them is the best in every case.<sup>43</sup>

The Santa Biblia is also notable for the ways in which it was allowed to appropriately diverge from the English edition. While the Spanish edition is formatted to look like its English predecessor and its study aids follow the English version as much as possible, its editors did not see the English edition as completely sacrosanct. In appropriate situations, the English chapter headings were modified and the footnotes were deleted, refined, or supplemented. Even though the King James translation was consulted and some passages in the Santa Biblia were modified to read like the KJV, there was no overriding concern that every verse sound the same or even mean the same thing. Even chapters with parallel translations in the Book of Mormon were not harmonized to strictly match that rendition. This independence means that the Spanish biblical text is in many instances more readable and more accurate than the King James translation.

The Santa Biblia also transcends its identity as a "Spanish Bible" by making at least two important contributions that benefit even Latter-day Saints who are not native Spanish speakers. First, in the Church at large the Santa Biblia is leading to an increased recognition of heroes from history whose dedication and faith helped further God's purposes, but whose stories are often overlooked. General conference

---

43. To appreciate the significance of this editorial decision, one must remember how passionately President J. Reuben Clark argued for the *Textus Receptus* against modern critical editions of the New Testament. His fullest treatment of this subject, *Why the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1956), relied on the work of several conservative Protestant scholars of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and some of his arguments are now sorely out of date. For two recent appraisals by LDS scholars, see Grant Hardy, "The King James Bible and the Future of Missionary Work," *Dialogue* 45, no. 2 (2012): 1–44; and Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 173–90. One important effect of President Clark's legacy in this matter is perhaps reflected in the almost complete lack of any footnotes providing alternate textual readings in the LDS edition of the English New Testament—four notes in all. Most modern translations include dozens if not hundreds of such notes.

addresses and Church manuals have frequently highlighted the sacrifices of reformer-translators like John Wycliffe and William Tyndale of England and Martin Luther of Germany.<sup>44</sup> Where are the heroes Spanish-speaking Saints can claim? The release of the Spanish LDS Bible began to draw more attention to Spanish history through a special half-hour orientation video about the new Bible that aired, in Spanish and English, in between general conference sessions in October 2009.<sup>45</sup> More recently, the 2014 edition of the Institute manual for the New Testament took a significant step forward in an introductory section that covers the history of the Bible as a book. The new manual presents a broader view of that history by describing not only the stories of Luther, Wycliffe, and Tyndale, but also the Spanish reformers Francisco de Enzinas, Casiodoro de Reina, and Cipriano de Valera. The manual's description of Enzinas's imprisonment, Reina's persecution and exile, and Valera's twenty-year translation effort provides the first English retelling of their stories in a Church print publication in more than forty years.<sup>46</sup> As proportionally fewer and fewer Latter-day Saints speak English, it will become increasingly important that our Church narratives include the contributions of inspired and inspiring individuals in the histories of other cultures, and the Santa Biblia has positively drawn attention to some of those stories.

The Santa Biblia also benefits those beyond its target audience when it is studied by those who can read Spanish but are not native speakers (this might include the tens of thousands of missionaries who have served in Spain and Latin America). Although the King James Version is wonderful in many ways, one disadvantage of reading it (or any version)

---

44. Numerous general conference addresses and *Ensign* articles discuss these individuals, especially Tyndale. *Preach My Gospel* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004), 45, provides basic information about these reformers for the benefit of missionaries, but the Spanish translation provides no additional information on individuals who were actually involved in the history of the Spanish Bible.

45. The Spanish version of this video is available at <https://www.lds.org/media-library/video/2009-03-000-latter-day-saint-edition-of-the-holy-bible-in-spanish?category=escrituras&lang=spa>.

46. See *New Testament Student Manual*, 7–8. The histories of Casiodoro de Reina and Cipriano de Valera are described in a 1972 *Ensign* article (Balderas, “How the Scriptures Came to Be Translated into Spanish,” 27–28), but searches at LDS.org show no other references to them until the appearance of the Santa Biblia in 2009.

exclusively is that readers may come to see its particular translational interpretations, its unique expressions, and even its specific typesetting format as being synonymous with “the Bible” itself. Interaction with other versions of the Bible improves our understanding of scripture by helping us see which features are idiosyncratic to our particular version and which are truly “biblical.” For example, while teaching Spanish at the Missionary Training Center in Provo, Utah, I saw the surprise several new missionaries experienced when they opened up their Reina-Valera Bible and wondered why the name *Jehová*—for them a relatively rare word—appeared on almost every page. The Spanish Bible taught them that the small-capitals “LORD” they grew up with was code for Jehovah all along. On one occasion, an English speaker asked me why the new Santa Biblia text was spaced so “weirdly” in several places, with sentences chopped up into twos and threes and placed in different lines. It turned out that because the KJV typesets poetry and prose the same way, he had never in his life known that the Bible even *has* poetry! Comparing how various translations express ideas differently can also help us understand gospel concepts in new ways. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland once taught an implicit lesson on the value of multiple translations when he described the greater appreciation he had for Jesus’s invitation, “Abide in me” (John 15:4), after reading the Spanish rendering, *permaneced en mí*. “‘Abide’ is not a word we use much anymore,” he explained, “but [in Spanish] even gringos like me can hear the root cognate there of ‘permanence.’ The sense of this then is ‘stay—but stay forever.’”<sup>47</sup> Bilingual readers who study *both* editions of the LDS Bible will inevitably find insights that they could not have gained from one alone.

Of course, the greatest benefits of the Santa Biblia have come to the millions of Spanish-speaking Saints it was designed to bless. President Thomas S. Monson declared, “This new Latter-day Saint edition is the finest Spanish Bible in all the world. . . . My heart is filled with gratitude as I ponder the blessing this new edition of the Bible will be in your lives.”<sup>48</sup> One Church member described how after obtaining her copy of the Santa Biblia, “I could hardly wait to get home and start studying—I stayed up until two in the morning. . . . I had tears in my eyes because

---

47. Jeffrey R. Holland, “‘Abide in Me,’” *Ensign* 34 (May 2004): 32; emphasis in original.

48. “La edición Santo de los Últimos Días de la Santa Biblia en español.”

I had been waiting for it for so long.”<sup>49</sup> Another said, “Sunday when we received word that it came . . . I was very happy! . . . One can really see the promises of the Lord being accomplished.”<sup>50</sup>

One final feature to note about the Spanish Bible is a unique introduction that explains the history, content, and features of the new edition. The final paragraph promises, “El lector que con oración sincera estudie esta edición de la Santa Biblia llegará a adquirir, mediante la inspiración del Espíritu Santo, una mayor comprensión y un testimonio más firme de Dios, el Eterno Padre, y de Su Hijo Jesucristo, nuestro Señor y Redentor, así como de la plenitud del Evangelio de Jesucristo.” [The reader who prayerfully studies this edition of the Holy Bible will gain, through the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a greater understanding and a stronger testimony of God the Eternal Father and His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer, as well as the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ.] Many Spanish-speaking Latter-day Saints testify that this has been their experience.

---

Joshua M. Sears received a BA in Ancient Near Eastern Studies at Brigham Young University, an MA in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at The Ohio State University, and is currently a PhD student in Hebrew Bible at The University of Texas at Austin. He began learning Spanish while serving in the Chile Osorno Mission. With Gaye Strathearn he authored “The Church of the First Century,” in *The Life and Teachings of the New Testament Apostles: From the Day of Pentecost through the Apocalypse*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010), 35–62. He presented “*Santa Biblia*: The LDS Spanish Bible and Its Place in Mormon Scripture” at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland, on November 25, 2013.

---

49. Taylor, “LDS Spanish Bible Praised.”

50. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Reaction to the New Latter-day Saint Spanish Bible,” *Newsroom*, September 22, 2009, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/blog/reaction-to-the-new-latter-day-saint-spanish-bible>.

## Leaving Egypt

couldn't have been easy. Walking away from  
tangible gods, elaborate bodies. No more  
wooing the throne or imposing your thirst  
on the Nile's fertility. Just wind and wilderness  
between desire and your next meal. Just  
the breath of your mother's God calling  
from the reeds. Now from the shepherd's well.  
Now from the backside of Sinai's emptiness.

But would you have known this side of loss,  
this side of anxiety if God hadn't drawn you  
from Egypt's bed? Hadn't read your name  
between the lines of Israel's pleas and snared you  
on the sun? Hadn't caught your eye, pupil wide,  
and wound it tight around the quarters of the wind?

—Tyler Chadwick

# Magnitude

*Elizabeth Knight*

The Richter scale of magnitude, developed in 1935 by Charles Richter and Beno Gutenberg of the California Institute of Technology and used to measure the power contained in earthquakes, references only itself; if it were human, we might call it narcissistic. We might also call Mr. Richter narcissistic, since this jointly developed scale was known by only his name, and it was not until after Gutenberg's death that Richter began to insist on sharing the credit.

The Richter (and Gutenberg) scale uses a seismograph to record the actual motion of the earth during an earthquake, taking into account the distance from the epicenter, to provide an absolute measure of an earthquake's intensity. It is a logarithmic scale; so a magnitude 6 earthquake—like the one that hit the Canterbury region of New Zealand on February 22, 2011, and destroyed the historic cathedral in downtown Christchurch, causing \$30 billion in damage and killing 185 people—is ten times stronger than the magnitude 5 tremor that struck that area ten months later on December 23, 2011. That 6 is one hundred times stronger than a 4, which is roughly equivalent in force to the explosion that occurred in reactor #4 at Chernobyl in 1986, a global event I don't remember because I was only four years old, and one thousand times stronger than the magnitude 3 aftershock from the second Christchurch earthquake, which I felt while in that city on December 31, 2011.

It was my husband's first time in New Zealand, or anywhere outside of the United States, and we'd planned to finish our trip in Christchurch before flying home on New Year's Day. We'd heard about the magnitude 5 quake, but only through vague small talk we'd made with other

travelers, and the extent of the destruction we found in the city was surprising.

The earthquake had been only a 5. It should have caused ten times less damage than the 6 had earlier that year. I had hoped to see the remains of the 132-year-old Anglican cathedral, severely damaged in February and finally toppled in December, but through the mesh of chain link surrounding the downtown perimeter, I could see only the empty skyline that had once held the church's landmark steeple.

Optimistic shop owners and determinedly cheerful residents mingled with the tourists in the temporary shopping district that had been hastily constructed out of storage containers, adjacent to the fenced-off ruins. The annual Christchurch Busker's Festival was attempting to go on as planned, and the makeshift town square was full of piano-playing children, jugglers, and slow-moving bodies painted to look like stone. We sat in our small rental car with the windows down, watching and listening, trying to decide where to go next. The 3 aftershock felt like someone was jumping up and down on the vehicle bumper and made the nearby unicycle-riding, mulleted street performer fall from his perch, midjuggle. He joked about experiencing a similar thing in a pub the night before, the crowd laughed, and we stopped poring over a city map for long enough to wonder what a force ten times that magnitude would have done to his act.

The term *magnitude* is another share of the legacy Mr. Richter left to the science of seismology. The word was traditionally used in the field of astronomy, of which Mr. Richter was a longtime enthusiast, to measure the relative brightness of a star. At the discretion of the Greek Hipparchus and the Alexandrian Ptolemy, stars were classified by their brightness, which at that time was thought to be the result merely of their distance from the earth. Under this assumption, stars were grouped into six realms of magnitude and referred to as stars of the first magnitude, second magnitude, and so on. Over time, as science progressed and telescopes were invented and improved upon, astronomers allowed the luminosity, or the electromagnetic energy emitted by a star, to factor into their calculations.

Richter (and Gutenberg) developed the scale initially to compare the size of different earthquakes. It was Gutenberg who suggested that it be a logarithmic scale; had the scale been linear, its units of measurement would have been far too small and far too numerous for common use. Perhaps we would have ranked earthquakes on a scale of 1 to

1,000,000,000. Of this decision, Mr. Richter said famously, “I was lucky because logarithmic plots are a device of the devil.” I’m unsure what he meant in saying this. A mathematician friend of mine tells me that logarithms are deceptively simple and can create the feeling of getting something for nothing; the calculations are too complicated, but the solution too easy. This friend always uses a slide ruler or computer to calculate logarithms, rather than attempting to do so in his head, and says this is common among mathematicians. Perhaps the use of this scale felt a bit like a deal with the devil for Mr. Richter. Perhaps he hated being dependent on anything external to make these calculations. He was also a nudist, which is perhaps another story.

And perhaps he was less narcissistic than he initially appears. Our understanding of any one item on a scale, logarithmic or linear, is dependent on our understanding of what ranks below or above it; nothing can stand alone. I had never felt an earthquake before the magnitude 3 aftershock I felt in Christchurch, and I knew that it was a 3 only because my husband’s guess, influenced by two years of living in the tectonic hotbed of California, was confirmed by news reports. The magnitude 5 quake that altered Christmas for so many Kiwis that year was bad. But it wasn’t nearly as bad as what they had experienced ten months prior, and for that, many of them expressed a shaken and profound gratitude. But all of this is most certainly more complicated than my limited understanding has allowed it to be. How can impacts, magnitudes, challenges be categorized into such neat logarithmic rankings?

Additional scales have been designed to measure various aspects of earthquakes, such as the amplitude or size of the waves or the amount of damage done, and the majority of seismologists no longer use the actual Richter scale. However, the idea of the Richter scale has been too firmly ingrained in the minds of the general public to abandon it now. Most scales currently in use have been designed to produce results that are numerically similar to those of the Richter scale, making those results easily understood. The same earthquake may receive a ranking of 5 from three different scales, but for very different reasons. But those reasons often don’t seem important if mainstream news reports can tell the general public that one earthquake received the same ranking as another one.

With similar ambiguity, the size and difficulty of whitewater on rivers throughout the world are measured on a linear scale of I–VI, with pluses and minuses thrown in for added flexibility. If there is a steady



current and minor disturbances in the surface of the water, that section of the river will rank a I, while a VI ranking is given to rapids or sections of river that are considered unrunnable by anything but driftwood; these rapids are long, huge, fast, extremely technical, and seldom paddled. The VI ranking is a strangely protected entity among river runners; if more than just a lucky few people are able to safely get through a Class VI section of river, that section's ranking is dropped to a V. Many rapids or sections of river are assigned a ranking spectrum, depending on their offerings at varying water levels. Lava Falls, one of the big names in North American whitewater and one of the most difficult rapids to maneuver on the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, is given a spectrum of IV–V on the international scale, depending on the daily fluctuation of water released from the upstream Glen Canyon Dam.

The first time I rowed a boat through Lava Falls, I was twenty-three and on an eighteen-day private river trip through the Grand Canyon. Our group had camped less than a mile upstream from Lava, knowing that the water would be lower in the morning and the rapid would consequently be less technical: more IV than V. Early the next morning we floated slowly downstream, listening to the roar of the rapid grow louder, and pulled over to hike down and scout the rapid. What I saw made my stomach heave. The water poured over a ledge that occupied most of the middle of the river, creating the infamous “ledge hole” just below, an enormous sucking hydraulic of water surging upstream and over itself, big enough to hold and crush an eighteen-foot raft, stripping it bare of frame, oars, and passengers. The runs on either side of the ledge hole were rock-strewn channels that fed into enormous lateral waves downstream. Surely, we had miscalculated our timing; this rapid, at this water level at this time of day, was a V . . . or possibly a VI. I stared at it for as long as I could stand, knowing that I'd have to row through it, then walked back to my boat on shaking legs.

I've seen video footage from this trip since then, and at this point in the recording, as I approach the brink of Lava's substantial elevation drop, I take several backstrokes with my oars before I sweep down into the rapid; I don't remember doing this, but it looks as though I'm making one final and hopeless effort to avoid doing what I'm about to do. And perhaps I was. The run itself was not the most perfectly executed that the rapid had ever seen, but I managed to keep the boat upright and pull into a downstream eddy and gradually stop shaking. Months later, a friend who had rowed Lava Falls several times watched the video of

our trip and commented on how lucky we'd been to have seen the rapid at such a forgiving level.

"It was probably only about a IV-minus," he said casually.

I felt slightly stung by the dismissal of my accomplishment, however imperfect it had been. Of course, I will never know exactly what that rapid was ranked that day, because the answer will always depend on other factors. Rapid ranking is done by the elusive and powerful "they" made up of river runners, mapmakers, writers, and departments of tourism because there is no governing body in the river-running world. The system is subjective, inconsistent, and often ego-based. The link connecting the general public to these whitewater rivers is most often a paid commercial river guide, a breed prone to exaggeration and insecurity. Picture a group of guys in their early twenties sitting around a campfire or their company warehouse, drinking and describing their exploits on the Colorado, the Salmon, or the Payette.

"Dude, it was like miles and miles of solid Class V?"

In most cases, it was probably just a few miles of interspersed Class III+ or IV. But individuals seeking to prove themselves will almost always claim the upper end of the spectrum, and there's nothing official to say whether they are right or wrong in doing so. A rapid's ranking, at least in the course of casual conversation, is dependent on the previous experience of the person doing the ranking, and his or her desire to impress. And no one is impressed by a III these days.

On previous trips to New Zealand, I had seen Huka Falls, perhaps the most visited section of the mineral-laden, light blue Aratiatia River on the North Island. This waterfall is tall, but not staggeringly so; the most striking feature is the enormous volume of water contained in this narrow channel, creating a cloud of mist substantial enough to dampen anything nearby. Even on sunny days, visitors wear rain jackets when they walk out to view the falls.

For years it was thought that these falls were too dangerous to kayak over and no one ever tried. Then in the early 1980s, a woman from the nearby town of Taupo threw herself over the protective railing at an upstream lookout and despondently propelled herself downstream and over the falls toward what she hoped would be the end of her life. Rather than being caught and held in the circulating hydraulic, she instead bobbed gently over the thousands of cubic feet of water that had been so feared for so long and emerged unscathed downstream from the waterfall. She swam to shore and—unwilling to abandon her fear

of and confidence in the destructive power of the waterfall—walked back upstream and jumped over the guard rail again, only to experience the same thing. She went over the falls four times before giving up. I've heard this story each of the three times I've visited Huka Falls, in variations consistent enough that I don't question at least the basic truthfulness. I don't know if she later sought another method of ending her life or if she interpreted this failed attempt as an indication that she was meant to continue living; I hope for the latter but wonder—if that were the case—if her interpretation may have been challenged by the fact that Huka Falls has now been downgraded from a Class VI to a Class IV–V, depending on water level, and people kayak it often. One New Zealand whitewater webpage refers to it as a “fun outing” and claims that it is possible to maintain a dry face when kayaking over the falls. This is obviously an exaggeration in true Kiwi “No worries, mate!” fashion, but it illustrates the degree to which public perception of this waterfall has changed due to the evolving boldness of kayakers.

In a long conversation over lunch, in which I tried to understand the nuances of logarithms and my own thoughts, my mathematician friend tried to articulate my problem with the whitewater ranking system in his own terms.

“It's like redefining the length of a mile every time someone beats the existing running record.”

And what if we did? What if, when the first precisely measured running tracks were built in England in the 1850s and Charles Westhall set the first world record in the one-mile run with a time of 4:28, the definition of a mile was adjusted to whatever distance Westhall could run in that length of time? What if his gait slowed as he aged? What if that British sense of nationalism, so prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century, had relaxed enough to acknowledge greater, though less official, speeds being run by individuals in South America or Africa? Would our mile now be something closer to the length of the modern kilometer? If so, it may have helped me better visualize the layout and dimensions of New Zealand when I first visited it as a naïve and unprepared nineteen-year-old.

Richter (and Gutenberg) devised their scale to replace the Mercalli scale, developed by and named after Father Giuseppe Mercalli, Italian priest and geologist, which ranked earthquakes on a scale of 1 to 12, based on the reactions of people and buildings. A collapsed building and panic in a crowd led to a high ranking, while levelheaded citizens

and a moderate tremor in the floor earned very little attention. The difficulty, obviously, was the subjectivity: the severity of an earthquake may depend entirely on Mercalli's light fixtures—did he have stationary light bulbs or chandeliers capable of swinging? As construction methods became sounder, the strength of an earthquake decreased; as populations swelled, earthquakes in that area became stronger. I wonder if all science is destined to become amusing for the generations that follow.

There is a heated debate over plans for the Christchurch Cathedral. The city itself is changing as it rebuilds; what was once the most “English” city in New Zealand is becoming more artistic and relaxed, and leaders of the church would like to see the cathedral replaced with a contemporary new building, one safer, less expensive, and more in tune with the times. Countering this (and filing lawsuits to prove their point) is the Christchurch Buildings Trust, a group of American supporters and local activists who hope to restore all the significant buildings in the city, specifically the cathedral. Supported by artisans and craftsmen from around the world, the trust has offered to do pro-bono work to begin reconstruction. Meanwhile, the cordoned-off wreckage of the church sits untouched in the town square.

A short distance away lies a representation of another controversy, Christchurch's transitional “Cardboard Cathedral.” This memorial church, built from nearly one hundred twenty-four-inch cardboard tubes coated with waterproof polyurethane on an A-frame of timber beams and structural steel, was dedicated in August 2013. The building was designed by Japanese architect Shigeru Ban, known for his temporary structures in the wake of natural disasters, who said, “The strength of the building has nothing to do with the strength of the material. Even concrete buildings can be destroyed by earthquakes very easily. But paper buildings cannot.”<sup>1</sup> Kiwis were, and continue to be, divided over this church; many appreciate the swift answer to the loss of their cathedral and admire the innovation and modern design, while many are repelled by the idea of a temporary structure; a church, after all, is

---

1. Quoted in Matt Hickman, “Shigeru Ban's Cardboard Cathedral Opens after Ungodly Delay,” *Mother Nature Network*, August 7, 2013, <http://www.mnn.com/lifestyle/arts-culture/blogs/shigeru-bans-cardboard-cathedral-opens-after-ungodly-delay>.

representative of the faith of its congregation, the rock upon which their devotion is founded.

But doesn't rock crumble and turn to sand eventually? Don't all of our estimations erode and change? A river will continue to run its course through a rocky rapid, despite the numerical ranking we assign to it, and an earthquake of high magnitude will still crumble a church, no matter what it's made of. I can't help but feel that a temporary church somehow makes a virtue out of acknowledging the unpredictability and impermanence of this world.

---

This essay by Elizabeth Knight received an honorable mention in the BYU Studies 2014 personal essay contest.

# Muslims among Mormons

## Perspectives on Muslim Students Attending Brigham Young University

*Shon D. Hopkin and Ray L. Huntington*

Muslim parents in the Middle East who want their children to receive a Western college education may face a dilemma. While they may see benefits in Western education, they generally also want their children to maintain their adherence to Islam. These parents may worry that their children will be exposed to the antireligious sentiment prevalent in the West or that association with Christianity will negatively affect their commitment to Islam. Parents may also be concerned that their children will be exposed to alcohol, recreational drug use, and premarital sexual activities that are prevalent in Western culture. Muslim youth in the West may become resistant to parental influences, marital expectations, and socially acceptable behaviors for Muslims.

BYU has attracted a small Muslim population. This unique population is worthy of study because of the religious differences and similarities between Muslims and Mormons. The exploratory study described in this paper examined the reasons Muslim parents and their children selected Brigham Young University for the children's higher education. The study also focused on the influence that exposure to Western culture has had on the religious and cultural values of BYU's Muslim students. We first asked what factors influenced parents to send their youth to attend a Western university in general and Brigham Young University in particular. Second, we asked what impact attendance at BYU has had on the students' religious and cultural values. We sought to determine if exposure to Western values and lifestyle weakened the students' practice of Islam and its associated culture.

## Shon D. Hopkin and Ray L. Huntington

This study is the result of our academic backgrounds and interests in Islam. Dr. Hopkin's involvement in this study stems from a doctoral program that focused on medieval Hebrew, Arabic, and Spanish literature from the Iberian Peninsula, where Islam, Judaism, and Christianity had extensive contact over the course of several hundred years. While working on his graduate degree at the University of Texas at Austin, he was also heavily engaged in interfaith work, serving as president of the university's interfaith council. This interfaith work led to many friendships with Muslim leaders and students in Austin and eventually led to an extended interfaith trip to Turkey, and later to a summer-long stay in Damascus, Syria. After arriving at BYU, he desired to continue his engagement in interfaith understanding and cooperation, leading him to collaborate with Dr. Huntington on this study.



Shon D. Hopkin



Ray L. Huntington

Dr. Huntington began his professional career assessing the impact of Israeli occupation on the historic family roles of Palestinian refugee families living in the West Bank of Palestine and Gaza. He has taught undergraduate courses on Islam in Religious Education for the past fifteen years, which provided opportunities to associate with Muslim students attending BYU. Many of these students face unique challenges attending a private, predominantly LDS university. This research project explores those challenges and the impact of attending school in a religious environment. Further, our in-depth interviews with these students have given us insights on how BYU can better assist Muslim students to achieve their educational goals.

## Methodology

Because of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the BYU Administration cannot release the names of Muslim students attending the university. We therefore used a snowball sampling technique. We knew several Muslim students, and when we interviewed each of them, we asked for the names of other Muslim students. The snowball grew to include thirty-seven students, whom we interviewed between June 2013 and November 2013. Based on information obtained from the Muslim students we interviewed, we estimate that approximately fifty Muslim students were enrolled at BYU at the time of the study. We thus obtained data from around 75 percent of the total population. Our failure to interview more students was primarily due to our inability to obtain their names and contact information from their Muslim acquaintances. Only three students for whom we had contact information did not return our emailed invitations to participate in the study.

Since this was an exploratory study, we utilized an in-depth interview method to obtain the desired information. The interview schedule asked general questions about why the students came to the United States to attend school and why they selected Brigham Young University. Questions also focused on their experiences at BYU, including their major area of study. We probed whether their acceptance and practice of Islam had changed during their time at BYU. We also inquired as to whether they had experienced any discrimination because of their religion and whether they had felt pressure to investigate the LDS Church.

Each respondent signed a “Consent to be Interviewed Form” that detailed the purpose of the study, the interview procedures, estimated length of the interview, and any risks or discomforts associated with the study. The most obvious risk for these respondents was that their individual comments could be publicly linked to them. To alleviate this concern, respondents were assured of interview confidentiality, with the promise that their name would never appear in any presentations based on this research. The students were also informed they did not have to answer questions they preferred to avoid and could terminate the interview at any time. Next, we asked their permission to digitally record the interview. Once a respondent had signed the consent form, he or she was interviewed. In order to combat the risk that students might avoid sharing negative experiences or perceptions because of the face-to-face interview, the interviewers stressed the importance of sharing both their positive and negative experiences at the university,



since their responses would be helpful in altering similar circumstances for future Muslim students. The average interview lasted approximately sixty minutes, with the shortest interview lasting forty-one minutes, and the longest interview spanning two different meetings of about seventy-five minutes each. The students seemed to enjoy the opportunity to share their feelings and experiences and often expressed the hope that doing so would not just be enjoyable for them but would be helpful for future Muslim students at BYU.

All the interviews were transcribed, and then their content was analyzed by the two researchers and by four student assistants in order to obtain data from the open-ended responses that could be evaluated. The reliability or consistency of data obtained between all analysts was over 95 percent.

### **The Participants**

We designed the initial portion of each interview to learn background and demographic information about the participants. Of the thirty-seven students, twenty-one (57%) were male, and sixteen (43%) were female. Nineteen (52%) were pursuing an undergraduate education. Eighteen (47%) were graduate students. Of the graduate students, about half were in the sciences, such as biochemistry and chemical engineering. One student was majoring in political science; a number of other graduate students were pursuing law degrees, and others were earning degrees in accounting. None of the students we interviewed were pursuing degrees in the fine arts or humanities. Twenty-five (68%) of the students were single; twelve (32%) were married. Twelve students interviewed were from Iran, nine from Palestine/Israel, eight from Jordan, four from Egypt, two from Pakistan, one from Oman, and one from Dubai. One of the Iranian students was born and raised in the United States but was raised in a home with close cultural connections to Iran, including frequent and lengthy visits to Iran to stay with family members and to learn about the cultural practices of Muslims in Iran.

### **Reasons for Attending BYU**

Table 1 lists several factors that influenced the students we interviewed to attend BYU. The categories in the chart overlap and affect each other. Many parents, for example, who expressed concern about having their child attend a Western university also had those concerns mitigated by their child's choice to attend BYU.

**Table 1. Factors Influencing Decision to Attend BYU**

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Number (n=37)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Parental concern with attending a Western university	24	65
BYU Honor Code	21	57
Parental concern mitigated by choice to attend BYU	18	49
Parental encouragement to attend BYU	12	32
Academics/Field of study	11	30
Family member living in Utah	05	13

Twenty-four of the students (65%) indicated their parents had significant concerns regarding their desire to attend a Western university. Some of these parents strongly desired their children to attend a school in the West but worried about the spiritual consequences of that choice. In other cases, the student rather than the parents desired a Western education, causing great concern among the parents that their child would abandon Islam and its moral standards. These concerns were the strongest factors that encouraged students and parents to look more closely at BYU, with twenty-one students (57%) stating that the BYU Honor Code affected their choice to attend BYU. In fact, the Honor Code was the strongest factor in the decision to attend school at BYU.

For eleven of the students we interviewed (30%), the reasons for attending BYU were almost exclusively academic. These students came to BYU because it had a certain program of study that fit their interests, and they had discovered the university as they were searching for Western programs that coincided with their educational pursuits. Of these eleven students, ten were graduate students who stated that they were looking for highly specialized programs and colleges that had demonstrated impressive success rates in placing graduates in the work force. They were found primarily in chemistry, chemical engineering, math, and law programs. For these students, BYU had been an attractive option without knowing anything else about the university, including knowledge about the Honor Code. Only one of the eleven students drawn to BYU for academic reasons was an undergraduate. As a younger population with less-specialized academic needs, Muslim undergraduate students could apparently meet their educational aspirations effectively elsewhere and were primarily drawn to BYU for reasons other than the school's academic value.

Five students (13%) indicated they were influenced to come to BYU because they already had a family member living there, which helped

them learn about the type of social atmosphere at the university and provided them with security and social connections as they left home and moved to Provo.

### **The Honor Code**

As stated earlier, of the 37 students interviewed, twenty-one (57%) came to BYU primarily because of the Honor Code. As they learned more about BYU, they discovered that the university and the local communities have a reputation for being family-friendly environments with conservative moral values. One student expressed his appreciation for the Provo environment as follows:

Because LDS people are marrying at a younger age than the norm, it means that they're focusing on family, and family is a very critical and essential part in the [LDS] church, and I like that. Because that's how it is in my culture and in my religion. I like it when we do FHE [Family Home Evening] or when people call their families every day. The average American will see their family on Christmas and Thanksgiving, and that will be it. I don't like that at all and will never be able to accept it as part of me.

The ability to attend a Western university that fostered fairly strict standards of behavior and had a relatively high academic ranking was extremely attractive to these students. Indeed, aspects of the BYU environment that would be distasteful or detrimental in the eyes of some non-LDS students, such as abstinence from alcoholic beverages and dress and grooming standards, were assets to these Muslim students. They chose to attend BYU because many of the values expressed in the BYU Honor Code are in line with Islamic belief and practice. In answer to the question "What's been challenging about adapting and being a Muslim student at Brigham Young University?" one student responded:

I don't know if it's been challenging to adapt because the environment here is basically the same [as] back home. I'm Muslim, and we have the same traditions, the same rules about dress code, about alcohol, smoking, and all of these things. They were basically the same. The only difference probably is drinking tea and coffee. That's the one thing that's different, but we got used to it right away. Everything else was so easy. It hasn't been that challenging for me.

While a few students indicated their parents were not overly concerned about their children attending a Western university, as mentioned above, twenty-four students (65%) indicated their parents were highly

concerned about their children leaving their home environment and moving to a place that might have a negative impact upon their religious beliefs and behaviors. Thirty-one students (84%) stated that their parents were supportive of their choice to attend BYU after their child reported to them about the Honor Code and the religious environment at BYU. Interestingly, of the parents of eleven students who had actually visited BYU, all (100%) left feeling better about their child's place of study than before they came. A number of students stated that their parents love BYU and want all of their children to attend there. Many of the students who reported family influence on their decision have had multiple siblings or extended family members who attended BYU in the past.

The experience of one Muslim student is illustrative of many of the students we interviewed who were impressed by the Honor Code and the values espoused by BYU. This student was raised in the United States but has very strong ties to Iran, where she visits extended family members regularly and is familiar with Iranian culture. She recounted her humorous experience as follows:<sup>1</sup>

I actually discovered BYU when I was about sixteen. My parents, brother, grandparents, and I were on a road trip through Utah, going from Park City down to Moab, I think. We didn't have smart phones or a GPS; that's why we got lost. We were driving this big rental van and got lost, and we ended up just driving through the canyon. For some reason, we ended up in the parking lot of the Wilkinson Center, and we didn't even know what BYU was.

We got out of the car, and I remember seeing the sign on the mountains and said, "Oh, mom, I've actually heard of this school; they have a football team, like the Y. I know this is a school; this is a university."

"Oh cool, well, you'll be applying soon. We're already here, why not get out of the car and go explore the campus a little bit? It seems really pretty."

We all got out and walked around campus, and then went into the Wilk[inson Student Center]. My first thought was, "Wow, this is really cool. Everyone is so good looking here!"

My mom and everyone else were sitting in the Wilk while I walked around asking people questions. She picked up a bridal magazine and was looking through it when she called me over.

"Why are they all wearing capped sleeves? That's so weird. Look, they're dressed kind of conservative. This is weird."

---

1. All interview sections have been edited according to the official style guides of Baylor University, University of Illinois, and University of Oregon.

I flipped through it too. Bridal magazines aren't supposed to be like that, you know; bridal magazines are all like a fashion show. She put the magazine down and said, "Let's go talk to admissions and see what's up with this university. It seems a little different."

We went to the information desk in the Wilk, and this girl sold me on BYU. I had grown up in a household with no drinking, no smoking, certain lifestyle things, and when you think of college, what do you think of? You think of partying, you know, certain things that go along with college lifestyle. This girl was so well informed about BYU and started telling us when it was built, and that the majority of students here are LDS. We had heard of Mormons, but I had never met one before. I really liked that she let me know exactly what I was getting myself into. She told me about the Honor Code within the first few minutes. My mom started nodding and said, "This is the school." My dad came over to look at a copy of the Honor Code statement and he said, "Yeah, this is a really good school."

All signs pointed to yes. Everything pointed to yes. I think the girl we talked to was some sort of Middle Eastern Studies major. She thought it was really cool that I'm from the Middle East, and [she] was learning Arabic or something. Then she told me the one thing that sold me on BYU. I'm super social, and I really like to have fun and go out to crowded places. She told me that a lot of people come to BYU and don't have a good experience because they don't know what to do or who to hang out with.

"But let me tell you something about my experience and my friends," she said. "Every other weekend, we drive down to St. George, and we drive down to Las Vegas, and we do everything fun, but don't break the Honor Code."

"How do you even do that in Vegas?"

"We love to dance, and we love music, but we don't indulge in certain things. We don't step past that line. And I have a great group of friends, and we all believe the same thing."

I thought to myself, "I need to find more friends like her! Maybe I'll find them here!"

My mom kept telling me the whole way back to the car, "You need to apply to this school. You need to apply."

Although this student was the only one of those we interviewed who was able to learn about BYU's environment in such a personal way, her experience illustrates the attraction BYU has for these Muslim students and their parents, who see the religious environment at BYU as a buffer against the worldly values and lifestyles seen on many campuses across the United States.

**Table 2. Student Perspectives about BYU Honor Code**

<i>Perspective</i>	<i>Number (n=37)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Highly positive	33	89
Concerns about prohibition of coffee and tea	07	19
Concerns about religious prohibitions in general	03	08
Concerns about prohibition of facial hair or traditional Islamic attire	02	05

We asked each of the students we interviewed about their experience with BYU's Honor Code and how they felt about it after attending BYU. The response to the Honor Code was overwhelmingly positive, with thirty-three students (89%) stating that they supported the Honor Code and appreciated attending a Western university that had a strict code of ethical behavior. To these students, the Honor Code meant they were not confronted with many of the worldly behaviors they anticipated finding in a Western culture, or with behaviors their friends or relatives who were attending other Western universities described to them (alcoholic consumption, illicit sexual behavior, and so forth). One student said, "When my father read the Honor Code, he told me, 'This is the right university for you.'"

In their responses, many of the married students connected the family-friendly environment they were experiencing at BYU (along with living in Provo, Utah) with the Honor Code, making it difficult to separate their feelings regarding the Honor Code from their feelings about the general community of Latter-day Saints not attending BYU. It is also important to remember that Muslim students who are less favorably inclined to live the Honor Code would likely choose to attend school elsewhere. This choice and these students' overwhelming support of the Honor Code indicates that most of them knew something about the Honor Code before attending BYU and were comfortable with the lifestyle it dictated. In short, the majority of Muslim students we interviewed at BYU appeared to be more comfortable and supportive of the Honor Code than we had anticipated.

There were, however, some exceptions to these positive feelings. Four students (11%) stated they had reservations about the Honor Code, and of the eighty-nine percent who were highly positive about the Honor Code some mentioned aspects of it that were challenging for them (as seen in table 2). Of the four students who were not highly positive about the Honor Code, two were still supportive of it in general but felt dissatisfied

with certain aspects when it conflicted with their own cultural expectations or religious views. The other two students viewed the Honor Code in generally negative terms. These two students mentioned the adverse effects they experienced from religious coercion in their country's interpretation and governmental enforcement of Islamic practices, and they stated that they had come to the West in part to escape restrictive rules regarding dress and behavior. They expressed frustration that they had encountered a modified, although less restrictive, version of those rules through the BYU Honor Code.

Several students made statements about how challenging it was to avoid coffee and tea when these drinks had been such a central part of their diet back home. A student who is highly positive about the Honor Code but who has found certain aspects of it challenging made the comment below:

I guess the only thing that I feel over here that's difficult for me is not drinking coffee and tea. I have never drunk them over here, and it's so hard for me, just because I used to drink so much coffee, like three cups a day. My mom made me abstain from drinking coffee and tea before I came here. She said, "Don't do it." She wanted to make sure that I tried not to drink them so that I would be prepared when I came here. I've found other things that help me compensate for it in the morning, like a cold shower.

Even though the prohibition of tea and coffee is difficult for some Muslim students, most of the students have not had trouble transitioning to BYU's culture. One student put it this way: "If I were to be at any other university, it would be more of a culture shock than here. Despite no coffee and tea, nothing has really changed in how I live."

Two male students expressed dissatisfaction with the Honor Code because it prohibited beards. (In 2015, BYU refined its policy and now allows an exception to the beard ban based on religion.)<sup>2</sup> In Islamic culture, beards are considered an important aspect of male appearance, since the Prophet Muhammad wore a beard and considered it a distinguishing mark of masculinity. Men who wear beards are also viewed as more mature or wise than those who are clean-shaven. These two students had a difficult time reconciling the prohibition of beards at BYU with their

---

2. See Amy McDonald, "Muslims Celebrate BYU Beard Policy Exemption," *Daily Herald*, January 17, 2015, [http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/education/college/byu/muslims-celebrate-byu-beard-policy-exemption/article\\_ed90845c-677a-5ade-9e24-9350ba33e68f.html](http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/education/college/byu/muslims-celebrate-byu-beard-policy-exemption/article_ed90845c-677a-5ade-9e24-9350ba33e68f.html).

own cultural expectations regarding facial hair but still followed the rules and were clean-shaven. A few of the other male students who did not complain about the beard prohibition did wear some facial hair (resulting from not shaving for a day or two), choosing to live the rules in a modified way that was more in line with their own cultural and religious views.

### LDS Religious Pressure

We suspected that Muslim students at BYU would have experienced a significant amount of religious pressure while attending the Provo school, with “religious pressure” defined as unwelcome encouragement to accept LDS religious viewpoints or to alter the interviewee’s religious viewpoints regarding Islam. Data from this study, however, indicated that Muslim students for the most part felt that they had been treated respectfully and had not received undue harassment or pressure to abandon Islam or modify their religious views.

*Table 3. Religious Pressure at BYU*

<i>Pressure</i>	<i>Number (n=37)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
None	28	76
Some religious pressure, but not negative to Islam	07	19
Strong religious pressure, but not negative to Islam	01	03
Strong religious pressure, including negativity toward Islam	01	03

As seen in table 3, only one student (3%) had experience with any type of religious pressure that included the devaluation of Islam as a persuasive tool. Of the seven students (19%) who said they had received some religious pressure and the one student who said he had received strong religious pressure (3%), none sensed any derogatory sentiment toward Islam but rather saw the religious pressure coming from the LDS students’ love of and commitment to their LDS faith. Twenty-eight students (76%) indicated that they had received no religious pressure whatsoever. This lack of pressure, of course, does not mean that LDS students had not shared any of their religious viewpoints or encouraged the Muslim students to learn more about the LDS faith. Rather, it seems to indicate that when religious viewpoints were shared, it was perceived as an open and friendly conversation, free of any unwelcome persuasion.



### Anti-Islam Discrimination

Twenty-nine students (78%) stated that they had experienced no type of cultural or religious discrimination, including when seen wearing traditional clothing, like the hijab for women, or offering their daily prayers. The other nine students indicated that they felt either very little or considerable prejudice.

*Table 4. Racial or Religious Prejudice at BYU*

<i>Prejudice</i>	<i>Number (n=37)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
None	29	78
Very little	08	22
Considerable	01	03

The feelings expressed by one student seem to be typical of the majority of the group. When asked if she had ever experienced any kind of racial or religious prejudice at BYU, she remarked:

No, I actually never have. I feel like here at BYU, every time I say I'm from Iran, people want to know me or they want to know where I'm from, what it's like living in Iran, or being a Muslim. My friends in other states might not feel as comfortable, but I feel like I was the luckiest because I came to Utah and people are so nice and kind.

In general, the eight students (22%) who had experienced "very little" discrimination said that the negative interactions did not occur with BYU students, but rather with older individuals they met outside of the BYU community. One female student described a negative experience that occurred off campus. According to her account, an older woman she bumped into while shopping looked angrily at her and then told her that she should return to her own country. Others recounted that at times they interacted with students or others who expressed pro-Israeli sentiments without seeming to be aware of the historical or contemporary variables that mark the Arab-Israeli conflict.

### Impact of Religion Classes

BYU requires all undergraduate students to take fourteen credit hours of religion classes during their four years of study. One religion course required for non-LDS students introduces LDS beliefs and behaviors to help them better understand the religious environment at BYU. Most religion classes, such as Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price, Doctrine

and Covenants, LDS Church History, and Sharing the Gospel are clearly LDS in perspective. Even classes that focus on more widely accepted religious texts and topics, such as the Old and New Testament, are taught from an LDS perspective.

Because of the LDS perspectives taught in the religion classes, we wondered whether Muslim undergraduate students would be offended by or concerned about the fourteen-hour requirement. More importantly, we wondered what impact these required religion classes would have on the Muslim students' religious identity. We anticipated the students we interviewed would be less positive about the required religion classes, since they might be viewed as a form of proselytization or as time wasted that could have been used to study for classes in their major. Surprisingly, the data indicated otherwise. The total number interviewed in table 5 differs from that in other tables since only undergraduate students are required to take religion classes at BYU. We were surprised that the religion classes, taught from an LDS perspective, both improved an appreciation for the LDS faith while also strengthening the Muslim students' appreciation for their own religious traditions.

*Table 5. Perceptions of Religious Classes*

<i>Perception</i>	<i>Number (n=19)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Interesting/helpful	18	94
Improved appreciation for Mormonism	18	94
Improved appreciation for Islam	17	89
No impact on views of Islam	02	11
An annoyance	01	05

When we asked the interviewees to account for these viewpoints, they responded with a number of possible reasons. First, many indicated the instructors were respectful to them as non-LDS students and, more importantly, as Muslim students. They did not denigrate or criticize Islamic beliefs, nor did they emphasize the positives of LDS theology at the expense of Islam. Second, the majority of students stated they noticed strong similarities between LDS and Islamic practices and beliefs. In general, members of the LDS Church, like Muslims, embrace a strict moral code, emphasize the importance of families, pay tithes (similar to charitable donations required in Islam), avoid consumption of alcohol and drugs, believe in submitting their wills to God—and make these choices without coercion.

Some of those we interviewed indicated that prior to coming to BYU they had not taken time to seriously think about their own faith traditions. As they observed (at least from their own perspectives) how the majority of LDS students at BYU actively lived their religion as a matter of personal choice, they were motivated to reassess their own faith, looking for the positive things they found to be of value to them as Muslims, such as reassessing the value of prayer or seeking to feel God's influence in their day-to-day lives. As one male student said, "When I saw [BYU] students taking their religion classes seriously, paying attention, reading their scriptures, and making comments, it encouraged me to be a better person—a person who was in touch with God."

We also found others who did not feel a need to reassess their own faith but simply found that the concepts discussed in BYU religion classes (like prayer, reading the scriptures, or cultivating family unity) strengthened their existing viewpoints and behaviors.

### **Changes in Islamic Religious Behavior**

During our interviews, we asked each student to describe the challenges of practicing Islam at a predominantly LDS university. Some aspects of Islam are often practiced communally, such as *salat*, or prayer five times a day, which is often done in a group setting at a mosque or in the home with family. Being removed from one's faith community can present challenges for adherents of any religion to continue practicing prescribed religious behavior, and we were interested in knowing if any of our Muslim students had experienced this challenge.<sup>3</sup>

We learned that many of our respondents found it more challenging to practice outward religious behaviors at BYU, such as praying five times a day or fasting during the month of Ramadan. The two primary reasons cited were (1) the busy schedule of a college student, and (2) the lack of a community to remind and assist in such behaviors as prayer or fasting.

Even with those challenges, over half of the students, twenty-one (57%), stated that studying at BYU did not seriously impact their religious practices. Most of these students said that Islam was designed to

---

3. We made a distinction between Islamic religious behavior and spirituality. Religious behavior is defined as participating in outward religious acts, such as praying five times a day. Spirituality is defined as a feeling of closeness toward Allah (God), thinking about him regularly, and seeking personal direction from him frequently.

be practiced anywhere and that living away from a supportive community did not impact them one way or the other. In fact, several of the students we interviewed indicated that the prayers offered at the beginning of their classes at BYU were extremely important to them, since they viewed them as fulfilling one of their duties to pray five times a day. Of the sixteen students (43%) who found it more difficult to practice their religion at BYU, ten said that the busy life of a student caused the difficulty. This was especially true when attending a Western university with a class schedule that was not designed to accommodate Muslim practices, such as daily prayer obligations or the month of fasting called Ramadan. The other six students said that it was more difficult to practice Islam at BYU, since they were living away from the family and community support that could be found in the Middle East. There were no students who believed that it was easier to practice Islam while attending BYU when compared to living in their home country.

### Muslim Student Spirituality and Religious Identity

Besides learning about the impact of their school experience on outward religious behaviors, we also wanted to assess the influence of BYU on the religious identity and spirituality of these Muslim students.

Of those interviewed, twenty-six (70%) reported that they felt an increased loyalty and commitment to Islam and had experienced an increase in their personal spirituality since coming to BYU. Ten students (27%) indicated that they were neither more nor less loyal to Islam due to their experience at BYU and that they felt a similar level of spirituality when compared with their lives before coming to BYU. Only one Muslim student (3%) expressed a decrease in loyalty to Islam; this student did express feelings of increased spirituality. None expressed a decrease in spirituality. Table 6 provides the reasons students provided for their increased feelings of spirituality and loyalty to Islam. Only those students who reported an increase in these feelings are represented in the table.

**Table 6. Reasons for Increased Loyalty to Islam**

<i>Perception</i>	<i>Number (n=26)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Positive influence of BYU students	24	92
Need for Allah in a foreign environment	19	73
Desire to be a good representative of Islam	08	31
Increased personal freedom	08	31

The largest factor for the students' increased spirituality and loyalty was the positive influence of LDS religious behavior and spirituality, expressed by twenty-four (92%) of the students. For instance, when they watched LDS students offering public prayers at the beginning of their classes, listened to the discussions between students and professors in their religion classes, and observed LDS students affirming their commitments to the Church, they assessed their own religious devotion and were motivated to improve their spiritual connection to God and their commitments to Islam.

Of the twenty-six students who indicated an increased spirituality, nineteen (73%) said that being away from their families and communities made them feel an increased need for Allah in their lives. In a situation where they sometimes felt lonely and isolated, they found that their relationship with God was a key factor in overcoming these feelings. Eight students (31%) mentioned that as a religious minority at BYU they felt a desire to live their religion in a positive way since they believed there were some students who did not have a favorable view of Islam. In short, they wanted to be good representatives and ambassadors for their faith.

Another eight students (31%) reported that the increased freedom at BYU helped them feel more connected to the religious choices they made, rather than making those choices due to external religious pressures (such as government-enforced religious policies), to please parents, or to fit in better with their community. According to many of the students, the freedom to choose how to live their religion at BYU contributed to their spirituality and closeness to God. These eight students were unanimous in their belief that instead of abandoning their faith, attending BYU had actually helped them appreciate Islam more than they had done before coming to BYU. A few of these eight students also mentioned that the absence of constraints on how they worshipped allowed them to personalize Islamic practices and create ways to achieve greater spirituality that were less orthodox than more rigid interpretations of Islam. Indeed, for many of these students separated from parents, family, and community support, most chose to find unique ways to increase their feelings for God (such as reading poetry, offering quiet personal prayers during the day, or softly repeating the Islamic names of God in quiet moments). Moreover, they mentioned how impressed they were with the LDS students, who were not coerced to practice their religion at BYU but chose to do so. A number of the students we interviewed

indicated this was a model they desired to follow in their own religious practices at BYU and when they returned home.

The following student interview demonstrates the influence that religious freedom and the religious behaviors of LDS students at BYU had on many of the Muslim students. This response is representative of others given during our interviews:

*Interviewer:* Do you think you are more or less spiritual here at BYU than you were when you were living at home? Would you say you feel less connected or more connected to Islam since coming here to BYU?

*Student:* I feel more spiritual here because in my country you have people who tell you that you should pray, pray, pray. Back home, I said, "Okay, they will tell me, then I will pray." So here, there is no one who tells me to pray, so I should pray for myself, because I want to and because I believe it is a good thing.

*Interviewer:* Has the LDS environment and seeing other people praying and being religious influenced you one way or the other?

*Student:* Yeah, they are good people. They practice their religion very well, very freely. I've seen that on Sunday they are always dressed nicely, and the families go to their church to pray. They have a strong community, a strong bond. Their influence has been good, and it has helped me to want to be a better person and to be more religious and spiritual in my life.

## Conclusion

In conducting this study, we aimed to answer the questions, "Why would a Muslim student choose to attend Brigham Young University?" and "What impact does BYU's environment have on its Muslim students?" On the whole, the data obtained indicate that Muslim students appreciated the religious environment at BYU and discovered that their experiences at BYU support their religious identity rather than conflicting with or marginalizing it. The number of positive responses was surprising to us at first since we had anticipated that many of the Muslim students would feel out of place at a religious school where the overwhelming majority of students were practicing Latter-day Saints. If

anything, just the opposite has taken place. For the majority of those we interviewed, attending BYU has been a positive experience and has not created conflicts with their own belief systems. Rather, it has strengthened the majority of them.

What factors led to the positive experiences for the majority of the Muslim students we interviewed? First, it appears the environment created by the standards lived by BYU students and reflected in the Honor Code were a significant factor in helping these students feel comfortable and fairly secure about their college experience while living in a foreign country. Second, it appears the LDS students' religious behaviors were not viewed as threatening to the Muslim students, but rather as supportive of their identity as practicing Muslims. The data we collected seem to imply that, along with the strong training provided by their own Muslim background, the religious environment at BYU as well as the positive interactions that the Muslim students have had with their LDS counterparts encouraged these students to see their religion as an asset rather than a detriment, particularly at a time when there is clearly some negative media bias toward Islam and Muslims.<sup>4</sup>

One of the more significant purposes of this study was to see what BYU can do to help minority students adjust and acclimate to a new environment and culture and, more particularly, what university professors can do to better deal with the cultural differences that impact the learning and well-being of Muslim minority students. Of the thirty-seven students interviewed, thirty-one (84%) said that BYU had made sufficient efforts to support their religious activities. For example, many of those we interviewed commented about the room BYU has designated in the Wilkinson Center to be used as a mosque for Friday prayers. Many were impressed that BYU would dedicate a space for the religious needs of such a small minority. Further, one graduate student who was attending BYU during the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center mentioned that the BYU administration had called each Muslim student to make sure they were safe, to counsel with them, and to give them a personal phone number if they felt threatened or needed help in any way.

---

4. See, for example, Rasha A. Abdulla and Mervat Abou Oaf, "Collective Guilt as a Response to Evil: The Case of Arabs and Muslims in the Western Media," *The Handbook of Global Communication and Media Ethics*, ed. Robert S. Fortner and P. Mark Fackler, 2 vols. (Hoboken, N.J.: Blackwell Publishing, 2011), 2:735-51.

While these efforts are admirable, there is more that can be done to help Muslim students feel welcome at BYU.

A number of the students we interviewed felt that BYU should devote more time in promoting its religious and cultural environment to non-LDS students looking for a unique place to study. They believed that if more Muslim students were aware of the uncommon educational and religious atmosphere at BYU, the numbers of Muslim students attending BYU would increase dramatically. Many of the students we interviewed believed that a larger Muslim student population would make it easier for them to practice the communal aspects of Islam. In their view, a larger Muslim population would allow them to more fully enjoy the benefits a religious community offers its members, which they perceived to be happening among the LDS student population. While we realize there are constraints to the number of students who can attend Brigham Young University, it is nevertheless a compliment to the unique religious environment of the campus that so many of the students we interviewed believed that other Muslim students would benefit from attending BYU. These students also gave other practical suggestions that would benefit the Muslim minority at BYU, like holding an orientation meeting for new Muslim students at the beginning of each semester, labeling foods at the Cannon Center that contain pork, and advertising the location of the Wilkinson Center room used for Friday prayers.

Finally, an important question that remains unanswered is, how does the experience of Muslim students at BYU compare with the experience of other Muslim students attending nonreligious universities in the United States? In order to answer this question, a comparative study is required in a variety of other settings, including secular educational environments and environments in which other religious viewpoints predominate. Consequently, a qualitative study of Muslim students is currently underway at a university in New York City, which will allow us to compare the findings of our BYU study with the data from interviews at the New York university. We anticipate there will be differences in the experiences of Muslim students at the two institutions. We believe the Muslim students at BYU will be more robust in their religious behavior, given the distinctive environment at BYU.

---

Shon D. Hopkin is Assistant Professor of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University. He received his PhD in Hebrew studies from the University of Texas



at Austin, with a focus on medieval Jewish, Christian, and Arabic literature, particularly in the Iberian Peninsula. His undergraduate and master's degrees focused on the Hebrew Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls. His current research focuses on medieval Jewish thought and literature, on the Hebrew Bible, and on the Book of Mormon.

Ray L. Huntington is Professor of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University. He received his PhD in sociology, with an emphasis in contemporary Middle East studies, from Brigham Young University. He has taught at the BYU Jerusalem Center on several occasions and helped to reopen the center in 2007, after a six-year closure.

# Viracocha

## Christ among the Ancient Peruvians?

Scott Hoyt

*There came from a southern direction a white man of great stature, who, by his aspect and presence, called forth great veneration and obedience. This man who thus appeared had great power, insomuch that he could change plains into mountains, and great hills into valleys, and make water flow out of stones. As soon as such power was beheld, the people called him the Maker of created things, the Prince of all things, Father of the Sun. For they say that he performed other wonders, giving life to men and animals, so that by his hand marvellous great benefits were conferred on the people. . . . In many places he gave orders to men how they should live, and he spoke lovingly to them . . . admonishing them that they should do good . . . and that they should be loving and charitable to all. In most parts he is generally called Ticiviracocha. . . . [And] that wherever [he] . . . came and there were sick, he healed them, and where there were blind he gave them sight by only uttering words.<sup>1</sup>*

—Pedro de Cieza de León, Catholic Historian, 1550

Viracocha was the principal deity of ancient Peru, and according to the *cronistas* (Catholic historians, mostly priests, arriving in Peru

---

1. Pedro de Cieza de León, *The Second Part of the Chronicle of Peru (El Senorio de los Incas)*, trans. and ed. Clements R. Markham (1874; London: Hakluyt Society, 1883; repr. Boston: Elibron Classics, 1999), 5–6. *Senorio* was originally handwritten in 1550. Citations are to the 1999 edition.

## Scott Hoyt

I became interested in the correlation between the ancient legends of Peru and the Book of Mormon, while serving my mission in Peru in 1972–74. One of my companions, Kirk Magleby, and I became friends with a professor at San Marcos University, the oldest university in the Americas. He obtained access for us to the university vault holding original manuscripts of the *cronistas*, the Spanish/Catholic historians who wrote in the 1500s and



1600s about, among other things, the religion, customs, and legends of the Incas and Pre-Incas. We had the rare opportunity to leaf through these and note legends with certain intriguing parallels to Book of Mormon accounts of Christ's visit to ancient America.

Kirk and I authored a paper while on our missions about these parallels, and we both continued to study and pursue these legends after our missions. I authored several other papers on the ancient God of Peru, Viracocha, and other similarities in the legends to Christ and Christian beliefs and rituals, including several written in the course of my Latin American studies major at California State University, Fullerton. I received my bachelor's degree in this major.

I went on to obtain my juris doctorate and made a career at a large national law firm. Even while in a demanding legal career and helping my wife, Gaylene, raise our six children, I never lost my passion for the legends and ethnohistory of ancient Peru and their potential support of the Book of Mormon. I continued to study and lecture on the subject.

I returned twice to Peru after my mission to continue my studies and ultimately pulled together all of my research on Viracocha and wrote this article. I have materials on other aspects of the Book of Mormon reflected in the legends, religion, and customs of the Incas and Pre-Incas, which I plan to use to write further articles.

shortly after Francisco Pizarro and the conquistadors in the 1500s) he was called the “creating God of the Andes.”<sup>2</sup>

The *cronistas* learned of and wrote about Viracocha based on oral accounts they received from the Incas and their study of Inca customs and practices still extant at the time of the conquest of Peru. They also saw and described several statuary representations of Viracocha that were worshipped by the Incas and their ancestors.

Significantly, many characteristics and actions of Viracocha reported by the Incas and documented by the *cronistas* in the 1500s match those attributed to Jesus Christ in Mormon scripture, including the Book of Mormon’s account of Jesus Christ’s visit to the Americas following his resurrection in Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> This article does not contend that the events

---

2. Although the Incas also worshipped the sun, according to the *cronistas* they did so because the sun was created by Viracocha and was associated with him. Cieza says he was “the Father of the Sun” (see epigraph) and Cristóbal de Molina says he “gave being to the Sun.” Cieza, *Chronicle*, xxvi, 5; Cristóbal de Molina, *Account of the Fables and Rites of the Incas* (written in 1573), ed. and trans. Brian S. Bauer, Vania Smith-Oka, and Gabriel E. Cantarutti (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 23, 45. Molina’s manuscript sat in Madrid until it was first published by Clements Markham in 1873. See appendix to Molina, *Account of Fables and Rites*, 91.

William Prescott, noted historian who wrote *History of the Conquest of Peru*, concluded that although heavenly bodies such as the sun were worshipped, “the Peruvians, like so many other of the Indian races, acknowledged a Supreme Being, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe, whom they adored under the different names of Pachacamac and Viracocha.” William H. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Peru*, 2 vols. (1847; Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1874), 1:93, 95. He states the Incas “had attained to the sublime conception of one Great Spirit, the Creator of the Universe, who, immaterial in his own nature, was not to be dishonored by an attempt at visible representation, and who, pervading all space, was not to be circumscribed within the walls of a temple.” Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Peru*, 1:88.

Padre Blas Valera, who was the son of a native Peruvian woman and a Spanish father and was the first mestizo priest in Peru, writing in 1592 (his manuscript was lost and little known until the late 1900s), stated the ancient Peruvians believed Viracocha created the sun. Sabine Hyland, *The Jesuit and the Incas: The Extraordinary Life of Padre Blas Valera*, S. J. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 2, 4, 157.

3. The crowning event described in the Book of Mormon is the visit of Jesus Christ to inhabitants of the American continent after his death and resurrection in Jerusalem. As this article will demonstrate, remarkable similarities exist between the version of Christ’s ministry in the Americas as recorded in the Book

in the Book of Mormon took place in Peru. Rather, its premise is that Christ may have visited the ancient Peruvians, as he did other people in other locations.

Given the general similarities between the *cronistas'* Viracocha and Jesus Christ as described in the Book of Mormon, some might wonder if Mormonism's founder, Joseph Smith, somehow gained access to the *cronistas'* accounts and used their descriptions of ancient Inca legends in producing the Book of Mormon. This would have been unlikely if not impossible, however, because the *cronistas'* writings generally were not published until well after the Book of Mormon was published in 1830.<sup>4</sup> At the time Joseph Smith was translating the Book of Mormon in Pennsylvania and New York, the *cronistas'* writings were securely ensconced in Catholic archives in Spain.

Some have dismissed the *cronistas* as writers who "catholicized" their accounts, ascribing Christlike attributes to Viracocha because of their personal religious beliefs. Although this criticism might apply to some of the more enthusiastic writings of later *cronistas*, one of Peru's foremost twentieth-century experts on the *cronistas* who documented those legends, Franklin Pease,<sup>5</sup> concludes that four of the earliest *cronistas*, Pedro de Cieza

---

of Mormon and the Catholic *cronistas'* accounts of the ministry of the ancient Peruvian deity Viracocha. Another striking similarity that will not be explored fully in this paper is the claim by some Incas, based on reports by several *cronistas*, that their ancestors came from Israel and that they shared many customs with the Jews and Hebrews. See, for example, Joseph [José] de Acosta, *The Natural and Moral History of the Indies* (written in 1590), trans. Edward Grimston, vol. 2 (1604; London: The Hakluyt Society, 1880), 69. Acosta was a Spaniard who joined the Jesuits and went to Lima in 1569. He traveled extensively in Peru with the viceroy-governor and from his travels wrote a detailed description of the Inca customs and history.

4. See, for example, Franklin Pease G. Y., *Las Crónicas y los Andes*, 2d ed. (Lima: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2010), 19, 204, 206, 233 n. 483, and 324 n. 737. See also Gordon F. McEwan, *The Incas: New Perspectives* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), 10–11 ("Many of the original manuscripts were not published until modern times").

5. Until his death in 1999, Pease was the most recognized expert in the world on the accounts of the *cronistas* and ancient Peruvian ethnohistory. See Ascención Martínez Riaza, "Franklin Pease García-Yrigoyen (1939–1999). In memoriam," *Revista Complutense de Historia de América* 26 (2000): 373–76. He lectured and wrote extensively on the accounts of the *cronistas* and served as university professor and director of Peru's National Museum of History. See also McEwan, *Incas*, 12, listing Pease among those who have made major contributions to Inca studies.

de León (“Cieza”),<sup>6</sup> Cristóbal de Molina (“Molina”),<sup>7</sup> Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa (“Sarmiento”),<sup>8</sup> and Juan Diez de Betanzos (“Betanzos”),<sup>9</sup> documented the beliefs, traditions, and customs of the Incas and their ancestors as they heard and witnessed them with relative accuracy and without significant Catholic embellishment. These four chronicles, according to Pease, “appear to be the least contaminated (with European elements) of the writings of the time. It is necessary to call attention to the fact that the versions of Andean myths that we have in our possession are always of an only relative accuracy, for the Spaniards that wrote them had serious difficulties—cultural and linguistic—in transcribing oral versions existing at the moment of the European invasion.”<sup>10</sup> Pease concludes with this

---

6. Cieza arrived in Peru in 1548. He traveled throughout the Andes and fought as a soldier in postconquest Spanish civil wars and “he is regarded as an honest and careful observer who distinguished between fact and opinion.” McEwan, *Incas*, 10.

In his translation of Cieza’s *Chronicle*, Markham states in his notes: “Cieza de Leon is certainly one of the most important authorities on Ynca history . . . whether we consider his peculiar advantages in collecting information, or his character as a conscientious historian.” Cieza, *Chronicle*, xxvi. See also Paul Richard Steele and Catherine J. Allen, *Handbook of Inca Mythology* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 42–43; and Pease, *Crónicas*, 38–40.

7. Molina was a Spaniard who arrived in Cuzco in the mid-1500s, learned the native language—Quechua—and then, at the request of Viceroy Francisco de Toledo, proceeded to interview the Incas and their descendants about their customs and beliefs, also serving as a priest to them. See Steele and Allen, *Handbook*, 42–43; and Pease, *Crónicas*, 52–53.

8. Sarmiento was a celebrated navigator and captain who, on the orders of the Viceroy of Toledo who governed Peru from 1569 to 1581, interviewed the Incas in Cuzco and completed a history of the Incas in 1572. This history is considered quite accurate by scholars. See McEwan, *Incas*, 10–11; Steele and Allen, *Handbook*, 42–45; and Pease, *Crónicas*, 38–40.

9. Betanzos “was considered in his day to be the finest interpreter into Spanish of the Inca language called Quechua. He married an Inca princess who was the former wife of both the last independent Inca ruler, Atahualpa, and the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro. Because of his wife, Betanzos had remarkable access to the Inca viewpoint of the pre-Conquest history.” He wrote a treatise on the Inca Empire. McEwan, *Incas*, 10–11. See also Steele and Allen, *Handbook*, 42–43; and Pease, *Crónicas*, 38–40.

10. Franklin Pease, “The Andean Creator God,” *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* 17, no. 3 (Dec. 1970): 162. See also Franklin Pease G. Y., *El Dios Creador Andino* (Lima: Mosca Azul Editores, 1973), 12–13; and Pease, *Crónicas*, 155–56. After the conquest, the Incas and their descendants

caveat: “We will then always have to depend on the unreliable information of the chroniclers and try to reach, through them and oral texts, the understanding of the cosmogonic myth and the image of the deity as a step towards later studying the religious life of the central Andes.”<sup>11</sup> In offering this caution, Pease joins other scholars who question the accuracy of these sixteenth-century sources. It should be noted, additionally, that these Catholic chroniclers tended to regard the Inca legends as fiction and often attributed any similarity between the ancient Peruvian religion and Catholicism as deceptions produced by the devil.<sup>12</sup> What this means is that these early chroniclers, rather than catholicizing the Incan myths, may have simply avoided recording some similarities because they found them offensive. Therefore, while recognizing the limitations in even these four more reliable accounts, we can still readily concede that the

---

began to intermingle their beliefs with Catholic beliefs. The Spanish priests did not discourage this, since it made it easier for them to “convert” the Incas. As an example, the Cathedral of Cuzco was built on the foundation of the Inca Temple of Coricancha, making it more likely the Incas would attend mass.

11. Pease, “Andean Creator God,” 175.

12. Pease, *Crónicas*, 69, 137 (“The goal of the priests became to remove the ‘idolatry’ and to extinguish the Andean cults and replace them with the infusion of Christianity.” “[F]or the Spanish they [Incas] did not have Gods but rather idols, demonic manifestations”). See also Luis E. Valcárcel, *Ruta Cultural del Perú* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1945), 166 (“All that wasn’t Catholic was idolatry and heresy”); and Hyland, *Jesuit and the Incas*, 65 (“In the effort to eradicate native beliefs, . . . all religious forms from the pre-Christian past were left out of the Quechua catechism . . . [as] too morally corrupt to have a place in a Christian culture”).

Harold Osborne has written: “We depend for our knowledge of myth and legend, even in this systematically distorted form, entirely on the records of the chroniclers who wrote during the early decades after the Conquest. . . . Some were genuinely eager to find out what the Indians themselves believed about their origins and took the trouble to question Indian authorities and record what they said. . . . Others had a less partial interest. But all were hampered by a rigid belief in the literal truth of biblical records and a horror of anything which conflicted with Christian dogma. As we have said, owing to this reason a great deal of mythological and legendary material which we should have valued today was contemptuously passed by in silence as trivial or immoral. Again and again our sources stop short just at the point where we should have found the continuation of most interest. The following passage from Sarmiento is typical. . . . ‘As the devil, who is always striving to injure the human race, found these unfortunates to be easy of belief and timid in obedience, he introduced many illusions, lies and frauds.’” Harold Osborne, *South American Mythology* (Feltham, Middlesex, UK: Hamlyn Publishing Group, 1968), 34–35.

similarities between Viracocha and Jesus Christ that did survive are striking in many regards.

There are a number of other *cronistas* who, although important, do not receive even the qualified acclaim for accuracy and for unembellished accounts given to the above-described four. Some of these less-reliable chroniclers will be cited herein, but the reader should keep the above-mentioned caution in mind. Pease was not alone in concluding the four primary *cronistas* were the most credible. Other Peruvian experts and scholars come to the same conclusion. For example, María Luisa Rivara de Tuesta, professor emerita of the prestigious National University at San Marcos in Peru, writing on “the creation myth” of ancient Peru, including the legend of Viracocha, relies almost entirely on these same *cronistas* as the most recognized and authoritative.<sup>13</sup>

Pease and Luis E. Valcárcel, a founding father of ancient Peruvian archeology and ethnohistory who founded and directed the Anthropological Museum of Cuzco and who at one point was director emeritus of all of Peru’s natural museums, support their conclusion that these *cronistas* did not catholicize their accounts by demonstrating that many of the key attributes of Viracocha documented by these four were foreign to their own Catholic preconceptions of Christ. For example, Pease notes that the *cronistas* do not represent Viracocha as creating the world from nothing (*ex nihilo*) as Catholics then believed God did. Rather, Viracocha created by organizing already-existent matter.<sup>14</sup>

---

13. María Luisa Rivara de Tuesta, *Pensamiento prehispánico y filosofía colonial en el Perú*, Filosofía e historia de las ideas en Latinoamérica, volume 3 (Lima: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000), 98–132. See also McEwan, *Incas*, 10–11.

14. Pease, *Dios Creador Andino*, 13–14; Franklin Pease G. Y., “Notas Sobre Wiracocha y Sus Itinerarios,” *Histórica* 10 (December 1986): 227 (“European authors in that epoch [1500s] only understood a creation *ex nihilo*”); Valcárcel, *Ruta Cultural del Perú*, 168–70. It should be noted that the Inca belief in creation was not similar to the Greek idea of creation out of already-existing primeval matter known as chaos that provided a backdrop against which the Judeo-Christian doctrine of *ex nihilo* creation arose. In Betanzos’s account, for instance, Viracocha created “some people from stone as a kind of model of those that he would produce later” and painted them as they should appear when called to life. He then had two helpers go through the land and call the various peoples forth. “Just the way I have painted them and made them of stone,” Viracocha instructed his helpers, “thus they must come out of the springs and rivers and caves and mountains in the provinces which I have told you and named.” By contrast, however, Betanzos’s description of the creation of sky, sun, moon, stars, and earth does not specify either a creation out of existing material or a



Comparisons show that the *cronistas*' descriptions of Viracocha differ in key respects from their Catholic conceptions of Christ, which is evidence they were not consistently or purposely infusing Viracocha with Christlike characteristics. As noted, however, the Catholic *cronistas*' accounts show significant overlap with the Mormon understanding of Christ, suggesting that legends concerning Viracocha (and his Aztec counterpart, Quetzalcoatl, as well as the white Mayan God, Kukulcan) might have some connection to the Christ spoken of in the Book of Mormon. Indeed, Valcárcel wrote that when the *cronistas* and priests learned of the ancient God of Peru, they did not understand the Incas' philosophical religious conception.<sup>15</sup>

Further evidence that not all *cronistas* catholicized their accounts of the Viracocha legends is found in their attempts to distance their "true" Catholic beliefs from the "false" Inca religious beliefs. In fact, the *cronistas* supported their Catholic colleagues in proselytizing the "pagan" Peruvians to Christianity, including the destruction of their Viracocha statues and the conversion of a Viracochan temple in central Cuzco into a Catholic chapel and convent (the Church and Convent of Santo Domingo, see page 132).

### **BOOK OF MORMON DESCRIPTIONS OF CHRIST'S LIFE AND MISSION ARE REFLECTED IN ANCIENT PERUVIAN LEGENDS**

In addition to discussing the Book of Mormon's descriptions of Christ's visit and their parallels in ancient Peruvian legends, this article will also explore the similarities between the legends and Book of Mormon

---

creation out of nothing. He merely says that Viracocha "suddenly made the sun and the day . . . , he made the stars and the moon," and "he created the sky and the earth." Juan de Betanzos, *Narrative of the Incas*, trans. and ed. Roland Hamilton and Dana Buchanan (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 7–8. The other *cronistas* gave similarly indefinite accounts. Perhaps recognizing the ambiguity in these earliest sources, Pease suggests a third possibility, creation *ex deo*: "The Andean deity creates from himself, by his word." Pease, "Andean Creator God," 169. It is not surprising that these Inca creation myths do not fit comfortably within the Greek or Catholic conceptions of creation, since these people were unaware of the Old World philosophical and theological debates that eventually resulted in current Christian dogma. In this regard, the ancient Peruvian legends are more reminiscent of Book of Mormon statements about the Creation, which likewise do not specify a creation either out of chaos or out of nothing, other than saying that man is created out of the dust of the earth (see Mosiah 2:25), which may be nothing more than a metaphorical statement, although it does suggest a creation out of *something* rather than nothing.

15. Valcárcel, *Ruta Cultural del Perú*, 166.

accounts of Christ's pre-earth role as Creator, his role as sustainer of all life, his resurrection, and prophecies of his coming to earth.

### The Visits of Christ and Viracocha

Echoes of Christ's appearance as related in the Book of Mormon can be found in accounts of Viracocha's visit that were handed down through generations of ancient Peruvians before finally being recorded by the Catholic *cronistas* in the 1500s. For example, according to the Book of Mormon, the visit of Christ to this continent was preceded by great destructions through earthquake, fires, landslides, tempests, falling mountains, rising plains, and cities swallowed by earth and water, all followed by three days of thick darkness (3 Ne. 8:5–23). Before Christ appeared, he announced from the heavens that certain cities had been destroyed: "Waters have I caused to come up in the stead thereof, . . . [others] have I caused to be sunk, and made hills and valleys in places thereof; and the inhabitants thereof have I buried up in the depths of the earth, to hide their wickedness" (3 Ne. 9:7–8).

Cieza said the Incas recounted how their ancestors

were a long time without seeing the sun, and that, suffering much evil from its absence, great prayers and vows were offered up to their gods, imploring for the light they needed. Things being in this state, the sun, shining very brightly, came forth from the island of Titicaca, . . . at which every one rejoiced. Presently, afterwards, they say, that there came from a southern direction a white man of great stature, who . . . had great power, insomuch that he could change plains into mountains, and great hills into valleys, and make water flow out of stones. As soon as such power was beheld, the people called him the Maker of created things, the Prince of all things, Father of the Sun.<sup>16</sup>

Given the belief that this "Maker of created things" had power to change the face of the land, it is not surprising that the ancient Peruvians' "chief god Viracocha was closely associated with both mountains and water."<sup>17</sup>

The full name of Viracocha, "Con Tici Viracocha," has significance relative to the destruction described in the Book of Mormon prior to the Savior's visit. Valcárcel stated that *Kon* was a form of *Kam* and the root of several words signifying "noise and thunder," "fire," and "God of

16. Cieza, *Chronicle*, 5.

17. Johan Reinhard, "Interpreting the Nazca Lines," in *The Ancient Americas: Art from Sacred Landscapes*, ed. Robert Townsend (Chicago: The Art Institute of Chicago, 1992), 291–301.

earthquakes.”<sup>18</sup> And Pease notes that Kon “is the personification of earthquake that manifests in the tremors with the eruption of volcanoes.”<sup>19</sup>

In the Book of Mormon account of Christ’s appearance in 3 Nephi 10:9, we learn that it was morning when the three days of darkness ended, presaging the eventual appearance of Jesus Christ in the Americas. Cieza reports that “the sun, shining very brightly, came forth,” prior to the appearance of the powerful white man they called Ticiviracocha, as described above.<sup>20</sup>

In the account in 3 Nephi, the people “cast their eyes up again towards heaven; and behold, they saw a Man descending out of heaven; and he was clothed in a white robe.” The man “stretched forth his hand and spake . . . , saying: Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world. . . . Arise and come forth . . . that ye may feel the prints of the nails in my hands and in my feet” (3 Ne. 11:8–10, 14). Similarly, the *cronistas* reported accounts of the visit of this bearded white man wearing a body-length tunic, often white in color. This description was in stark contrast to the usual appearance of the Incas, who wore short skirts, had dark skin, and had little if any facial hair. They also recount that this was Viracocha, who took upon himself a human form to visit those on earth—a “white man” they called “Maker of created things, the Prince of all things.”<sup>21</sup>

Following is a series of quotes extracted from the *cronistas*’ accounts of the appearance of Viracocha in Peru:

Viracocha was represented as a tall, well built man, wearing a beard, . . . dressed in a tunic that came down to his feet.<sup>22</sup>

All agree that Viracocha was the Creator of these people. They have the tradition that he was a man of medium height, white and dressed in a white robe like an alb secured round the waist, and that he carried a staff

---

18. Luis E. Valcárcel, “Kon, Pachacamac, Uirakocha” (thesis, Universidad del Cusco, 1912), 9, available at <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.32000000860132;view=1up;seq=3>.

19. Pease, *Dios Creador Andino*, 18 n. 14.

20. Cieza, *Chronicle*, 5–6.

21. Cieza, *Chronicle*, 5.

22. Garcilaso de la Vega, *The Royal Commentaries of the Incas* (written in 1609), trans. Maria Jolas (New York: Orion Press, 1961), book 5, p. 137. Garcilaso was the son of a Spanish Conquistador who married an Incan noblewoman. As a result, he fraternized with Incan nobility and priests and wrote what many consider to be a somewhat idealistic history of the Incas.

and a book in his hands. . . . [He] went on his road and came to a place where many men of his creation had congregated.<sup>23</sup>

[Viracocha,] a man with long robe and marks in his hands, preached to them.<sup>24</sup>

He was a tall man dressed in a white garment that reached to his ankles and was belted at the waist. His hair was short and he had a tonsure like a priest. . . . They said his name was Contiti Viracocha Pacha-yachachic, which means “God, maker of the world” in their language.<sup>25</sup>

Viracocha . . . made them [men] . . . of his stature which was, as they say, average height of men, and being made he gave them life.<sup>26</sup>

The most detailed account of Viracocha’s appearance, which comports closely with the Book of Mormon, was provided by Cieza and is set out at the beginning of this article.<sup>27</sup>

The Book of Mormon relates that Christ, like Viracocha, appeared to a large group of people. “All the multitude, with one accord, did go forth with their sick and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, . . . and he did heal them every one. . . . And he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them. . . . And when he had done this he wept” (3 Ne. 17:9, 21, 22). As Christ wept when he was moved by the tears of his people, Viracocha is depicted in various statues and drawings showing tears running down his cheeks. Indeed, one of Viracocha’s names was “The Weeping God,” with the earliest known depiction of him crying placed prominently on the Sun Gate in the ancient city of Tiahuanaco, the place from which Viracocha embarked upon his ministry.<sup>28</sup> An interesting local legend recovered by Gary Urton in the vicinity of Cerro Blanco, considered the highest sand dune in the

---

23. Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, *History of the Incas*, trans. and ed. Clements Markham (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1907), 35, available at <https://archive.org/details/ocmo6996956.2159.emory.edu>. Sarmiento took sworn testimony from all leading Inca descendants, and for this reason, his account is “the most authentic and reliable that has yet appeared.” Introduction, in Sarmiento, *History of the Incas*, ix–xii. Although Sarmiento wrote his *History* in 1572, his manuscript remained in a library unprinted or published until 1906. Sarmiento, *History of the Incas*, xi.

24. Calancha, *Crónica moralizada*, 333.

25. Betanzos, *Narrative of the Incas*, 10.

26. Sarmiento, *History of the Incas*, 38.

27. Cieza, *Chronicle*, 5–6.

28. See the images on pp. 127 and 130. The image on page 127 shows a staff consisting partially of a two-headed serpent in his left hand.

world (2,078 meters), ties the weeping of Viracocha to the weeping of the people:

In ancient times, before there were aqueducts in the valley, a great drought occurred and the people had no water for years. The people began to cry out to their god, Viracocha or Con. . . . The people went en masse to the foot of Cerro Blanco. . . . At that moment, Viracocha/Con descended from the sky to the summit of the mountain and heard the weeping of his people. He was so moved by their cries that he began weeping and tears flowed from his eyes. The tears ran down Cerro Blanco, penetrated the earth, and these tears were the origin of the aqueducts.<sup>29</sup>

Kathy Doore indicates that “Tici Viracocha was worshipped as god of the sun wearing rays for a crown, with thunderbolts in his hands, and tears descending from his eyes; he is remembered for his teachings, and wept for his people.”<sup>30</sup> Gene Savoy, another noted archaeologist studying ancient Peruvian culture, described a statue of the Moche culture of the northern coast of Peru as having “crying eyes that reflect strong characteristics of Quetzalcoatl [the great white God of the Aztecs].”<sup>31</sup>

According to the Book of Mormon, one of the first things Christ did after arriving in the Americas was to call disciples to help him minister to the needs of the people. Sarmiento’s account refers to Viracocha sending forth disciples: “He ordered his two servants [to go forth] . . . naming the tribes and ordering them all to go forth and people the country. His servants, obeying the command of Viracocha, set out on their journey and work.”<sup>32</sup>

---

29. Gary Urton, report of fieldwork in Nazca, Peru, unpublished manuscript in possession of Helaine Silverman; quoted in Helaine Silverman and Donald A. Proulx, *The Nazca* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2002), 208.

30. Kathy Doore, “Toro Muerto Rock Carvings: Crying Viracocha’s [sic]: Ancient Engravings from a Lost Culture,” *Labyrinthina.com*, describing the stone carvings, [http://www.labyrinthina.com/toro\\_muerto/tm\\_index.htm](http://www.labyrinthina.com/toro_muerto/tm_index.htm).

31. Gene Savoy, “El Misterioso Dios de la Barba Florida,” *Caretas* (January 20–30, 1966): 26–29.

32. Sarmiento, *History of the Incas*, 34. In Sarmiento’s retelling of this fable, there were actually three servants, who alone survived the great flood that Viracocha caused to come and destroy the people he had created. One of the three servants disobeyed him, so he was tied “hands and feet” and launched “in a *balsa* on the lake.” After threatening vengeance, “he was carried by the water down the drain of the same lake, and was not seen again for a long time.” Sarmiento, *History of the Incas*, 32–33. In Betanzos’s account, there was no flood,

Also, according to the Book of Mormon, Christ performed many miracles, issued his commandments, and taught the people to live peaceably one with another. In the Viracocha legends, we read:

Viracocha continued his journey, working his miracles and instructing his created beings. . . . Intending to leave the land of Peru, he made a speech to those he had created, apprising them of the things that would happen.<sup>33</sup>

For they say that he performed other wonders, giving life to men and animals, so that by his hand marvellous great benefits were conferred on the people. . . . In many places he gave orders to men how they should live and, he spoke lovingly to them and with much gentleness, admonishing them that they should do good, and no evil or injury one to another, and that they should be loving and charitable to all. In most parts he is generally called *Ticiviracocha*.<sup>34</sup>

Viracocha ordered these people that they should live without quarrelling, and that they should know and serve him. He gave them a certain precept which they were to observe on pain of being confounded if they should break it.<sup>35</sup>

Wherever [he] . . . came and there were sick, he healed them, and where there were blind gave them sight by only uttering words. Through acts so good and useful he was much beloved by all.<sup>36</sup>

Other accounts from the *cronistas* intimate that the Incas had an understanding of Viracocha's relationship with God the Father. For example:

The Creator . . . ordered that the eldest of his sons, called Ymaymana Viracocha, [which means] "in whose power and hands all things are found," should . . . visit . . . all the land . . . teaching the people. . . . [The Creator's sons] descended . . . to the lowermost [part] of the land. From there they ascended to the heavens.<sup>37</sup>

---

and the two servants were not called from among the people but came with Viracocha, along with others; however, only these two were sent out to call the people into existence "out of the springs and rivers and caves and mountains." Betanzos, *Narrative of the Incas*, 8.

33. Sarmiento, *History of the Incas*, 36.

34. Cieza, *Chronicle*, 5–6.

35. Sarmiento, *History of the Incas*, 29.

36. Cieza, *Chronicle*, 6.

37. Molina, *Account of Fables and Rites*, 10. This aspect of his visit—that he descended to visit them, then ascended—also was known to the Mayas and

They kissed his feet . . . calling him Tunum . . . Lord, the son of the Creator.<sup>38</sup>

As he ended his visit, Christ told the people, “I must go unto my Father;” and “he departed from them, and ascended into heaven” (3 Ne. 18:27, 39), but he promised to return in glory at his Second Coming (3 Ne. 26:3). Viracocha also promised to return to the Peruvians. Sarmiento relates, “When this [the arrival of the Spaniards] became known to Atahualpa he rejoiced greatly, believing it to be the Viracocha coming, as he had promised when he departed.”<sup>39</sup>

The similarities between Jesus Christ and Viracocha as described by the *cronistas* are compelling enough that a number of the lesser *cronistas* and later non-Mormon scholars of the history of Peru concluded it is possible that one of Christ’s Apostles or Christ himself came to Peru and that Christ and Viracocha might be the same person. Sabine Hyland explained, “Viracocha [is described] in no uncertain terms as a Christ-like being who represents the incarnation of God as man. Viracocha is described as ‘God [i.e. Pachacamac] in human figure.’”<sup>40</sup> According to Franklin Pease, “The Wiraqocha of Cuzco is presented in a human form

---

is depicted above the temple doorway in Tulum, Mexico, which shows a God figure half-pointing up and half-pointing down.

38. Calancha, *Crónica moralizada*, 334.

39. Sarmiento, *History of the Incas*, 152. Because of this belief, the Incas came to refer to the Spaniards as viracochas, but Atahualpa’s initial misconception was quickly corrected, when one of his people, Ciquinchara, who had spent time among the Spaniards, returned to report to Atahualpa. He informed the emperor that the invaders were really devils and thieves who “appropriate everything, leaving nothing.” Betanzos, *Narrative of the Incas*, 248. This news saddened Atahualpa. Still, he was curious to meet the strangers and didn’t fear for his safety since he had a force of 80,000 warriors with him. He obviously underestimated the greed of the conquerors and had little understanding of Spanish weaponry or the devastation a small cavalry could cause, or he certainly would have refused to meet Pizarro under the conditions that led to an ambush, a massacre, and Atahualpa’s capture and eventual execution. His outright rejection of the proffered Bible (or breviary, in some accounts) as a token of the Spaniards’ religion suggests that Atahualpa did not consider these visitors to be gods or representatives sent from Viracocha when he met them in a royal audience unarmed and lightly guarded in the city of Cajamarca. See, for instance, Christopher Minster, “The Capture of Inca Atahualpa,” *About.com*, <http://latinamericanhistory.about.com/od/theconquestofperu/p/The-Capture-Of-Inca-Atahualpa.htm>.

40. Hyland, *Jesuit and the Incas*, 144–45; bracketed text in original.

(some chroniclers even suppose an identification between an apostle of Christ who would have arrived in America and the both peaceful and terrible image of the, occasionally bearded, old man with a staff or rod).<sup>41</sup> And Valcárcel states, “There is a tradition they saw the Apostle Thomas or Bartholomew.”<sup>42</sup>

Other *cronistas* concluded that Viracocha was not merely an Apostle of Christ, but rather that he was Christ. According to the *cronista* Padre Blas Valera, Viracocha “was God incarnate. . . . Viracocha was Christ.”<sup>43</sup> Another Jesuit priest, Father Pedro Deillanes Sanservo, who studied the Incan quipus-knot system for recording and remembering important events and details, described “Viracocha in no uncertain terms as a Christlike being who represents the incarnation of God as man.”<sup>44</sup>

Cieza mentions some “Spaniards” who postulated that Viracocha was “one of the glorious apostles who, in the days of his preaching, had passed this way.” Cieza himself, however, was not convinced and insisted instead that the Incas had not heard “the word of the Holy Gospel” before the arrival of the Spanish.<sup>45</sup>

### Viracocha’s Pre-Earth Life—the Creator

The ancient Peruvians believed Viracocha existed before the earth and that he created it. Sarmiento reports: “The natives of this land affirm that in the beginning, and before this world was created, there was a being called Viracocha. He created a dark world without sun, moon or stars. Owing to this creation he was named Viracocha Pachayachachi, which means ‘Creator of all things.’ . . . Viracocha . . . ordered that the sun, moon and stars should come forth, and be set in the heavens to give light to the world, and it was so.”<sup>46</sup> Based on his study of the *cronistas*, Pease adds that they talk of a pre-earth creation by Viracocha, who initially created the heavens, the earth and a generation of men. He was the creator who conquered chaos and ordered the preexistent world; he commanded the

---

41. Pease, “Andean Creator God,” 164.

42. Luis E. Valcárcel, “Kon, Pachacamac, Uirakocha: Contribución al estudio de las religiones del antiguo Perú,” *Revista Universitaria* 1, no. 1 (Julio de 1912): 50, available at [http://revistau.unsaac.edu.pe/Revista/pdfs/REVISTA\\_1\\_.pdf](http://revistau.unsaac.edu.pe/Revista/pdfs/REVISTA_1_.pdf).

43. Hyland, *Jesuit and the Incas*, 145.

44. Hyland, *Jesuit and the Incas*, 144.

45. Cieza, *Chronicle*, 7–8.

46. Sarmiento, *History of the Incas*, 28, 33.



heavens, the sun, the moon and stars to divide space and he organized the four regions.<sup>47</sup>

According to Betanzos,

In ancient times, . . . the provinces of Peru were dark and neither light nor daylight existed. In this time, there lived certain people. . . . During this time of total night, they say that a lord emerged from a lake in this land of Peru . . . and that his name was Contiti Viracocha. They say that he brought with him a certain number of people. . . . When he and his people arrived there, they say that he suddenly made the sun and the day and ordered the sun to follow the course that it follows. Then, they say, he made the stars and the moon. They say that this Contiti Viracocha had emerged another time before that one, and that on that first occasion he created the sky and the earth but left everything in darkness. Then he made those people who lived in the time of darkness.<sup>48</sup>

These people displeased him, so he turned them into stone. “In that very moment, he made the sun and the day and the moon and stars.” He then formed stone models of another people and painted them. “After he had finished making them, he ordered all those he had there with him to depart, leaving only two in his company. He instructed those who were left to look at the stone likenesses, and he told them the names he had given to each kind of people.” His two helpers then went out, “calling and bringing out the people from the caves, rivers and springs, and high sierras.”<sup>49</sup>

According to Pease, “The creation was of a character of ordering a stratification of matter that already existed in one manner or other, a construction with matter already there. The creator of the universe is he who puts in order, who dominates chaos. The formation or ordering pre-supposes a creator and fundamental matter.”<sup>50</sup> Again, Pease draws

---

47. See Pease, “Notas,” 227; Pease, *Dios Creador Andino*, 84 n. 21.

48. Betanzos, *Narrative of the Incas*, 7.

49. Betanzos, *Narrative of the Incas*, 7–9. The Mayan *Popul Vuh* refers to three creating gods and states that they held counsel and decided to create the heavens, earth, and man. *Popul Vuh* (written in 1550), trans. Miguel Angel Asturias and José María Gonzalez de Mendoza (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1973), 12–15.

50. Pease, *Dios Creador Andino*, 84 n. 21, citing Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Fenomenología de la Religión* (Mexico, FCE, 1964), 550–51. This accords with the Mayan understanding of the nature of the Creation as written in the *Popul Vuh*, where it calls the three creating gods the “Dominators,” “Constructors,”

upon the *cronistas*' accounts of Viracocha's creation for his conclusion that they describe Viracocha as a creating God who used stone to make men, who also made the sun, moon, and stars.<sup>51</sup> Valcárcel likewise notes that the *cronistas* described a God who made, organized, and named men, plants, animals, sun, moon, and stars.<sup>52</sup>

From accounts such as Betanzos's, Pease states, "In the Andes, the word is creator. Viracocha creates by means of the word."<sup>53</sup> And another *cronista*, Francisco de Ávila, reported that Viracocha "was the creator of all things, and that with only commanding it and saying it . . . terraces arose . . . and irrigation channels were formed."<sup>54</sup>

These accounts of Viracocha as creator of all things through his words are similar to descriptions of Christ found in the Book of Mormon and other modern Mormon scripture. For example, in Ether 3:14, Christ declares: "I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people." In Mosiah 3:9, Christ is called "the Creator of all things from the beginning" (see also 2 Ne. 2:14), and in 3 Nephi 9:15, Christ proclaims, "I was with the Father from the beginning."

The ordering and commanding of existing elements by the word and voice of God are fundamental to the words found in Helaman 12:8–17, where the hills and mountains, the foundations of the earth, the waters of the great deep, and even the sun all obey the command and voice of the everlasting God who created humankind and this world.

In the book of Moses, God appears to Moses and tells him, "By the word of my power, have I created them, which is mine Only Begotten

---

and says that a semblance of ocean and space existed in heaven but nothing had yet been united together. See *Popol Vuh*, 12–15. The *Popol Vuh* has been criticized for being catholicized by the Mayans, who wrote their accounts after the conquest. However, murals of the Creation accounts in the *Popol Vuh*, dating to 200 BC, have been discovered recently in Guatemala. The accounts in the murals conform to the later manuscripts of the *Popol Vuh*. See Ministry of Culture and Sports, "The Painted Murals of San Bartolo," UNESCO, April 27, 2012, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5738/>.

51. See, for example, Betanzos, *Narrative of the Incas*, 7–9; and Valcárcel, *Ruta Cultural del Perú*, 168 ("All that exists comes from the hands of one creator: Apu Kon Titi Wirakocha the supreme maker, namer and organizer [ordenador] of the universe").

52. Valcárcel, *Ruta Cultural del Perú*, 168.

53. Pease, *Dios Creador Andino*, 23, citing Betanzos, *Narrative of the Incas*, 85.

54. Francisco de Ávila, *Dioses y Hombres De Huarochirí* (1608; n.p.: La Fundación el Libro Total, n.d.), 5, available at [http://www.ellibrototal.com/ltotal/?t=1&d=3567\\_3681\\_1\\_1\\_3567](http://www.ellibrototal.com/ltotal/?t=1&d=3567_3681_1_1_3567).

Son” (Moses 1:32). This theme is rooted in biblical creation accounts from the beginning: “and God said . . .” (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29); consonantly, the early Book of Mormon prophet Jacob declares, “For behold, by the power of his word man came upon the face of the earth, which earth was created by the power of his word” (Jacob 4:9).<sup>55</sup>

### Viracocha and Christ as Sustainer of Life

The similarities between LDS scripture and ancient Peruvian legends do not end with the Creation. Although Christ proclaimed himself the light and life of the world in the New Testament (John 1:4 and 8:12), the ancient Peruvians understood this role of Viracocha, and Latter-day Saints understand Christ in this same regard more literally than the Catholic conception held by the *cronistas*.

The *cronistas*’ accounts reported that, after creating the heavens, the earth, and man, Viracocha actually radiated the energy and light that animates, gives vitality to, and sustains the daily life of men, animals, plants, and all things. Cieza says the Peruvians called him “Creator of Heaven and Earth” and he that was “giving life to men and animals.”<sup>56</sup> Blas de Valera said, “Pachacamac and Viracocha come first, followed by the heavenly objects created by God and [these are] adored by the Andeans as secondary objects infused with life and power by the Creator.”<sup>57</sup> According to some sources, another name for Viracocha was “Pachacamac.”<sup>58</sup> “The word Pachacamac is made up from *pacha* (time/

---

55. In D&C 93:33, we read that “the elements are eternal,” and in D&C 131:7, Joseph Smith taught, “There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter.” This is why Joseph rejected the notion of creation *ex nihilo*. To him, creation was organizing existing matter, not conjuring matter out of nothing.

56. Cieza, *Chronicle*, 5, 94.

57. Hyland, *Jesuit and the Incas*, 146. Sabine Hyland notes that this creator provides “substance” to his creations and that Padre Valera called him “Light Eternal.”

58. Hyland says, “Valera also taught that the Incas maintained a distinction between the first two persons of the Trinity—the creator of the universe (Pachacamac) and his incarnation on earth (Viracocha), who was also fully the creator.” Hyland, *Jesuit and the Incas*, 159. Pease claims that some chroniclers “Christianized” their accounts, observing that “not only Garcilaso, but other chroniclers, attribute to the Incas the knowledge, reached by philosophical reflection, of the ‘real god’ (the Christian one); with that criterion they established an identification between Pachacamac and Wiraqocha.” But he also points out that both names are Quechua words and suggests that “both words could be two different names of the same diety, Wiraqocha in the mountain

space, universe/earth, state of being) and *camac* (creator or animator).<sup>59</sup> “Wirakocha . . . is the life of the world and is in the sun and other celestial bodies . . . the fire, earth and water [who] animated rock . . . [to] create man . . . [is] in all places.”<sup>60</sup> Indeed, “they worshipped him as creator of the universe cosmic luminous light in the heavens reflected in the water and in lightning. He is the fertilizer of water and light not only in the heavens but also in sacred rocks and in the blood.”<sup>61</sup> Valcárcel describes Pachacamac as he who “animates” the earth.<sup>62</sup>

After studying the writings of all of the *cronistas*, Pease summarizes: “Viracocha transmits the energy from His very person, which lights the sun.”<sup>63</sup> Sabine Hyland cites Valera as indicating that the Andeans adored the sun, moon, and stars as “objects infused with life and power by the Creator.”<sup>64</sup> Perhaps this comparison is why some have been confused about whether both Viracocha and the sun were gods to the Incas. Acosta, for instance, says, “Next to Viracocha, or their supreme God, that which most commonly they adore is the Sunne; and after that, those things which are most remarkable in the celestiall or elementary nature, as the moone, starres, sea, and land.”<sup>65</sup> Molina stated that Viracocha “gave being to the Sun.” “They did not recognize [the Sun] as the Creator, but as [being] created by the Creator.” The priests prayed that it would give “light and splendor” and “that it can shed light on the people that you created, O Creator.”<sup>66</sup>

In Doctrine and Covenants 88:13, a nearly identical description of Christ’s role as animator and sustainer of the universe is found. Christ’s light is “the light which is in all things, which giveth life to all things,

---

region and Pachacámac in the plains of the coast of the Pacific.” Pease, “Andean Creator God,” 168.

59. Steele and Allen, *Handbook*, 45.

60. Valcárcel, *Ruta Cultural del Perú*, 168, 169, 170.

61. Robert Randall, “La Lengua Sagrada: El Juego de Palabras en la Cosmología Andina,” *Lengua, Nación y Mundo Andino: Allpanchis* 19, no. 29/30 (1987): 267–305.

62. Valcárcel, “Kon, Pachacamac, Uiracocha: Contribución al estudio,” 49–55.

63. Pease, *Dios Creador Andino*, 24.

64. Hyland, *Jesuit and the Incas*, 146.

65. Acosta, *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, 303–4, archaic spelling preserved from Grimston’s translation.

66. Molina, *Account of Fables and Rites*, 23, 45. See also Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia General de las Indias* (1556; Barcelona: Maestras Obras, 1965), 340 (“Pachacamac, creator and illuminator of the world”).

which is the law by which all things are governed, even the power of God.” The scripture also states that the light of Christ powers the sun and the stars (D&C 88:7–9).

Moreover, in discussing Viracocha’s power and energy as described by the *cronistas*, Pease states that he is “God of the light and creator of the sun. . . . The fire that dances in the sun is the same that moves in the fertilizing power; the energy that is in all elements, fire and water, is one and the same.”<sup>67</sup> Molina quotes a prayer in which the Peruvians called Viracocha “You who give being to everything. You who enable men to eat and drink in this world.”<sup>68</sup> Citing *cronistas* Balboa and Acosta, Prescott states that Pachacamac signifies “He who sustains or gives life to the universe.”<sup>69</sup>

Similarly, in Ether 4:12, Christ is described as “the light, and the life, and the truth of the world.” Moroni 7:16 states that every man is given “the Spirit of Christ.” And in 3 Nephi 9:18, Christ states, “I am the light and the life of the world. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.”

### Resurrection—Life after Death

The *cronistas* were intrigued to find that, in addition to sharing a seemingly Christian view of repentance and forgiveness, the ancient Peruvians believed in a resurrection and afterlife. Molina wrote, for instance,

---

67. Pease, *Dios Creador Andino*, 24. See also Steele and Allen, *Handbook*, 24 (“In the Andean world, an animating or vital force is assumed to infuse all material things”).

68. Molina, *Account of Fables and Rites*, 44–45.

69. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Peru*, 1:93, citing Balboa, *Historia del Peru*, cap. 6; and Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, 141. Although there is some debate among Peruvian scholars about whether Viracocha and Pachacamac were the same god, both were generally described as principal deities and creators. And many *cronistas*, ethnohistorians, and Peruvian scholars support Garcilaso’s conclusion that they were the same god to the ancient Peruvians. See, for example, Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, 256 (“most of them acknowledge and confess a supreme Lord and Maker of all, whom the Peruvians called Viracocha, adding a very excellent name such as Pachacamac or Pachayachacic, which means the creator of heaven and earth”); Hyland, *Jesuit and the Incas*, 144 (“Viracocha is described as God [i.e. Pachacamac] in human figure”); Prescott, *Conquest of Peru*, 93 (“The Peruvians . . . acknowledged a Supreme Being, the Creator and Ruler of the Universe, whom they adored under the different names of Pachacamac and Viracocha”); and Valcárcel, “Kon, Pachacamac, Uirakocha” (thesis), 4–6.

“They believed, and were very sure, that the souls did not die and that those of good [people] went to rest with the Creator. . . . Those who went to heaven would eat and drink with great splendor the very fine foods that the Creator had arranged for them.”<sup>70</sup> Prescott reported, “They admitted the existence of the soul hereafter, and connected with this a belief in the resurrection of the body. . . . This belief in the resurrection of the body . . . led them to preserve the body with so much solicitude.”<sup>71</sup> Without doubt, the doctrine of the resurrection of the mortal body and its eternal reunion with the spirit is strongly taught in the Book of Mormon and in the Doctrine and Covenants (for example, 2 Ne. 9:13; Alma 11:43–45; 40:21–23; D&C 88:27–28).

### Prophecies and Symbolism of Viracocha before His Visit

The Book of Mormon contains many prophecies of Christ’s visit and symbolism associated with him, just as legends claim the ancient Peruvians were well aware of and worshipped Viracocha long before he visited them in person.

Some scholars claim that every ancient Peruvian culture, including those before AD 30—Chavín (approximately 1200–300 BC); Huari (approximately 200 BC–AD 400); Paracas (approximately 800–100 BC); and Tiahuanaco (approximately 300 BC–AD 300)—worshipped Viracocha and had the same or similar graphic representations of him on their pottery, textiles, stone carvings, and temples.<sup>72</sup> All later cultures also worshipped him and depicted him in their art and architecture, including Pachacamac (approximately AD 200–600); Moche (approximately AD 100–800); Nazca (approximately AD 400–650); Chimú (approximately AD 900–1450); and the Incas (approximately AD 1400–1500). Each of these civilizations left images of the “staff deity.” Whether this deity initially represented Viracocha is uncertain, but in the later periods the staff god is uniformly identified as Viracocha by the experts on

70. Molina, *Account of Fables and Rites*, 67.

71. Prescott, *History of the Conquest of Peru*, 91–92.

72. See Claudette Kemper Columbus, “Madre-padre-criatura: el dios andino transcorriente, Wiracocha,” *Anthropolgica* 13, no. 13 (1995): 13. Elsewhere, Columbus attributes to Julio Tello and unnamed others the belief that representations of Viracocha date back to the Chavín period (“if Julio Tello among others is correct in supposing one of their [Chavín] deities represents Wiracocha”). Claudette Kemper Columbus, “Human Discourse about Nature; Nature’s Processes as Discourse: The Pre-Columbian Peruvian Myth of Cavillaca,” <http://www.iupui.edu/~arisbe/menu/library/aboutcsp/columbus/CAVIL.htm>.

ancient Peruvian cultures. Julio Tello, who discovered the Chavín civilization, concluded that the staff god of Chavín and Tiahuanaco was one and the same—Viracocha.<sup>73</sup>

A figure facing forward with outstretched arms holding staffs—is one of the best known Andean iconographic images. This figure was depicted on all sorts of media—stone, textile and ceramic as well as colonial paintings. The tradition can be traced back to Chavín culture with figures holding serpent staffs. . . . It was characteristic of Wari and Tiahuanaco cultures. . . . [It] is also found in Nazca culture. . . . The best known version of the Staff Deity is depicted on the gateway of the sun at Tiahuanaco.<sup>74</sup>

---

73. Julio C. Tello, *Introducción a la Historia Antigua del Perú* (Lima: Editorial Euphorion, 1921), 44–45; Julio C. Tello, “La religión en el antiguo Perú, Wirakocha,” *Revista Inca* 1, no. 1 (1923): 93–320 and no. 3 (1923): 583–606; Luis E. Valcárcel, “Símbolos Mágico-Religiosos en la Cultura Andina,” *Revista del Museo Nacional* 28 (1959): 3–18 (the staff god was depicted “from Chavin to post Hispanic times”). John Howland Rowe, in “Form and Meaning in Chavín Art,” Anthropology Emeritus Lecture Series at U.C. Berkeley, <http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/ANTH/emeritus/rowe/pub/chavin/>, wonders whether the images of the Chavín “Staff God” were depicting a nature god or a creator god, which casts some doubt on whether Viracocha myths date back to the Chavín period. “In later Andean religion gods who were worshipped so widely were nature gods, all others being of local or regional importance. If, as seems likely, this fundamental *distinction* was an old one in Peru, the Staff God was probably a nature god. His association with eagles and hawks in the temple at Chavin suggests that he was a sky god, but that is as far as our archaeological evidence will take us. Perhaps he was a god of Thunder, like the Inca deity Illapa, who was pictured as a man holding a club in one hand and a sling in the other. There is no reason to think that he was a creator god.” The problem underlying Rowe’s ambivalence is that none of these ancient civilizations had a written language, so all the experts have to go on is the art these people left. It is apparent, though, that the later civilizations drew upon the images left by the older ones. And although some may question whether these earlier images represent Viracocha or some other deity, at least Tello reconciles Rowe’s question by attributing the feline and nature powers of the jaguar god of Chavín to Viracocha, the creating god. He states unequivocally that the jaguar god of Chavin was Viracocha. See Tello, *Introducción a la Historia Antigua*, 44–45. See also McEwan, *Incas*, 37, 40, describing the figure on the Gate of the Sun at Tiauanaku as the “deity derived from the Chavín staff god.”

74. Valcárcel, “Símbolos Mágico-Religiosos,” 3–18; Rowe, “Influence of Chavín Art,” 101–24.

Both Betanzos and Sarmiento mention that Viracocha carried a staff.<sup>75</sup> The images generally show sunrays emanating from his head, and many depict a bearded face. All have a scepter or staff in each hand, said to be emblems of his power and authority as creator of all things.<sup>76</sup> From the various images of Viracocha on the pottery, textiles, metal works, and temples of the ancient Peruvians dating back well before Christ's earthly mission, it is clear that these Peruvians worshipped a staff god and may have associated him with Viracocha.

In a somewhat similar manner, various prophecies of Christ's coming appear in the Book of Mormon, including prophecies by Isaiah that are repeated in the first few books of the Book of Mormon.<sup>77</sup> These prophecies go into detail about his mission to save mankind by atoning for their sins and initiating the universal resurrection of all mankind.

According to the Book of Mormon, Lehi and his group brought brass plates with them that contained the earlier parts of the Old Testament, including texts of Isaiah. In addition to having all of Isaiah's detailed prophecies about Christ and related symbolism in the five books of Moses, Lehi and successive prophets after him received further detailed revelations about Christ and his role as Savior. These included prophecies that Christ would take upon himself the sins of the world and that



The Staff God carved in the Doorway of the Sun in Tiahuanaco, Bolivia. This figure also was depicted in the stone carvings, metalwork, pottery, and textiles of all other ancient Peruvian civilizations from the Chavín to the Incas. Photograph by Dennis Jarvis.

75. Betanzos, *Narrative of the Incas*, 10; Sarmiento, *History of the Incas*, 31–32.

76. The image on this page shows a figure from the Tiahuanaco civilization circa AD 500, holding a staff in each hand.

77. It is impossible to draw a perfect parallel here because the ancient Peruvians did not leave a written record like the Book of Mormon. So any speculation that the earliest depictions of the staff god indicate a prophecy that he would come to visit the people is unverifiable.



because of his resurrection all would be resurrected (see, for example, 1 Ne. 10:4–11; Mosiah 13:28, 33–35).

The symbolism of Christ described in the Book of Mormon includes one element that is of particular relevance to the depictions of Viracocha mentioned above: the brass serpent Moses raised up on a staff for those bitten by fiery serpents to look at so that they might be healed, an analogy for all mankind to look to Christ for salvation or healing from their sins (see 2 Ne. 25:20).

Archaeological and ethnohistoric evidence shows that this symbol of a man holding a staff with serpents was widely utilized by the ancient Peruvians to represent Viracocha. Sarmiento noted that Inca Pachacuti (ninth Royal Inca) made two images of gold—one of Viracocha that he placed to the right of the image of the Sun and one of lightning that he placed to the left of the image of the Sun. “This image was most highly venerated of all. Inca Yapanqui adopted this idol for his *guauqui* [idol], because he said it had appeared and spoken in a desert place and had given him a serpent with two heads, to carry about with him always” to protect him.<sup>78</sup> And as discussed and shown in the iconographic image of Viracocha above, he was depicted as the “staff god” holding a two-headed serpent staff, much like ancient Near Eastern depictions of two serpents intertwined around a central pole or the single serpent that Moses raised up as symbolic of Christ (Num. 21:9; John 3:14). According to *The Handbook of Inca Mythology*, the “two-headed subterranean . . . serpent [was] depicted in pre-Columbian art long before the Incas.”<sup>79</sup>

The Incas also practiced a ritual faintly reminiscent of the sacrament instituted by Christ to symbolize his atoning sacrifice to his followers. Prescott describes the Virgins of the Sun making a fine bread of maize flour that was distributed with fermented liquor.<sup>80</sup> Hyland refers to these emblems as “corn beer and a sacred bread.” “The parallels with the Eucharist are obvious,” she concluded, referring to the outward form and not the deeper symbolism of body and blood that Christ invoked.<sup>81</sup> Garcilaso stated, “Because of this . . . certain Spaniards have felt it their duty to affirm that the Incas and their vassals celebrated

---

78. Sarmiento, *History of the Incas*, 101.

79. See Steele and Allen, *Handbook*, 26. The Aztecs and Mayas symbolized their great white bearded Gods, Quetzalcoatl and Kukulcan, with a feathered serpent.

80. Prescott, *Conquest of Peru*, 111.

81. Hyland, *Jesuit and the Incas*, 168.

Holy Communion as Christians do.”<sup>82</sup> While the Incas apparently did not associate the idea of atonement with either their partaking of sacred emblems or their practice of offering blood sacrifices, some elements of their sacrificial rituals were similar in form to ancient Hebrew practices. Cieza, for instance, related that they offered sacrifices “of lambs, of sheep, of doves . . . , and of other birds and beasts.”<sup>83</sup>

### Statuary Representations of Viracocha

Although textile, pottery, trinket, and some statuary stone representations of Viracocha survived the ravages of the Spanish conquest, the most lifelike statuary representations of him did not. While older, primitive rock statues of Viracocha on the outskirts of the Inca Empire remained untouched, the *cronistas* made reference to a number of other dramatic Viracocha statues in and around Cuzco that, one by one, disappeared or were destroyed.

The destruction or disappearance of these remarkable statues can be attributed to three primary causes:

- Some of the statues were made of solid gold and were either melted down into ingots or otherwise transported to Spain as part of the usurpation of Inca wealth by Spain and its conquistadors.
- Other statues were destroyed by Spanish soldiers on the orders of Catholic priests frustrated by the idolatrous worship of the Incas.
- Still other statues were secreted away by Incas intent on protecting them from the Spaniards.

Garcilaso noted that “the Indians threw a great part of the treasures from the Cuzco temple into . . . [a] lake.”<sup>84</sup>

It is ironic that some Catholic conquistadors initially documented the existence of these statues and described their Christlike attributes only to participate later in their destruction. This can be explained in part by their evolving schemes to Christianize the Inca masses. At first the priests seemed willing, even anxious, to build bridges of understanding between their theology and that of the Incas. Then it seems they decided it would be easier to start from scratch. So it is that the

---

82. Garcilaso, *Commentaries*, book 6, p. 183. The Aztecs held a similar ceremony and claimed they were eating the body of their god. See Acosta, *Natural and Moral History*, 415.

83. Cieza, *Chronicle*, 94–95.

84. Garcilaso, *Commentaries*, book 3, p. 81.

selfsame *cronistas* can be found musing that a certain statue of Viracocha has the attributes of an Apostle of Christ, perhaps even Christ himself, only to later excoriate the Incas for worshipping that same demonically inspired image.

The end result is that, although there is some evidence that life-like statues existed and depicted a more obviously Christlike figure, none of these “realistic” statuary is currently available to be examined. But that does not change the enthusiasm with which some *cronistas* reported the existence of many Christlike monuments throughout the Inca Empire. For example, Garcilaso gave these two descriptions:



A statue of the “Weeping God” showing his scepter and tear tracks down his cheeks. Photograph by Scott Hoyt.

Viracocha was represented as a tall well-built man, wearing a beard as long as your hand; he was dressed in a tunic that came down to his feet. . . . There was something about this statue that reminded one of the likenesses looked of our holy apostles, and especially of his honor Saint Bartholomew.<sup>85</sup>

When the Spaniards discovered this temple and the statue of Viracocha, they said that Saint Bartholomew had perhaps been in Peru to teach the word of God to the gentiles.<sup>86</sup>

Garcilaso, whose account is not considered as reliable as those of the four primary *cronistas*, gives a rather different perspective than Cieza, who wrote this after viewing a statue of Viracocha:

---

85. Garcilaso, *Commentaries*, book 5, pp. 137–38. The oral tradition and legends of the visit of a great white bearded God are similar among the ancient civilizations of North, Central, and South America, but to the author’s knowledge, statues conforming to the descriptions of him in these traditions and legends were found only in Peru.

86. Garcilaso, *Commentaries*, book 5, p. 138.

When I passed through this province, I went to see the idol, for the Spaniards affirm that it may have been some apostle. . . . Whether this or any other was intended for one of the glorious apostles who, in the days of his preaching, had passed this way, God Almighty knows. I know not, and can only believe that if he was an apostle, he would work with the power of God in his preaching to these people, . . . and there would be some vestige of his visit. . . . Hence, I believe that, until our times, the word of the Holy Gospel was not heard.<sup>87</sup>

Obviously, some among the Spanish were seeing a similarity between the image of Viracocha and their own (probably inaccurate) concept of what an Apostle of Jesus might have looked like. But Cieza was more skeptical. Unfortunately, none of these more lifelike statues has survived, so we are left with diverse descriptions and interpretations.

No statue of Viracocha was more prominently displayed or thoroughly described than that which was found in the central temple of Cuzco, the capital of the Inca Empire. The solid gold statue was of a bearded man in flowing tunic and sandals with one arm “raised as if in command.”<sup>88</sup> Molina reported that in Cuzco in the temple of Quishuarancha, dedicated to the god Viracocha, was a “gold statue of the Creator [that was] the size of a ten-year-old boy. It was shaped like a standing man, his right arm raised high, with the hand almost closed, and the thumb and second finger raised, like a person who was ordering.”<sup>89</sup> The natives came to this temple in Cuzco-Coricancha night and day and made offerings on an altar before the gold statue. The temple and golden statue survived for several years before Catholic priests had the building demonished and built on its foundation a Catholic church and convent that stand to this day.

The fate of this oft-described solid-gold statue is a mystery, although legends abound that this golden relic, as well as many others, may have been spirited away by Inca warriors and hidden in the mountains, inside caverns, or at the bottom of lakes. As a 2011 article in *National Geographic* highlighted, at least two nineteenth-century explorers were led by indigenous guides to huge troves of Inca treasures presumably

---

87. Cieza, *Chronicle*, 7–8.

88. McEwan, *Incas*, 145.

89. Molina, *Account of Fables and Rites*, 15. See also Bernabé Cobo, *History of the Inca Empire* (written in 1653), trans. Roland Hamilton (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983), 156. Cobo was a Jesuit missionary and writer who lived in Peru sixty-one years and wrote a history composed of his observations during that time.



A picture of the Church and Convent of Santo Domingo showing the stone foundation of the Inca Temple of Coricancha beneath it. Photograph by Scott Hoyt.

hidden from the Spaniards in the 1500s. One of them was an American named Barth Blake, who wrote of beholding “thousands of gold and silver pieces of Inca and pre-Inca handicraft,” including life-size human figures. Blake continued, “I could not remove [all the treasure] alone, nor could thousands of men.” “Taking only what he could carry, Blake left and never returned,” the article continues. “Sources suggest that en route to New York, where he planned to raise funds for an expedition to recover his prize, he disappeared overboard. Some say he was pushed deliberately.”<sup>90</sup>

Another prominent monument to Viracocha survived the Spanish Conquest and is still displayed on a hillside of the Sacred Valley in Ollantaytambo, Peru. The Tunupa/Viracocha monument is a Mount Rushmore-like effigy of the profile of a man staring across the valley toward Macchu Picchu. Although the rock carving has fallen into disrepair, thousands of tourists still visit the site every year.

This rock effigy is best viewed from the heights of the fortress of Ollantaytambo, which was the site of a heroic rebellion against the

---

90. James Owen, “Lost Inca Gold—Ransom, Riches and Riddles,” *National Geographic* (April 25, 2011), <http://science.nationalgeographic.com/science/archaeology/lost-inca-gold/>.



A picture from the Inca fortress at Ollantaytambo showing the effigy of Viracocha on the cliff at the right-hand side of this image. Photograph by Scott Hoyt.

Spanish by the Inca emperor in exile Manco Inca in the late 1500s. One can almost imagine Manco sitting atop his mountain fortress, staring across the valley at the effigy of Viracocha for inspiration and, if at all possible, a blessing.<sup>91</sup> According to Betanzos, this effigy was carved in the image of Viracocha in memory of his visit.<sup>92</sup> The people also made another rock statue of Viracocha in Urcos outside of Cuzco, where they said Viracocha sat when he visited.<sup>93</sup>

## CONCLUSION

While interpreting ancient myths and images is never an exact science, the foregoing data drawn from accounts of ancient legends and corroborating archaeological depictions suggest that the ancient Peruvians viewed their creator god Viracocha in some ways as Christ is described

91. Kim MacQuarrie, *Last Days of the Incas* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), 230–50.

92. Betanzos, *Narrative of the Incas*, 7–8. See also William H. Isbell and Anita G. Cook, “Ideological Origin of an Andean Conquest State,” *Archaeology* 40, no. 4 (1987): 27–33.

93. Betanzos, *Narrative of the Incas*, 7–8.

in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and other LDS scripture. Although some of the lesser *cronistas* who reflected on the possible origin of the legends of Viracocha concluded that he either was an Apostle of Christ who came to proselytize or was Christ himself, the four primary chroniclers—Cieza, Betanzos, Sarmiento, and Molina—were more circumspect in their assessment of this possibility. Still, certain parallels leave that particular door cracked open, and those who look into these ancient legends must wonder if Viracocha might indeed have been Christ. While there is a chance that the ancient Peruvians were either the people Jesus visited in the Book of Mormon or among those who separated from the main body of Lehi's descendants, the idea that the Book of Mormon events took place in Peru is not one of the more popular theories. But even if the ancient Peruvians were not descendants of Lehi, that does not mean Christ did not visit them. He did tell the Nephites, after all, that they were not the only people the Father had commanded him to visit after his resurrection (see 3 Ne. 16:1–3).

---

Scott Hoyt graduated from California State University, Fullerton, with a bachelor's degree in Latin American studies. He went on to receive his juris doctorate from the University of California, Hastings, where he was a member of the Order of the Coif and editor of the Hastings Law Review.

Hoyt clerked for the California Supreme Court before becoming a litigation partner at Gibson Dunn, where he tried what was at that time the largest case ever tried in the United States court system (the Coordinated Asbestos Coverage Case, with over one hundred defendants). Gibson Dunn's litigation department was ranked first in the nation by *American Lawyer* magazine.

Prior to attending the University of California, Hoyt spent two years in Peru as a Mormon missionary, during which time he studied the legends of Viracocha as recorded by Spanish Catholic historians during the conquest in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Hoyt and Kirk Magleby wrote "Los Cristianos Pre-Colombinos," which was printed and circulated widely in Peru.

While practicing law, Hoyt furthered his study of the history and archaeology of Peru, as well as of Mexico and Central America. He wrote numerous papers on Viracocha, Quetzalcoatl (white, bearded god of the Aztecs), and Kulkulkan (white, bearded god of the Mayas), and returned to Peru twice for research. Hoyt also published a book about his missionary experiences, which includes a discussion of the legends of Viracocha: *Two Years of Eternity* (New York: Vantage Press, 2010).

## Shaping the Earth

*Erika Price*

*Water is fluid, soft, and yielding.  
But water will wear away rock,  
which is rigid and cannot yield . . .  
This is another paradox:  
what is soft is strong.*

—Lao Tzu

Indiana produced two of this nation's greatest oddities: Michael Jackson and my brother-in-law. I never met Michael, but my thirty-five-year-old brother-in-law introduced himself to me by rolling up his left shirtsleeve past his shoulder, bending his arm like he had someone in a chokehold, and then demanding, "Feel my pecs!" I stood paralyzed, trying to avoid eye contact with any muscle group below his forehead. Either this was a test—a bizarre type of in-law initiation—or Indiana folk were far less reserved than I had imagined.

When I didn't accept my brother-in-law's generous invitation, he grabbed my hand and placed my three middle fingers just below his collarbone and to the right of the flexed and freckled bicep that was now turning a shade of purple. "See?" he grinned with satisfaction at the firmness of his chest. "I lift weights." I could have countered his offer with my mouth open wide, inviting him to inspect my cavity-free molars with a declaration that "See? I floss!" But I didn't. Instead, I nervously pulled my lips wide across my face in what I hoped would pass for a smile and excused myself from the room to collect my nerves: I still had four more in-laws to meet.





In a way, I can see why my brother-in-law was so anxious to flaunt his physique: it took a lot of effort to make all that muscle. Heaven knows I've tried to make some muscle of my own. I've joined gyms, run in races, hefted weights, and crunched my abdominals into spasms. And yet, when I look in the mirror, I still see a silhouette that is more rolled than ripped, more curved than cut.

I blame the disappearance of my figure on the fact that it spent years trying to contain large pregnancies and has since gone into retirement out of sheer exhaustion. But where is the sexiness in that trade-off? Marble bodies—not motherly ones—get our compliments, our headlines, and our resources. But why is it that we value hardened bodies so highly? Is it the work ethic inherent in the product? The attractiveness of the aesthetic? A fascination with the alchemy that turns weakness into strength, flesh into fiber?

Maybe it's the psychology of the language we use: Exercise. Fit. Physique. These words slice the air with their syllables. They are crisp, emphatic, strong—a motto for the modern age. We could use more holistic terms like *being*, *person*, and *soul*, but these words slow our mouths with taffylike vowels and rolling transitions. They are round, patient, gentle, even motherly—qualities we simply don't have time for in the rush for physical perfection.



Just hours after my first childbirth, a young nurse came into my room and leaned over my exhausted body. She gently pulled down the blanket that rested on my stomach to reveal a bruised and broken but triumphant womb. I'm not quite sure what I expected her to do at that moment. Did I think she would put her hand over her heart in a moment of silence? Place a blue ribbon on my belly? Clap?

Instead, she quickly flexed her hands in the air and then pressed her fingertips into the raw dough of my abdomen and began to knead. With straightened arms and flexed palms, she descended into my midsection like a curse. That is when I, too, began to curse. Between gasps for air I asked her why she was torturing me. She explained that pressing on the uterus would help it to cramp down, stem its blood flow, and return it back to its normal size. If I had had the presence of mind to chitchat with her about the physiology of the womb that she was in the process of pulverizing, I would have reminded her that my uterus had just exerted

up to one hundred pounds of downward force with each contraction of an eternal labor and that after superhuman efforts such as those, then maybe, just maybe, my muscles might deserve a little break and lot more credit. After all, it took my uterus nine months to get to the size it was that day, and I was quite sure it could get back to where it came from if given the same amount of time. But no, unfortunately for me, that is not how things work in the forsaken world of postpartum care. The nurse assured me it was for my own health and safety as she continued to dig her fists in toward my spine.

It was an abrupt transition: the act of bringing life into this world had reversed the modern trajectory that softness must yield to hardness. I had survived the most physically trying experience of my life, where everything was hard—my womb was hard, my bed was hard, my labor was hard, my breathing was hard. Pain and exertion had sculpted my brow like stone. But after the crisis, after the hardness had threatened to consume and break me, my world gave way to softness—soft cries, soft skin, soft blankets, soft light. That night I swaddled my mewling baby in the warmth of my folds and fed him from the strength of my body. At that moment, I sensed the meaning of this new pattern: Softness wasn't the absence of hardness, it was the completion of it. Stone had joined with water, death had joined with life, woman had joined with mother.



I have had the privilege of coming home from the hospital with five boys. Five times I have agonized over finding the perfect name for the new arrival. I believe in strong and regal names for my boys—names that will go before them in life, names that will shape them into men and sound good when they take over the presidency or the desk of the nightly news. For example, I wanted to name our fifth baby Henry. It was a confident and commanding calling card—the perfect name for a son. My husband, on the other hand, liked the name Sheldon. Sheldon might have gotten points for being an ancestral name, but it had the rhetorical strength of a marshmallow. We named our fifth baby Henry.

From the moment these babies of mine took breath, it seems like the world and I have been constructing a space for them where the expectations of “manliness” are clear: strong names and strong bodies, sharp toys and sharp tools, tough jobs and even tougher attitudes. And to some extent these expectations might be good ones. Our society needs men who can and will do hard things—men who will face the world outside their parents’ basements, get their hands dirty, work at marriage,

and support their kids. But I'm fearful that with all my efforts to harden my boys' resolve and cement them into pillars of strength, I haven't made enough room for them to be soft.

Take today, for instance. My thirteen-year-old came home from school and promptly fell into a coma on the couch. His nine-year-old brother took this opportunity to put a taffy-colored teddy bear with a bow around its neck in his big brother's arms. When the rest of us discovered the prank, there was nothing left to do but take a picture with the iPhone and send it to everyone we knew. Within nanoseconds, the picture was surfing the Internet and ringing text message tones. Our thirteen-year-old received more likes and LOLs than a Harlem Shake—and all because he was seen with a stuffed animal.

It's not that I want my boys to take up cuddling with toys, but I do want them to know that it is okay to be tender and vulnerable and that softness isn't a concession to strength—it is a corollary and one that the Savior knew well. In the New Testament, Christ is referred to as both the sacrificial Lamb of God and the King of the Jews. He silently writes with his finger in the sand and then later overcomes a tomb of stone. He heals the lame with tender hands and then cleanses the temple with a whip. He is the son who worries about his mother from the cross and then commends his spirit into the hands of his father.

Christ is the sublime combination of strength and subtlety, humility and power. His nature is one of perfect paradoxes: "Listen to the voice of the Lord your God, even Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, whose course is one eternal round" (D&C 35:1). He is everything good that is masculine, but he is everything good that is feminine, too—the fruition of his mother's and Father's best qualities, a Son of the Most High.

Maybe that is what I'm really wishing for my sons. Not only do I want them to be like their Savior, but I want them to reflect the best that is in me and my husband. Somewhere in the tableaux of our sons' lives, I hope I'll see broad strokes of crimson and soft wisps of sapphire and know that they got those colors from me: my modest nose, my love of music, my resilient joints, my quick laughter, my strong stomach, my sentimental heart. These are my best qualities, the best I have to offer them from my body and soul.



Every year we try to plan a unique family trip with the boys. This year we're thinking of backpacking the Grand Canyon. I can see the hike in

my mind already: my boys will go through 3.9 pounds of trail mix in less than two miles, my husband will give a tour-guide discourse on the geologic history of the area, and I will be composing my will. It will be dusty and hot, and dehydrated exhaustion will lurk around every corner. My sons will love it: the ultimate physical challenge, a male badge of courage. On the other hand, my fear of the animal kingdom and I will be praying that we don't encounter any bighorn sheep along the way.

At some point during our hike, however, I imagine that we will pause our step to take in the surroundings: the coral cliffs and their jagged majesty, the way they look as though they've been etched with God's hammer and chisel. Once we have taken in the power of the expansive cleft, I wonder if we will glance down at the Colorado River below—that soft, satin ribbon of water that flows beneath it all, caressing the rock and singing life into the desert. Perhaps then we'll realize that it has been there all along, gently shaping the earth in its path.

---

This essay by Erika Price received an honorable mention in the BYU Studies 2014 personal essay contest.

## Reprise

His hip replaced. Four valves  
bypassed. Now this. The tremors  
shake his spoon as he  
lifts it to mouth, lets  
the potatoes slip down his throat.  
Tabling the spoon, he reaches  
for the towel bibbed  
around shoulders and chest,  
and sweeps his lips. Blinking,  
he looks to my wife, to me,  
says, *The roof's got a leak.*  
His shoulders fall against  
the high-backed chair  
as he fingers the plastic tray  
holding his meal, looks down:  
*Just one more thing*  
*to add to the list.* I trace the years  
on his face: *Well, Someone*  
*must think your shoulders*  
*are pretty broad.* He laughs. Or  
sighs. *I'm sure we can get it fixed,*  
my wife says, wrapping herself  
around his shiver. *You've got*  
*plenty of able bodies around.*  
He rises, then sinks in his chair,  
and traces the bowl of lukewarm stew:  
*Maybe we'll just have to wait.*  
She looks to me, then says, *No.*  
*We'll come fix it before winter hits.*  
He swallows her words slowly and,  
looks up:  
*It won't be a bad winter though.*  
He steadies his fainting hand  
and reaches for his pills.

—Tyler Chadwick

# Toward a Mormon Systematic Theology

## Essay on *Wrestling the Angel* by Terryl L. Givens

*Stephen H. Webb*

Can Mormon theology be made systematic? That question presupposes, of course, that it is not systematic already, and this is where the skeptics of system building have an advantage. If Mormon theology appears to be a bit protracted, improvised, and even makeshift if not positively byzantine, then forcing it into a schematic form might be inappropriate. Organizing Mormon thought might even be a violent act, like cramming a lot of priceless pieces of glass art into a small, unpadded box for shipping. Under such conditions, how could any theologian guarantee that breakage won't occur?

Fortunately, ideas are not so fragile, and theology is not so immediately consequential. Every significant idea has built-in logical consequences, but it can take centuries for academic theology to have much impact on everyday religious beliefs and practices. Even the systematic theology of Thomas Aquinas, of which it can be said that nothing more theologically systematic can ever be thought, took centuries to become the standard teaching of the Catholic Church. I doubt if any church will ever have another Aquinas; the social conditions for such magisterial summation will never be so finely tuned.

Nonetheless, I think that Mormon theology is actually in a better position to become more systematic than most, if not all, of its theological competitors. Whatever we non-Mormons think about the origin of his revelations, Joseph Smith was a remarkable thinker who assimilated a variety of neglected, lost, misunderstood, or simply rejected aspects of the Christian tradition. He was fearless in affirming all truth wherever he found it, and his intuitive skills (what Christians in the ancient world would call spiritual perception) were unrivaled. Perhaps because of this interconnection in Joseph between insight and revelation, the

Latter-day Saints remain to this day open to ongoing clarifications, supplements, and expansions of those original claims. That Joseph Smith's theological vision is coherent is sufficiently established by the ongoing life and ministry of the Church he founded. But that leaves the crucial, if subsidiary, theological task of highlighting the lines of consistency that hold together the intellectual structure of those communal practices. Theologians will be able to find multiple ways to tinker with these connections, but a good systematic theology will show how the logical possibilities are not unlimited and that, in fact, there are reasons to prefer some connections over others.

Still, it is important to admit that even the best Mormon systematic theology will not look like Thomism, which is structured according to a set of metaphysical principles designed to isolate the singularity of God's necessary existence in starkest contrast to the common features of contingent creation. For Aquinas, God is the being of all that exists, but in such a way that God's own being is utterly beyond everything that we can know in this world. The world is knowable only in light of an essentially mysterious and absolutely "other" deity. Because Mormonism, in my view, makes personality ontologically basic, it makes God more like us and thus more intelligible. It also gives the world its own personality, one could say, in the sense that even matter is enlivened with yearnings and aims. There are other examples of personalist metaphysics in Western philosophy, but none as consistently personal as this.

For Aquinas, everything begins with the intelligibility of being and the interplay of act and potency. Metaphysics maps a hierarchical scale with matter (pure potency) at the bottom, indistinguishable from nothingness, and with God (pure act) so over the top that the scale doesn't reach to him either. For Mormons, reality is more like a bunch of people sitting around and talking to each other—and the chairs they are sitting on are as real as they are. Even God exists not as a unified substance but as three "distinct, fully individuated persons" (72). The resulting metaphysical geometry will be more circular than ladder-like.

While Aquinas's first metaphysical principle is the real distinction between essence and existence (which is not a distinction at all in God), Mormon metaphysics begins with the simple proposition that persons are always prior to ideas, with the understanding that persons are always physically embodied. The world is not anchored in anything outside of itself, just as personal freedom is not dependent on anything other than its own extended existence in time and space. Projected onto the Thomistic ladder, we would have to say that personality goes all the way

down the scale as well as all the way up. Ideas are important, but rather than enlightening the darkness of our knowing, they exist in the shadows of personal intentions, decisions, and desires.

Terryl Givens's magnificent new book *Wrestling the Angel: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Cosmos, God, Humanity* (Oxford, 2015) is an exceptional representation of a Mormon systematic theology. It is breathtakingly comprehensive, full of historical finesse, and beautifully expressed. It could have been titled *Dancing with the Angels*, since Givens writes in a way that never lets the reader see him sweat. In fact, he writes too well to be a systematic theologian, by which I mean that he conveys the complexity of ideas by vividly representing their various façades rather than breaking them down into their smallest components. Ideas, for Givens, are more like people than complex formulae. They have personalities, and they grow in relation to each other, which makes their various interconnections more familial than logical. This is metaphysics with a decidedly human face. Christianity has never looked so anthropomorphically at home.

Nevertheless, for all its orderliness, Givens actually denies that his book is a work of systematic theology, calling it instead a “study of the foundations of Mormon thought and practice” (ix). I take such denials as a nod to nervousness in the Mormon community about attempts by individuals without a prophetic vocation to bring order to the capacious house of Joseph's many ideas. That is understandable, but I look forward to the day when Mormon theologians (and yes, while Givens is a professor of religion and literature, he is most assuredly a Mormon and a theologian) do not feel the need to use their church's “open canon” to claim that “Mormon doctrine is by definition impossible to fix” (x). Every Christian tradition that is open to the Holy Spirit is living and evolving and thus difficult to pin down. Even the most biblically focused Christian traditions tend to operate with a “canon within a canon” whose boundaries are hard to fix, and magisterial church traditions supplement the closed canon with the openness of creeds and councils. Mormons are in pretty much the same position as every other Christian tradition with regard to systematic theology; which is to say, there are lots of sources of authority to be juggled and few certainties to be found, but much delightful work to sustain the life of any curious mind. Brigham Young called theology a “celestial science” (6), and I couldn't agree more. When Givens emphasizes how Mormon theology must be provisional and incomplete, he is describing theology as such; on this point, Mormons, I regret to say, are not all that special.



I think Givens's book will go a long way toward calming Mormon theological worries that system building can assume creedal dimensions. Despite his occasional rhetoric to the contrary, his systematic ambitions are clear; yet his aim, appropriately, is doctrinal complexity, not creedal simplicity. Givens is convinced that Mormon foundations have to be put in the context of both continuities with and departures from ancient and contemporary Christian traditions. While systematic theology for churches that are more certain of their location within the broader stream of the faith can afford to be formal and abstract, the intelligibility of Mormon doctrine cannot be elaborated outside a comparative methodology grounded in a historical narrative about the development of church doctrine. Mormonism's claim to represent the fullness of Christian faith requires nothing less.

Givens points out that the Latter-day Saints do not have a counterpart to Catholicism's Catechism and that the 1842 Articles of Faith "contain relatively few of Mormonism's key beliefs" (6). Yet it is my experience that the Saints have done a better job than any other Christian church in instructing their members in the doctrinal basics of their faith. When it comes to theology, Mormons protest too much. The theological practices of the Saints are much more systematic than their rhetorical apologies for being unsystematic would suggest. What the Saints say about theology needs to be brought into closer alignment with what they actually accomplish through education, publishing, and conferencing venues, which is quite impressive indeed.

As demonstrated by his very fine analysis of Mormon views of apostasy, Givens keeps the fullness of the restored gospel front and center. "In Smith's scheme of restoration, any pruning of accretions is meant to clear the way for the tree's trunk to reattain the fullness of its original foliage" (19). Such flowery language is a testament to the decades Givens has spent immersed in the literature of the romantics, and indeed the overall aim of Givens's project is to situate Mormon thought in the ancient past of the church, with all of its exotic richness, rather than in the Protestant Reformation's narrower explication of the three solae (scripture, grace, and faith). In Givens's hands, Joseph comes across as a lot closer to Origen than Calvin—and Joseph also comes across as a more theologically explicit variant of Wordsworth, Blake, and Coleridge.

Origen was cosmologically speculative, anthropologically optimistic, biblically imaginative, and doctrinally unconventional, so that comparison provides an apt framework for this book. Givens argues that Mormon cosmology resists the ancient allure of spirit-matter dualism by

developing a two-tier monism instead, and it is at times like this that one can wish for more clarity, and less romance, in his language. The tiers of two monisms can easily collapse, leaving a muddle in its place. Givens makes the eternity of matter one of the basic principles of Mormon metaphysics, but he hesitates to take a position on whether Mormonism teaches that matter is essentially mind or that mind is essentially material.

Such indecisiveness is to be applauded, I think, if mind and matter are to be understood as the co-essential constituents of personhood, but Givens retreats from this commendable indeterminacy when he discusses the status of eternal law in Joseph's thought. According to Givens, Smith argued that self-existent principles "underlie the very structure of the universe and exist independently of God, though he is our source for knowing them" (63). Moreover, Givens explicitly sides with Mormon philosopher Kent Robson's opinion that natural and moral laws are "independent of God and to some extent out of God's control" (65). The law that governs matter is an example of what philosophers call an abstract object, and it exists as necessarily as God.

If this is true, then my own personalist interpretation of Mormon metaphysics is misguided and wrongheaded. Law measures movement, and if the teleological structure of the universe operates outside of and external to the nature of God, then it is, for all practical purposes, the functional equivalent of Being in the Platonic theologies that Smith so roundly rejected. Worse, we are right back to the eternity of Plato's forms, with the law taking the place of Being (or taking the place of the good beyond Being). Like Being, the law becomes the ground of intelligibility, but, for that very reason, it is immune to further explanation. The early Church Fathers were surely right to follow the Middle Platonists in moving the forms into the mind of God, although that raised the problem of why God needed to think them if God was not always creating the world. Mormons, by portraying God as mutable while advancing in perfection, have an easier way to grasp the forms as the content of God's thoughts. That is, Mormons give the eternal aspect of the forms more to do than the Church Fathers could, since the forms are the law of matter's own everlasting evolution. The law can be both God's law and nature's design because God is himself a physical being. More bluntly put, if God is a physical person who perfectly unites matter and mind, then the eternal law is nothing more than the divine self-consciousness. Mormonism pulls off the neat metaphysical trick of connecting the eternal law to both nature and God in such a way that its necessity does not contradict God's absolute sovereignty. Matter, here,

far from being the pure potentiality of Aristotle and Aquinas, is as actual as God and thus does not need to have form imposed on it from without; at its most natural, we could say, matter is the stuff of personhood. A modified or complex monism (or to give Givens his due, a two-tiered monism) thus takes the place of spirit-matter dualism.

The Mormon view of matter puts the Saints in a unique position to dialogue with the natural sciences, especially the idea of emergent naturalism, which imbues matter with a self-mobilizing momentum that compels it to achieve increasingly complex levels of biological organization. At the very least, the Mormon view of matter is far removed from Darwinism, which is why I was disappointed that Givens tries to assimilate orthodox evolutionary theory into Mormon theology (213). The origins of modernity can be traced to the severing of the natural law from the mind of God, but Mormon theology avoids that possibility by wagering that God's own self-consciousness is the culmination of processes inherent within matter itself. Intelligent design theorists defend consciousness as the source of information, an idea that finds resonance in the way Mormonism sees evidence of consciousness pervading matter at every level, in the sense that the development of personality is matter's innermost potential and *telos*. Thus does Mormonism achieve a materialism that avoids the dualism of the Gnostics as well as the impersonalism of pantheism; the latter could never do justice to the Mormon experience of "God's highly personal involvement in human life and his revelatory responsiveness to individual prayer" (79).

The uniqueness of the Mormon accomplishment should not be underappreciated. For the ancient Greeks, matter is just an idea, and for the scholastic metaphysicians, even God cannot create, know, or manipulate prime or pure matter, because matter is nothing until it is given a form. For Mormonism, matter has its own reality regardless of whether anyone, God or us, is thinking about it. That does not need to mean, however, that matter is as basic as personality. A better formulation would be to say that matter and mind meet in what persons are. When Mormons say "person," they mean an embodied individual who is free to think and act. God is the perfect unity of matter and mind, but the rest of us can only dream of what such unity might mean. Mormons can thus acknowledge the mystery of God as much as any other Christian tradition, with the caveat that they locate that mystery in the eternity of a divine body rather than in an infinite and immaterial spirit.

A physically real person is active, and Joseph's God is never without many things to do. Real people are also hard to describe, which means

that Mormonism provides a complex theory of a complex God. One of those complexities involves the category of intelligence, which Joseph associates with agency, spirit, and, at times, matter. When we think about consciousness (which I identify with the Mormon category of intelligence), it does seem metaphysically basic. Consciousness is a primordial phenomenon that science cannot explain because it appears to us to be completely uncaused, like God. So it makes sense to think of it (again, like God) as eternal. Givens is at his dancing best in sorting out the various Mormon positions concerning how intelligence came to be in relation to God's own becoming. Joseph envisions God as the one who lifts others up while bringing them into networks of family togetherness. But did God, manifest in both a father and a mother, give birth to these spirit intelligences, or adopt them? Is he more like a parent (the intimate source of all intelligences) or a community organizer (first among equals)?

While the feminine aspect of God in Mormonism should provide a tremendous hint concerning that question, Givens gives up on further clarity. "The impossibility of establishing with certainty Joseph's position on spirit birth as opposed to spirit adoption is one of many points of indeterminacy in the Mormon past, and a reminder of how much fog enshrouded a narrative that is at times depicted as clear and unfailingly linear in the modern church" (157). The greatest of those intelligences is, of course, Jesus Christ, but Mormons also "emphatically declare Christ to be an eternal God" (121). For Givens, Mormon Christology is the end of the road for Mormon metaphysics. "The question of how Christ could be fully divine premortally, and at the same time literally begotten in the spirit by the Father, has never been fully resolved in Mormon doctrine" (120). The Mormon *both/and* regarding spirit and matter hits an *either/or* concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ: is he truly God or not?

I think this is a false dilemma, not least because creedal Christianity is also agnostic about what "begotten" really means. Mormons actually have an advantage in thinking through the divinity of Jesus because they do not have to bracket his incarnational body. Since matter is, in some way, eternal, God does not create out of nothing, but that does not mean that God has always been just one of many intelligent beings. God is an organizer, as Givens repeatedly explains, but eternity is not overcrowded with a divine mob. I take it that intelligences are the precursors of the human soul, and that God creates them not out of nothing but, in a way, from the matter that he already is. That is, since the nature of God includes a material component, what God gives others is already part of what he is in himself. If that sounds complicated, classical theism is no less so.

Thomas Aquinas thought that souls were immaterial, of course, but by accepting Aristotle's dictum that matter is the principle of individuation, Aquinas could not explain how souls are individual, how they can survive the death of the body, and how they can be the bearers of personal identity. Mormon metaphysics has none of these particular problems because souls that are material are able to be individual and personal (see 211). Our souls are not exactly created by God, according to Mormon theology, but they are not equal to God, either. Obviously, there is a need to find in God the point where matter and mind meet, and that is Jesus Christ, who provides the eternal pattern for how spirit and matter join together in the fullest expression of personhood.

The great mystery of human personality is also the chief mystery of God. We are embodied intelligences, and while our bodies in this mortal state test and challenge our freedom to act like Jesus, he remains the model not only of our moral life but also of the harmony we seek between our bodies and our souls. It is Jesus who is the fullest personality we know, which is why Mormons have long tended to identify Jesus with "the Jehovah of the Old Testament" (118). Jesus's personality will also be the shining light of heaven, leaving plenty of room for each of the faithful to abide with God in all of their own individuality, and Givens shows that all Christians have much to learn from the Mormon conception of the afterlife.

So much of classical theism is devoted to the protection of God's divinity, as if it is a scarce quantity that would lose value were it to be widely shared, but Mormon metaphysics assumes that there is more than enough divinity to go around. Personality is, after all, a relational category, which means that it comes to be as it is shared. In Givens's moving words, eternal life is "a destiny modeled on the existence, character, and nature of God himself. . . . Eternal life is therefore the life that God lives" (266). Our bodies both enable and limit the ways in which we share ourselves in this mortal state, but in heaven, matter will be a pure conduit for unlimited personal development, guided by the dominating presence of the personality of God.

---

Stephen H. Webb received his PhD at the University of Chicago and has taught philosophy and religion for more than twenty-five years. He is widely published in journals such as *First Things*, and his recent book publications include *Mormon Christianity: What Other Christians Can Learn from the Latter-day Saints* (Oxford University Press, 2013) and *Jesus Christ, Eternal God: Heavenly Flesh and the Metaphysics of Matter* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

# “The Season of Eric” at Plan-B Theatre

## A Milestone in Mormon Drama

*Callie Oppedisano*

When I learned that Plan-B was considering an entire season devoted to my work, I think I was outwardly composed. I may have said something like “Well, that’s very flattering. Thank you.” Or something equally bland. Inside, though, Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony was playing.

—Eric Samuelsen<sup>1</sup>

It is rare, even for the most successful contemporary playwrights, to have a full season devoted to their work at a major theatre company. That is one reason why a full season of five Eric Samuelsen plays at Salt Lake City’s Plan-B Theatre is noteworthy. Another reason the so-called “Season of Eric” is noteworthy is because it marks an important milestone in contemporary Mormon theatre. Never before has a Mormon playwright so successfully partnered with a professional theatre company to produce so many new works. These works are influencing the Mormon theatre canon and assisting in the evolution of the Mormon theatre aesthetic. Samuelsen is demonstrating that Mormon theatre is becoming more dramaturgically diverse. His work is influenced by other countries, languages, and genres; it takes a hard look at politics and economics and the culture from which they come. His art form is capable of playing to a seasoned critical audience, one that leans toward the belief that theatre can and does lead to social change.

At first glance, Samuelsen and Plan-B Theatre’s decade-old partnership is rather unexpected. Samuelsen is a retired Brigham Young University professor who proclaims a devout belief in and loyalty to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Plan-B Theatre is a secular theatre company in Salt Lake City devoted primarily to nurturing new

---

1. Eric Samuelsen, “Announcing Plan-B’s 2013/14 Season!” *Plan-Blog*, May 6, 2013, <http://planbtheatre.org/wp/?p=2983>.

work by Utah dramatists. Together they join forces in their common desire to expose what they see as social and political ills. “The Season of Eric” demonstrates the width and breadth of what this kind of artistic collaboration can bring to a Utah audience: theatre that is relevant, thought provoking, entertaining, and, at times, igniting.

Anyone acquainted with Utah or LDS theatre is at least aware of Samuelsen’s work. Expertly structured, his plays are well researched and known for their natural dialogue and intricately woven humor and pathos. He has garnered numerous awards, including three Association for Mormon Letters (AML) awards in drama for *Accommodations* (1994), *Gadianton* (1997), and *The Way We’re Wired* (1999).<sup>2</sup> In addition to receiving critical acclaim, he is one of the most prolific dramatists creating new work for Utah’s stages.<sup>3</sup> He is known, too, for his long career as professor of playwriting at BYU, nurturing such LDS playwrights as Melissa Leilani Larson and James Goldberg, and for his position as AML president from 2007 to 2009.

Growing up in Indiana, where his father (a Norwegian immigrant, Mormon convert, and opera singer) taught music at the university level, Samuelsen experienced an early exposure to the arts, but it was not until the July 1977 issue of the *Ensign* arrived at his home with President Spencer Kimball’s talk “A Gospel Vision of the Arts”<sup>4</sup> that he realized that “we could and should write about conflicts in our culture, about difficulties and struggles, about ‘apostacies and inner revolutions and counter-revolutions.’” He reflects, “I knew that day that I needed to write about my own culture. And that’s what I’ve been drawn to.”<sup>5</sup>

Samuelsen’s many dramatic musings on Mormon culture are often, in his own words, “critical.” In a 2008 interview, he said, “I’m much

---

2. After three AML wins in the same category, individuals are not eligible for further consideration. Instead, Samuelsen was awarded the Smith Petit Award for outstanding contribution to Mormon letters in 2012.

3. Samuelsen has had over two dozen plays professionally produced across the country.

4. The article was an adaptation of Kimball’s 1967 address titled “Education for Eternity.” Spencer W. Kimball, “Education for Eternity,” September 12, 1967, Brigham Young University, <http://education.byu.edu/edlf/archives/prophets/eternity.html>.

5. Eric Samuelsen, interview by Mahonri Stewart, “An Interview with Eric Samuelsen,” *A Motley Vision: Mormon Literature, Criticism, Publishing, and Marketing*, May 2, 2006, <http://motleyvision.blogspot.com/2006/05/interview-with-eric-samuelsen.html>.

more interested in work that's critical of the culture or challenging to the culture within the culture," adding that as a playwright, he's "less interested in what happens in sacrament meeting than what happens in those conversations in the car ride home from sacrament meeting."<sup>6</sup> Samuelsen's interest in exploring the hidden places in Mormon culture has helped situate him on the outside of mainstream Mormon drama, to the point that he has, on occasion, written plays under a pseudonym.<sup>7</sup> In addition, his approach has also contributed to what can be seen as an ideological division of his work, with some plays, such as *The Plan* (2011), taking place in Provo for primarily LDS audiences; other plays, such as *Borderlands* (2011), are staged in Salt Lake City, the majority at Plan-B Theatre.

Samuelsen's deep concern for matters of politics and social justice has made him a good fit for Plan-B Theatre. One of three fully professional theatre companies in Salt Lake City, it was cofounded in 1991 by Cheryl Cluff, who now serves as managing director. With the passionate leadership of Jerry Rapier, longtime producing director, Plan-B's mission is to produce "unique and socially conscious theatre. With a particular emphasis on new plays by Utah playwrights."<sup>8</sup> It was not until 2001, however, that Plan-B's current mission began to take shape, when they staged the regional premiere of *The Laramie Project* by Moises Kaufman and members of the Tectonic Theatre Project.<sup>9</sup> Rapier recalls, "It changed our profile in the community, it changed the way we tell stories, it changed the way we decide which stories to tell."<sup>10</sup>

In 2004, Samuelsen's work was first introduced to the Plan-B audience via the theatre company's first annual *Slam*, a twenty-four hour theatre festival. These festivals are often collections of nonsensical farces, but Samuelsen's 2004 contribution to *Slam* was about a rancher-turned-beef-producer, partly inspired by Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*, a scathing examination of the landscape of America's food industry. It was so well received that Rapier asked Samuelsen to turn it into a full-length work, and it appeared on stage two years later under the title

---

6. Eric Samuelsen, interview by Callie Oppedisano, Provo, Utah, May 2008, 5.

7. Samuelsen, interview by Oppedisano, 21–22.

8. "About," *Plan-B Theatre Company*, <http://www.planbtheatre.org/about.htm>.

9. *The Laramie Project* is a docudrama about gay college student Matthew Shepard, who was killed in Wyoming in 1998.

10. Jerry Rapier, quoted in Callie Oppedisano, "RoseXposed: Plan-B Theatre Company," *Utah Theatre Bloggers Association*, August 25, 2013, <http://utahtheatrebloggers.com/16033/rosexposed-plan-b-theatre-company>.



*Miasma*.<sup>11</sup> Samuelson and Plan-B established a creative and mission-minded partnership that led to the world premieres of *Amerigo* (2010), *Borderlands* (2011), and his translation of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll House* (2011).<sup>12</sup> Highly successful, these plays, in turn, led to Plan-B's "Season of Eric."

Plan-B Theatre is, by professional standards, a small company, but it maintains its size by choice in order to operate independent of funding that would dictate the type of work produced on its stage.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, when Jerry Rapier sat down to select the 2013/2014 season, he was able to do so with his own personal admiration for Samuelson's work in mind. He reflects:

Eric writes with an enviable ease about Big Ideas—he can be Truthful with a Capital T and Intellectual with a Capital I, yet still guide his audience to a soulful place, a place of passion, a place where a true marriage of truth and intellect is possible—a place where you have no choice but to take pause, reexamine and choose how best to move forward. . . . So when it came time to select the 2013/14 season, I did what I had been considering for quite some time—I invited Eric to be a resident playwright. And then I did something else I had been considering for quite some time—I asked if Plan-B could stage an entire season of his work. I wanted to celebrate his range as a playwright and let some of that been-under-a-bushel-far-too-long work see the light of day.<sup>14</sup>

This uncommon opportunity, a playwright's dream, enabled Samuelson to reach far and wide into his archives to find five plays, diverse in tone and subject, with which to display his talents. The resulting season consisted

---

11. In the advertisement for Plan-B Theatre's staged reading of the play at the Rose Exposed event in August 2013, *Miasma* was described thus: "MIASMA is the smell of fear, the smell of a fractured and unhealthy family, the smell of money. In 90 minutes Utah playwright Eric Samuelson touches on the grim realities of contemporary agribusiness, the evolution of the traditional American West, illegal immigration, homosexuality, apocalyptic Christianity, drug trafficking and corporate culture." "Daytime Events," *Eventbrite*, <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-rose-exposed-tickets-7213085533>.

12. *Borderlands* is a critical examination of Mormon fringe culture with a gay Mormon character who attempts to change hearts and minds. Plan-B chose to extend its run due to sold-out shows.

13. Jesse Hawlish, "Serious Entertainment: Plan-B Celebrates 20 Years of Socially Conscious Theatre," *Slug Magazine*, August 31, 2010, <http://www.slugmag.com/article.php?id=2330&page=1/>.

14. Jerry Rapier, "Jerry Rapier on Selecting The Season of Eric," *Plan-Blog*, May 20, 2013, <http://planbtheatre.org/wp/?p=3123>.

of a translation of Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts*, and premieres of Samuelsen's *Nothing Personal*, *Radio Hour Episode 8: Fairyana*, *Clearing Bombs*, and 3.<sup>15</sup> With the plays decided, Rapier and Samuelsen set about casting the plays (by email, no less) so that Samuelsen could create final drafts of the scripts with specific actors in mind, and the creative teams began their design process.<sup>16</sup> Plan-B then proceeded to market the season using nothing more than Samuelsen's first name.<sup>17</sup>

### Translation of Ibsen's *Ghosts*

The first play of the season linked Samuelsen's academic roots with his artistry. Whereas literary adaptations are fairly common among Mormon playwrights (such as with Melissa Leilani Larson writing Jane Austen adaptations), there are surprisingly few translators. An Ibsen scholar, Samuelsen speaks fluent Norwegian, and his translation of Ibsen's *Ghosts* was a natural direction following his translation of *A Doll House*. Both plays were part of Plan-B's Script-in-Hand series, staged readings that are often co-produced by various organizations in the Salt Lake Valley.<sup>18</sup> Samuelsen's translation of *Ghosts*, which he also directed, is Ibsen's most controversial work, and it was billed by Plan-B as "quite possibly the most radical play in history."<sup>19</sup> As Samuelsen explains, *Ghosts* is "an excoriating attack on the Victorian sexual double standard" and the physical consequences that come primarily to women through male

---

15. *Ghosts* premiered on August 25, 2013, in the Jeanne Wagner Theatre at the Rose Wagner Theatre in Salt Lake City. The rest of Samuelsen's plays appeared in the Studio Theatre at the Rose Wagner Theatre. *Nothing Personal* ran October 24 to November 3, 2013, *Clearing Bombs* ran February 20 to March 2, 2014, and 3 ran March 27 to April 6, 2014.

16. Samuelsen worked very closely with the design team, directors, and actors throughout the season, attending rehearsals, answering questions, and adapting the script to their needs when necessary.

17. The administrators of Plan-B Theatre Company are masters of social media marketing. They maintain an active blog with posts by actors, directors, playwrights, designers, and audience members. In addition, they post performance teasers on YouTube and effectively utilize Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Radio advertising is also a strong aspect of Plan-B Theatre marketing; for nearly every Plan-B production, KUER Radio West hosts an interview with members of the artistic or design team.

18. The production starred Jason Bowcutt as Pastor Mandors, Topher Rasmussen as Oswald Alving, Christy Summerhays as Mrs. Helene Alving, Jesamyn Svennsson as Regina Engstrand, and Jason Tatom as Jacob Engstrand.

19. "Ghosts," *Plan-B Theatre Company*, <http://planbtheatre.org/ghosts.htm>.

licentious privilege.<sup>20</sup> Samuelsen's translation draws attention to these thematic workings of Ibsen, and he makes the play more relevant to the twenty-first century.

A prominent trademark of Samuelsen's plays is his witty and notoriously difficult-to-memorize realistic dialogue—dialogue that is peppered with colloquialisms and pauses found in contemporary American speech. While Ibsen's classic writing is not altered by Samuelsen to reflect current discourse entirely, it is given a certain familiarity that is not found in other English translations of Ibsen's work. For example, in Samuelsen's translation, Oswald calls his mother "Mom," a current term of endearment absent, for example, in seminal Ibsen translator Rolf Fjelde's *Ghosts*. Similarly, Samuelsen's translation boasts contemporary brevity—it is not that he is "cutting" Ibsen, but, given the opportunity to use a shorter phrase to communicate meaning, Samuelsen takes it. These stylistic translating preferences are in keeping with Samuelsen's own dramaturgy, as is his focus on character. Accordingly, Samuelsen retains a strong sense of melodrama, which was highly influential to Ibsen's work, and he focuses on the play's inherent humor, which is often glossed over in other translations. Samuelsen's fully blocked reading elicited laughter but did not interfere with the gravity of the work, a difficult task for such an infamous play.

### **Religion and Politics in *Nothing Personal***

The gravity of Ibsen gave way to Samuelsen's own weighty subjects with the premiere of *Nothing Personal*, a play with recognizable political relevance, infused with questions of faith identity, and one that essentially borrows from history to create a drama that is anything but historical. On the surface, the play is about Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel in the Whitewater controversy during Clinton's presidency, and Susan McDougal, who, along with her husband, partnered with the Clintons in their failed Whitewater real estate venture.<sup>21</sup> At its heart,

---

20. Eric Samuelsen, quoted in Barbara Bannon, "'Ghosts' Kicks Off Plan-B's Season Dedicated to Utah Playwright," *Salt Lake Tribune*, August 18, 2013, <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/entertainment2/56739470-223/samuelsen-eric-plan-rapier.html.csp>.

21. Susan McDougal was jailed for eighteen months for contempt of court after refusing to answer three questions before a grand jury, which independent counsel Kenneth Starr had empaneled to investigate the Whitewater scandal in September 1996 (she cited a fear of later perjury charges if she answered

however, *Nothing Personal* has little to do with Kenneth Starr and Susan McDougal. As Rapier, who directed the production, asserts in a *Salt Lake Tribune* interview, "Most of what happens in the play never happened. Kenneth Starr never questioned Susan McDougal in prison." The play is "Eric's view of the impact of Susan and Kenneth, not a history lesson."<sup>22</sup> While not a historical account, the play does require the audience to reflect on recent history (and events in the making) as it "explores the loss of civil liberties and the violations of human rights."<sup>23</sup> *Nothing Personal* also compels the audience to address fanaticism, racism, politics, and truth, all weighty subjects in contemporary America. While Mormonism is not a direct theme in the play, religion is. Just as he does in his other works, Samuelsen invites audiences to reflect on how faith influences the identity and actions of individuals and nations.

Critics point to Samuelsen's tendency for contriving characters and situations that tend to ambush audiences and drive them toward certain conclusions. While that criticism may or may not be fair, it is likely more so with *Nothing Personal* than with other Samuelsen works. The play opens with Susan (played by April Fossen) pacing her minimally designed jail cell before the audience takes their seats.<sup>24</sup> Susan is deeply affected by her imprisonment, unable to think or speak clearly. Her lines are full of verbal hesitations, peppered with colloquial phrases, profanity, and anger-induced vulgarity. Her speech is in marked contrast to that of Kenneth's character (played by Kirt Bateman), who enters her cell and speaks with clarity, precision, and intelligence. Kenneth immediately begins the process of interrogation, and Susan responds with ongoing refusal to answer his questions. Their exchange is witnessed by the prison matron (played by Dee-Dee Darby-Duffin), who remains silent for the majority of the play.

---

the questions). During jail time, she was placed in solitary confinement and shuffled to various prisons around the country. (This practice, known as "diesel therapy," often involves shackling the prisoners as they are transported for days and weeks.)

22. Jerry Rapier, quoted in Barbara M. Bannon, "Plan-B's 'Nothing Personal' Takes Personal Look at Torture, Abuse of Power," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 25, 2013, <http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/mobile3/56973981-219/mcdougal-susan-samuelsen-kenneth.html.csp>.

23. "Nothing Personal," *Plan-B Theatre*, <http://planbtheatre.org/nothingpersonal.htm>.

24. The set designs for all of Plan-B Theatre's plays during "The Season of Eric" were done by Randy Rasmussen.

The opening conversation between Kenneth and Susan imparts information related to the historical grand jury investigation, but their dialogue quickly veers in other directions and transforms *Nothing Personal* into a play about physical and mental torture. Over the course of seven scenes, Susan is shackled, subjected to waterboarding (after accusations that she is connected to al-Qaeda), put in solitary confinement, and sexually harassed. She also engages in conversations with Kenneth about religion and the nature of truth and reality. Appropriately, some events in the play hover between truth and reality in Susan's mind, reinforcing the mental anguish of her torture. This is all witnessed by the matron, who also participates in inflicting agony; however, there is one moment of what appears to be compassion, when, in response to Susan's frenzied appeal for recognition, she gives an impassioned speech in glossolalia.<sup>25</sup> Kenneth, on the other hand, never waivers in his belief of Susan's wrongdoing. Even at the end of the play, when he has lost his battle and Susan is free to leave, he bemoans her immoral actions and the actions of those who will lead to the "destruction of America."<sup>26</sup>

*Nothing Personal* engages the audience in a political and social reflection of the last two decades. The battle between Susan and Kenneth is a political metaphor for the battle between Democrats and Republicans. Susan, the protagonist, is a Democrat, and the victor. Kenneth, the antagonist, is a Republican, and the loser. Kenneth is the outwardly religious "moral" character whose behavior demonstrates his immorality, while Susan is the crass adulteress whose honesty and steadfastness demonstrate her decency. Her ordeal signifies the abuses of power inflicted on the American people and foreign prisoners of war by a Republican congress and president.<sup>27</sup> Kenneth, in fact, prophesies this:

---

25. Regarding the matron and her part in the play, Samuelsen writes that the matron "represents for me the law enforcement establishment, the soldiers at Guantanamo, the bailiffs in the courtroom, the jailers and cops and foot soldiers. She'll go along with Starr, but when he loses her, he's done. And she's deeply, personally and genuinely religious, which I have symbolized by having her speak entirely using glossolalia." Eric Samuelsen, "Eric Samuelsen on Creating *Nothing Personal*," *Plan-Blog*, September 30, 2013, <http://planbtheatre.org/wp/?p=3389>.

26. Eric Samuelsen, *Nothing Personal*, unpublished draft, 2013, p. 73, in possession of the author.

27. Despite his political support of Barack Obama, Samuelsen does not turn a blind eye to human rights abuses that have taken place during his presidency. In a *Plan-Blog* post, he asserts, "The same arrogance and self-righteousness and contempt for rule of law continues today. I supported Barack Obama's

"I think you're the first. You're the prelude. I see it pretty clearly. You're the precedent. To save this nation, there will be a time, soon, when we're going to have to suspend . . . certain . . . procedures."<sup>28</sup> In addition to this prophecy, Kenneth foresees the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the presidency of Barack Obama.<sup>29</sup> As the play ends, Susan leaves her cell, and the following exchange takes place:

- Kenneth:** Just remember. It's called the White House for a reason.  
**Susan:** Uh, what?  
**Kenneth:** You'll see. You'll see who makes the destruction of America complete.<sup>30</sup>

This reference to President Barack Obama and the racism directed toward him effectively cements Kenneth's role as the vilified Republican. It also cements Samuelsen's willingness to take tremendous dramatic risks, in this case using the name and likeness of a living national figure and linking him to acts of brutality and torture that he did not, in fact, commit. The only question left to answer is, to what end?

---

candidacy because I saw in him the possibility for genuine change. But as our country continues drone attacks that kill non-combatants, and Guantanamo stays open, that assault on civil liberties continues. I supported the President in both his political campaigns, with both time and money. But friends tell friends the truth, and this President has also succumbed to fear, with its attendant violence." Samuelsen, "Eric Samuelsen on Creating *Nothing Personal*."

28. Samuelsen, *Nothing Personal*, unpublished draft, 69.

29. During his debate with Susan about truth and reality, he uses the concept of gravity to prove a point, noting, "What if we're on the roof of a building, a very tall building, a tower say, on fire and about to collapse to rubble, what if gravity, as you call it, is about to kill us? There would be no recourse from gravity, no alternative to death. We'd fall, we'd jump, we'd die." Samuelsen, *Nothing Personal*, unpublished draft, 25.

30. Samuelsen, *Nothing*, 73. Following this line, the matron says to Susan, "Go ahead and leave, I'll watch him for you." At this point, the stage directions note that the matron looks down at Kenneth with "a feral smile." Rapier cast Dee-Dee Darby-Duffin, a black actress, as the matron, which gives a certain perspective to her character's actions at the end of the play. After months of witnessing the abuse of Susan, the matron is suddenly confronted with Kenneth's racism, and, like Susan, she takes it personally. It should be noted that there is no character description for the matron in the script, although Samuelsen did suggest to Rapier that she "could be black." Rapier liked the idea and "ran with it." Eric Samuelsen, "Re: Nothing Personal Question," e-mail to author, April 24, 2014.

While many will reasonably see *Nothing Personal* as an obvious attack on their political party, the strongest message in the play speaks incisively to people on both ends of the political spectrum. That message has to do with the perils of corrupted faith. Just as Kenneth accuses Susan in the play of rationalizing her sin of adultery, so, too, Samuelsen makes it clear that Kenneth is using his faith to rationalize his treatment of Susan. Just as Islamist fundamentalists use their faith as an excuse to terrorize whole nations, Kenneth uses his faith as an excuse to personally terrorize Susan in an attempt to “save” his nation.

The experience of watching *Nothing Personal* makes it difficult *not* to take things personally. The performances of Kirt Bateman and April Fossen drew empathy and fear from the audience. Many audience members found it difficult to watch, and a few left early.<sup>31</sup> This was not because the torture elements were graphic; in fact, they were not shown on stage but suggested as scenes went to darkness. Samuelsen’s ability to make things personal is at its peak in this play. No longer are foreign prisoners of war in Guantanamo a news story; they are suddenly people standing before the audience in real flesh and blood. The staged representation in *Nothing Personal* of Samuelsen’s humanist message about the gravity of human rights violations ultimately supersedes any political pandering that might be evident when the script is merely read.

The humanist message in *Nothing Personal* is also tied to a spiritual message that might appeal to Samuelsen’s Mormon audience. Although the representation of religion in the play is not favorable per se, it is in reality the lack of spiritual concern that ultimately leads to physical mistreatment. Whereas in most Mormon drama, and in the vast majority of Samuelsen’s other plays, characters struggle with their faith or struggle living out their faith, Kenneth and Susan have no such difficulties. Kenneth is entirely self-assured in his personal salvation through Jesus Christ, and Susan is almost dismissive of her similar professed acceptance of salvation and unconcerned with the particularities of any dogma. The matron, too, spiritually gifted enough to speak in tongues, cannot bring herself to live out Christianity in action. Samuelsen’s insightful and troubling suggestion is that when people stop wrestling with their personal spirituality and stop sincerely questioning how their behavior reflects their faith, personal and political crisis ensues. This

---

31. Eric Samuelsen, “Nothing Personal: Opening Night,” *Mormon Iconoclast*, October 25, 2013, <http://www.mormoniconoclast.com/nothing-personal-opening-night/>.

spiritual theme is crafted into the play so that it is not overpowering, and *Nothing Personal* serves as a prime example of how Mormon theatre can set its religious roots within a drama that appeals to a wide audience.

### Film Noir Echoes in *Fairyana*

In contrast to the historical fiction of *Nothing Personal*, Samuelsen's *Fairyana* for Plan-B Theatre's *Radio Hour Episode 8* is a campy fantasy with a little bit of spoof and thematically devoid of religion. Samuelsen had written the stage play over six years earlier, but he reflects that "it never felt right; never felt finished."<sup>32</sup> However, adapting it to radio, a medium with which Samuelsen has little experience, gave the play new life. In addition, its peripheral Christmas theme suited its December 3 broadcast. Directed by Cheryl Ann Cluff and performed in front of a live studio audience, the radio play featured live original music composed by David Evanoff and sound effects by Foley artist Michael Johnson.

*Fairyana* is unlike anything Eric Samuelsen has written for the stage. Its characters are not taken out of history, nor are they products of his observations of local culture. They are taken straight from stereotype and thrown together in a silly scenario that brings fanciful humor. Samuelsen notes that his inspiration for the script started out with his love of "hard-boiled detective fiction," and with Donald E. Westlake's Dortmunder novels in particular.<sup>33</sup> The novels are full of New York crooks besieged by bad luck, and Samuelsen reflects that he had always wanted to see if he could "capture at least something of their language and attitude in a play." This, combined with a chance encounter of a *Barney* episode on television, led to Samuelsen's creation of *Fairyana*'s scenario: amoral cynics working in children's television. The result is a play that is well suited for radio. Unlike most of Samuelsen's work, which is characterized by realistic contemporary dialogue, the characters in *Fairyana* speak in exaggerated voices of their character stereotypes, and there is a hilarious disparity between the tone of the television show characters and the tone of the writers working behind the scenes.

The setup is simple: a television producer named Max (Jason Tatom) is desperate to please the star of a long-running children's show called *Fairyana*. He is tasked with coercing his writers, Viv (Teresa Sanderson)

---

32. Eric Samuelsen, "Eric Samuelsen on Writing Children's Television for Radio—Radio Hour Episode 8: *Fairyana*," *Plan-Blog*, November 18, 2013, <http://planbtheatre.org/wp/?p=3545>.

33. Samuelsen, "Eric Samuelsen on Writing Children's Television for Radio."



and Stan (Jay Perry), into creating a very long storyline that will lead into a history-making Christmas special. He convinces them to bring back a forgotten villain, Snoogums (Santa's favorite elf), into the world of *Fairyana*. Viv refuses until Max tasks his favorite cousin and Italian mafia member, Guido, into kidnapping and roughing up Viv's lover, Carl. When Viv relents and starts writing the Snoogums storyline, she becomes possessed by Snoogums to the point of death. She is resurrected just long enough to almost bring the story to an end when Max threatens to shoot Stan if she doesn't come through. During her effort, Viv is once again possessed by Snoogums and tries to take the gun from Max. In the struggle that ensues, Stan gets hold of the gun and kills Viv. Max then gains possession of the gun and forces Stan to finish the story at gunpoint. Stan does so and also becomes possessed by Snoogums. The play ends with the closing lines of the finished episode of *Fairyana* and the sudden discovery of a dead body backstage.

If *Nothing Personal* is a play in which Samuelsen hopes to move audiences to consider the human damages of abuse and torture, *Fairyana* is a play that asks audiences to dismiss them in favor of a laugh. Max is particularly abhorrent. A tough guy of Italian descent, his lines are profuse with contractions and incomplete sentences. This recognizable stereotype found in Max is placed alongside Viv, described in the play as a "chain-smokin' alcoholic like everyone in children's television," and Stan, a hypochondriac, "maybe forty, maybe sixty, a man who life defeated years ago, hangin' on like a death row inmate waiting for the governor's reprieve."<sup>34</sup> During the performance, the actors gave exaggerated life to the characters, with Sanderson embodying Viv with the husky voice of a chain-smoker, Perry nasally suggesting Stan's perpetually runny nose, and Tatom giving Max's New York Italian Mafia speech perfect rhythm. They were definitely characters meant to be heard, and their animated onstage performance incited much laughter among the audience, whose attention was also drawn to the fascinating Foley.

Samuelsen's radio hour relinquished any meaningful messages in favor of amusement. Whereas his dramas are usually fodder for thought and interspersed with humor, *Fairyana* is a well-made comedy only interrupted by momentary woe. Near the end of the play, Viv makes a case for killing Snoogums and Santa Claus, arguing that "Santa's about presents. But Santa's also Mom and Dad. . . . And if they're poor, what're

---

34. Eric Samuelsen, *Fairyana*, unpublished draft, 3, in possession of the author.

their kids get? All-a-dollar crap? While rich kids get like iPads?"<sup>35</sup> This is followed by the following monologue: "They may be kids, Max, but they're gonna grow up. And they're gonna be out there, in the world, with rapists and serial killers and landlords. And they won't be ready, they won't be prepared. They'll think bad guys are pink. They'll think you can cuddle 'em. Loan sharks and tow truck drivers and the lady at the DMV. And don't even get me started on real estate agents."<sup>36</sup> Although humorous, Samuelsen makes a case that Viv's valiant fight against Snoogums "has a serious point to make," that "the meaning of Snoogums is that villains are cute and cuddly. . . . Children need to be told the truth—that life can be tough and violent and mean and damaging."<sup>37</sup> This all may be true, but it is certainly not the crux of the play. It is, in fact, periphery at best to the character studies in an implausible situation that make *Fairyana* the film noir comedy that it is.

### Clearing the Bombs in Macroeconomics

In *Clearing Bombs*, Samuelsen returns to subjects that are serious and socially conscious. The play is a staged debate of economics, and while theatre and economic deliberation are not usually captivating bedfellows, in this production, the partnership works. Like Samuelsen's *Amerigo*, in which historical figures Christopher Columbus, Amerigo Vespucci, Niccolo Machiavelli, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz debate politics, religion, and race, the debate in *Clearing Bombs* is more than a history lesson as it becomes a captivating examination of humanity's interworkings lightened by humor (including a wink to Samuelsen's Mormon audience).

The impetus for the play began on a trip to the library when Samuelsen was browsing the shelves for any book about any subject that looked interesting. On this particular occasion, he found Nicholas Wapshott's 2011 book *Keynes Hayek: The Clash That Defined Modern Economics*. In it, he briefly mentions that the two famous economists, British Etonite John Maynard Keynes and Austrian immigrant Friedrich A. Hayek, spent the night on the roof of King's College Chapel together as part of a faculty assignment to extinguish any German incendiary bombs that might drop in an air raid. Very little is known of what happened that night, but Samuelsen was fascinated with the thought of what

---

35. Samuelsen, *Fairyana*, unpublished draft, 38.

36. Samuelsen, *Fairyana*, unpublished draft, 38.

37. Samuelsen, "Eric Samuelsen on Writing Children's Television for Radio."

might have occurred when two great economic minds were placed in such a situation. The outcome of the war was still uncertain at that time, and the two economists engaged in heated debates about what should be done in its aftermath.<sup>38</sup>

Directed by Samuelsen himself, *Clearing Bombs* starred Mark Fossen as Keynes, Jay Perry as Hayek, and Kirt Bateman as Mr. Bowles, a fictional English middle-class everyman who serves as fire warden, supervisor to the two economists, and judge of their respective theories. The play opens on the rooftop of King's College Chapel. The set was simple: the location was suggested with a sloped wall behind the playing space, and behind the scrim there were inconspicuous firelike tongues stretching from the sky (these "tongues of fire" would light up at the end of the play during the attack). Mr. Bowles enters first, keeping his eyes on the sky. Keynes and Hayek arrive, and Bowles instructs the academics on how to extinguish and contain fire if there is an attack. The men get comfortable, preparing themselves for a long night. Their comradeship starts slowly with a discussion of each other's part in the war. This discussion leads to Keynes's first stab at his colleague's opposing economic theories. He informs Bowles that Hayek has just written a book titled *The Road to Serfdom*, in which he predicts that too much government interference in national economics will lead to further war.<sup>39</sup> Hayek questions Keynes's motives for instigating argument on such a night, asking, "You want to argue? Now? Under these condi—" He is interrupted by Keynes, who replies, "You know me, Freddy, I would rather argue than breathe."<sup>40</sup>

Mr. Bowles is a hesitant audience to the argument that takes place that night, only agreeing to be judge of their theories to "pass the time."<sup>41</sup> For the audience, Bowles is the means through which macro-economic theory becomes accessible. Keynes and Hayek put their ideas of government stimulus and *laissez-faire* into layman's terms. As Keynes succinctly puts it to Hayek, "What you fear is too much government;

---

38. Eric Samuelsen, "Playwright and Director Eric Samuelsen on Creating *Clearing Bombs*," *Plan-Blog*, January 27, 2014, <http://planbtheatre.org/wp/?p=3694>.

39. *The Road to Serfdom* was published in 1944. Samuelsen acknowledges that he "fudge[s] it a bit" in respect to the timing of their night on the roof and the completion/publication of Hayek's book in an effort to reference both men's important works in the script. Keynes's celebrated work *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money* was published in 1936.

40. Eric Samuelsen, *Clearing Bombs*, unpublished draft, 15, in possession of the author.

41. Samuelsen, *Clearing Bombs*, unpublished draft, 23.

what I fear is too little. You're against it, as a matter of principle. . . . I think you're dangerous. I think you're wrong. And you think the same of me."<sup>42</sup> Hayek agrees. The two then proceed to defend their positions to Bowles. Keynes argues that government stimulus can and should save depressed economies by offering jobs to keep citizens working so that they can earn money to spend on goods, which then creates more jobs. Hayek, on the other hand, thinks that government intervention leads to debt, which burdens taxpayers and takes away their freedom. Of course, both men agree on some economic points, making some allowances to their opposition, but both also think the other's economic theories in action will lead to mass poverty and, in turn, restlessness and war.

This synopsis is a simplification, of course. If it were that simple, Samuelson's play would not be as compelling as it is. The reason why *Clearing Bombs*, a play in which two characters debate macroeconomic theory, gripped audiences is that the economic theories they debate are not simplistic at all. In Samuelson's own words: "But if [*Clearing Bombs*] works, and I do think it might, it works because ideas matter. Because we human beings, irrational and emotional and arbitrary and prejudiced and foolish and biased and culturally blinkered though we are, are sometimes, every once in awhile, capable of thinking at a very high level, and expressing quite profound ideas in prose that crackles. And ideas can change the world. And Keynes and Hayek were thinkers on that level."<sup>43</sup> To the "everyman," the high ideas of Keynes and Hayek are complex and perplexing. And, as both economists point out, there are very dire human consequences if the wrong economic theory is "chosen." In fact, the citizen's responsibility to make an educated vote is a strong message in the play.<sup>44</sup> In an effort to convince Bowles of the importance of economics in the day-to-day life of all citizens, Keynes says to him,

---

42. Samuelson, *Clearing Bombs*, unpublished draft, 24.

43. Eric Samuelson, "Opening Night: *Clearing Bombs*," *Mormon Iconoclast*, February 21, 2014, <http://www.mormoniconoclast.com/opening-night-clearing-bombs/>.

44. Samuelson writes, "Their debate, over macro-economics and politics and policies and debt and stimulus, the debate these two men may have had on that roof (and certainly did have in their published papers), remains relevant today. The last Presidential election probably turned on some version of Keynes v. Hayek. It was fascinating to me to watch this election, to compare the President's economic plans and compare them to the plans offered by Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan, and see resonances of Keynes and echoes of Hayek." Samuelson, "Playwright."

“When you vote, Mr. Bowles, bear this in mind. You believe you’re voting for a chap, a good bloke. . . . [But you] are voting for a set of economic principles. . . . If you vote the wrong way, for the agreeable chap you could imagine sharing a pint with, but who, as it happens, believes in a bad theory, an unworkable theory, a chap who will, if elected, attempt to implement a foolish economic programme based on an untenable theory, you could, in very short order, drive your nation off a cliff into disaster.”<sup>45</sup> Bowles responds to this warning by asking what he should do, to which Keynes responds, “Learn economics, preferably.” Bowles then protests that as a laboring middle-class man he hasn’t the time. Once again, Keynes fires back, insisting that he does, indeed, have time to “read a book or two.”<sup>46</sup> The only question is, which one? The economic theories pushed by Keynes and Hayek in the play sway Bowles one way and then the other, and when, in the final scene, he is asked to say who won the debate, he is interrupted by bombs falling from the sky.

Economic theory aside, in the script and onstage, if one wanted to vote for “a good bloke” as Bowles would say, “a chap you could share a pint with,” Keynes would be the victor. He is, quite simply, more likeable than Hayek in the play (though both Fossen and Perry gave superb performances). Keynes’s sense of humor is stronger, and his wit is sharper. Moreover, Hayek becomes less likable when he accuses Keynes of having a shortsighted vision of economics due to his homosexuality. He asks, toward the end of the play, “Is it not at least somewhat possible that you, as a childless man, are not . . . inclined to consider the future? That you tend to overvalue the short term?”<sup>47</sup> This accusation is the climax of *Clearing Bombs*, the point at which the economic debate becomes more personal. The accusation is also unexpected (there is certainly no indication prior to this point that sexual orientation of any person is of any consequence to the discussion), so it was somewhat jarring to the audience.<sup>48</sup> This is

---

45. Samuelsen, *Clearing Bombs*, unpublished draft, 22.

46. Samuelsen, *Clearing Bombs*, unpublished draft, 23.

47. Samuelsen, *Clearing Bombs*, unpublished draft, 73.

48. The inclusion of homosexuality as an issue in the play would, at first glance, seem to be a labored inclusion of what is a recurring theme in Samuelsen’s work (it is most prominent in *Borderlands* but also appears in other plays, including *Miasma* and 3). However, the inclusion of this accusation is taken from recent history. In May 2013, celebrated Harvard history professor Niall Ferguson was asked about Keynes’s famous phrase, “In the long run, we are all of us dead,” to which he suggested that Keynes’ homosexuality contributed to flaws in his economic theory. Ferguson was blasted by the press and

not to say that the plot development was misplaced. In fact, all tension between the economists comes to a head at this moment, only to dissipate as the play comes to a close, the two men achieving some understanding of their shared concern for democracy as the bombs start to fall.

The damage is done, however, and despite Samuelsen's intention for an even-handed approach to character, Hayek is somewhat diminished, no matter what virtues are found in his economic theories. Hayek is not the only one with faults, however. There is a strong sense in the play that both economists hover in a space above life's reality. In contrast to the "two old agnostics," Mr. Bowles is a Bible-reading, believing Protestant more grounded in the moment. While the economists are busy philosophizing and clearing theoretical bombs, Mr. Bowles stands ready to sacrifice his life when real ones fall.

### Relationship Tensions in 3

In *Clearing Bombs*, faith is peripheral to economy, but Plan-B's final production in the Samuelsen series was a play focused on faith, featuring three vignettes that each have three main female characters, played by three actresses; the play is appropriately titled 3.<sup>49</sup> Directed by Cheryl Ann Cluff, all three vignettes address issues of sex and gender among Latter-day Saints and examine how women, specifically, often suffer in a culture that sometimes unwittingly encourages perfectionism. Started over a decade ago, 3 is a return to Samuelsen's roots in LDS drama, of writing about the hidden corners of his faith community. He asserts, "Mormonism is my lifelong spiritual home. But loving a culture does not mean blinding oneself to its limitations." He sees problems when there is a "culture of sexism" and when some engage in a kind of "patronizing patriarchy." Above all, he says, "Mormonism can be obsessed with public relations, with how things seem, with appearances."<sup>50</sup> Appropriately,

---

subsequently apologized, as Hayek does in the play. Samuelsen does contend that he had "qualms" about putting "some version of Ferguson's notions into the mouth of Hayek," but in the end decided to give Hayek the line because he believes that Hayek could have conceivably believed that everything about Keynes, including his homosexuality, prevented him from seeing the long-term effects of his economic views. Samuelsen, "Playwright."

49. Samuelsen explains that he deliberately tied in the numerical title of the play with the significance of that number in Christian theology, and specifically LDS theology. Eric Samuelsen, "Eric Samuelsen on Writing 3," *Plan-Blog*, March 3, 2014, <http://planbtheatre.org/wp/?p=3828>.

50. Samuelsen, "Eric Samuelsen on Writing 3."

the set design that greeted the audience was industrial-looking shelving, piled high with boxes, water barrels, and white buckets, set on their sides, upright, and stacked on top of each other. These containers of food storage, a staple in any devout LDS home, were all empty. This design concept visually introduced the theme in “Bar and Kell,” the first of the three vignettes in 3 and the one most concerned with Mormonism and outward appearance.

Bar (Theresa Sanderson) and Kell (Christy Summerhays) are two devout LDS women who befriend Brandie Jacobs (Stephanie Howell), a new neighbor and ward member, but one who does not share their standards for homemaking or spirituality. With three children and one on the way with her abusive boyfriend and few qualms about discussing her tattoos or sexual indiscretions, Brandie is, as Kell remarks, “the very definition of ‘less active.’”<sup>51</sup> Bar immediately sees Brandie as a “project” and enlists Kell’s help to make her over.<sup>52</sup> The two women help her unpack, paint, coordinate rides to her GED classes, watch her kids, and ultimately convince her to marry her boyfriend and the father of her children. In the process of their “progress” with Brandie, Kell realizes that her feigned friendship actually means something, and she begins questioning how “helpful” she and Bar actually are, and, specifically, whether convincing Brandie to marry her abusive boyfriend is such a good idea after all.

“Bar and Kell” is a simple vignette about the pressures women sometimes put on each other while striving for perfection. It is an examination of how good intentions are not always good. While Brandie benefits from the help she receives, there is no talk of the gospel during Bar and Kell’s service, no talk of Brandie’s spiritual growth. Rather, Bar and Kell work on the external aspects of Brandie’s life, only lightly touching the surface of her inner turmoil.

“Community Standard,” the second vignette in 3, also exposes the pain Samuelsen believes is hidden deep within some LDS women. He ingeniously explores this topic using events from over a decade ago, when the news in Utah was dominated by headlines of a video rental store editing out “offensive” scenes in the movie *Titanic* and of a jury tasked with deciding if certain pornographic films violated a community’s standard. These two stories are cleverly intertwined in the lives of

---

51. Eric Samuelsen, 3, unpublished draft, 2012, 7, in possession of the author.

52. Samuelsen, 3, unpublished draft, 8.

Janeal (Stephanie Howell), Christine (Theresa Sanderson), and Bertine (Christy Summerhays).<sup>53</sup> The three women find themselves serving jury duty, deciding if a video rental store violated the community's standards by renting out pornographic videos. From the beginning of the play, it seems as if Janeal is the most conservative of the three, the most likely to vote against the defendant. In the process of viewing the pornography, however, Janeal finds that she can relate to the women acting in the offensive films because she is objectified in the same way by her husband. She asserts that what the people in her community and within her faith profess and what they actually believe are two different things. In the end, Janeal votes to acquit the defendant and will not budge on her position, creating a hung jury. The vignette ends with Janeal and Christine parting ways after running into each other years later at the grocery store. Christine questions Janeal's marriage, only to find that she is still with her husband, despite his possession of a laptop computer that offers instant access to pornography.

"Community Standard" is a scathing examination of sexism in Mormon communities that could potentially divide audiences—similar to the way the women in the play are divided. Samuelson makes it clear in the play that healthy marriages are prevalent in Mormon culture but that the couples, and specifically women, in those healthy marriages may be blinding themselves to the reality of some unhealthy marriages in their midst. In this way, "Community Standard" is as much about those who hide their depressed and troubled spirits behind a front of perfectionism as it is a play about harmful relationships.

Following the exposition in "Community Standard," the third vignette in 3, titled "Duets," explores the potential hazards in what are meant to be eternal partnerships in the LDS faith. In the play, two women, Candace (Theresa Sanderson) and Sherilyn (Stephanie Howell), try to enlist the help of Sondra (Christy Summerhays) to improve their ward choir after they hear her sing one Sunday at sacrament meeting. Sondra is new to the ward, however, and seems hesitant to get too involved or get too close. Months pass before she finally does arrive at choir practice with her husband, Mark. Together, they transform the choir and seem to enjoy themselves, but the next week they retreat into their private lives, refusing callings and visiting teaching.

---

53. Christine is the only major non-Mormon character in 3.



Sherilyn does eventually forge a friendship with Sondra, and it is during their chats that Sherilyn gleans that all is not well between her and Mark. The suspicion is confirmed Easter Sunday when she sees Mark arrive at the house in the wee hours of the morning and then notices a rift between them during their Easter duet. Later that night, she visits Sondra to find out the cause of their marital discord and to offer support, only to discover that Mark is gay. Sondra reveals that she knew of his sexuality before they were married, how he had tried to overcome it without success, and how he had finally succumbed to adultery with another man. Before any more information is revealed, the women are startled by the sound of a gunshot. Mark has killed himself just behind the study door. In her bereft devastation, Sondra professes her love for him. Meanwhile, Sherilyn is unable to feel compassion or empathy and does nothing to comfort her, but, in fact, turns away.

Samuelsen's talent for controversy again sparkles (and bristles). To say nothing of same-sex-attracted men and women in successful marriages, some audience members will be uncomfortable as the play interposes Easter worship with the horrors of suicide—and the marital covenant itself seeming implicit in the tragedy. Samuelsen, however, wrote “Duets” from a personal place. He asserts, “I’ve had many friends who had suffered the heartache of such misalliances. I’ve seen it end in tragedy, as it does in this play. Not always, thank heavens, but often enough.”<sup>54</sup> Unlike “Community Standard,” in which Janeal erects walls around herself, disallowing the women around her to see her anguish or bolster her spirit, Sondra pleads for understanding and support for her situation, but it is withheld under a guise of protecting personal purity. In neither play do the women operate as authentic sisters in the faith.

The performances of the seasoned actresses in 3 were both moving and funny. There is usually abundant criticism for plays about women written by men, but Samuelsen is too keen an observer of human behavior to invite such condemnation. The women in 3 are complex character studies, only falling into stereotype for occasional humor. In some ways, 3 is closest to *Peculiarities* (2003) of all Samuelsen's other work. *Peculiarities* comprises six vignettes that explore LDS youth and sexuality. 3 could easily be seen as a sequel to what happens to the young women in *Peculiarities* in adulthood, exploring how they adjust their lives to meet the expectations of their culture.

---

54. Samuelsen, “Eric Samuelsen on Writing 3.”

## Final Curtain Call and New Beginnings

In scouring the Internet, one is hard-pressed to find a negative review of Samuelsen's plays in Plan-B's "The Season of Eric." This leads to the question: How does one measure success? Audience attendance for this season was good, to say the least (the season played to 93 percent capacity with *Clearing Bombs*, and 3 completely sold out).<sup>55</sup> However, it is clear that Samuelsen realized his professional triumph when he learned that a season was to be devoted to his work, and he is vocal in his gratefulness to Plan-B Theatre.

On their blog in December 2013, Plan-B Theatre Company gave their artists and patrons a chance to publically describe what Plan-B Theatre is or means, to which Samuelsen contributed, "Plan-B means a life buoy thrown to a drowning man."<sup>56</sup> These are strong and meaningful words from someone recently retired from his life's work and struggling with serious health concerns. To Samuelsen, the season was not just show business. It was personal. In his final "farewell" comments about the season, he reflected, "Obviously, the greatest five events in my life were when I married Annette, and when each of our four children were born. I'm not kidding when I say this: The Season of Eric comes sixth."<sup>57</sup> With an entire season devoted to his work, no doubt Samuelsen looks forward to even greater recognition in the Utah theatre community. He certainly can count on continued production opportunities for his plays elsewhere and at *Plan-B*, where his recent work *Canossa*, about the Investiture Controversy of 1077, began the workshop process in 2014.<sup>58</sup>

The notable success of Samuelsen as an individual Mormon playwright may be self-evident, but the question remains as to what "The Season of Eric" means for Mormon dramatists as a collective. The Season of Eric has certainly added to the canon of accessible LDS drama (Plan-B has made an ebook available for purchase).<sup>59</sup> More importantly, however, it has added to the critical and cultural conversation of

---

55. Jerry Rapier, personal e-mail to author, April 14, 2014.

56. Eric Samuelsen, quoted in "Plan-B Is/Means . . ." *Plan-Blog*, December 3, 2013, <http://planbtheatre.org/wp/?p=3603>.

57. Eric Samuelsen, "Eric Samuelsen Bids Farewell to the #SeasonOfEric," *Plan-Blog*, April 8, 2014, <http://planbtheatre.org/wp/?p=3965>.

58. I attended the first workshop of *Canossa* at Plan-B theatre on April 7, 2014. Although still in its first draft, it is in keeping with Samuelsen's work: impeccably researched, funny, and humanistic.

59. Jerry Rapier, editor, *#SeasonofEric* (Plan-B Theatre Company, 2014), Kindle edition.

what LDS drama is and what an LDS dramatist can be. While there is a pervasive Mormon theme present in 3, Samuelsen's other plays make it clear that his personal aesthetic is informed by his faith, not defined by it. His individual understanding of LDS belief influences the political and social messages in his work, and the themes align with the mission of Plan-B Theatre. In finding artistic common ground, the playwright and the production company have created one of the best examples of theatrical partnership the state has seen. And while their approach to activism may not bring about a revolution, it makes for good drama—Mormon or otherwise.

---

Callie Oppedisano received her PhD in drama from Tufts University and is an independent theatre scholar. She has taught at Eastern Nazarene College and Tufts University, writes reviews for Utah Theatre Bloggers Association, and continues to present her work at local and national conferences. Her reviews have appeared in *BYU Studies Quarterly*, *Theatre Survey*, and *Theatre Journal*.

Karen Lynn Davidson, David J. Whittaker, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, editors.  
*Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844.*

Vol. 1 of the Histories series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*,  
ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman.  
Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2012.

Karen Lynn Davidson, Richard L. Jensen, David J. Whittaker,  
editors. *Histories, Volume 2: Assigned Histories, 1831–1847.*

Vol. 2 of the Histories series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*,  
ed. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman.  
Salt Lake City: The Church Historian's Press, 2012.

*Reviewed by James B. Allen*

I am always delighted to pick up a new volume of the *Joseph Smith Papers* and find that it continues the same book quality that has characterized the series from the beginning. Every volume is elegantly designed and solidly bound, and the editorial work is outstanding. Most of all, every volume includes documents that are invaluable in understanding and writing about early Mormon history.<sup>1</sup>

---

1. I encourage the reader to visit the Joseph Smith Papers website, [josephsmithpapers.org](http://josephsmithpapers.org). Transcripts of all documents published in the *Papers* are included there, as well as full digital images of each document. There have been some complaints that the “Manuscript History,” and particularly book A-1, is not being published. In fact, book A-1 is essentially the same as “Draft 2” in *Histories* volume 1. But a digitized copy of the original manuscript is published on the website, along with a parallel transcription. Also, under “Histories” is a link titled “Introduction to History 1838–1856 (Manuscript History of the Church).” Clicking on that link leads to an introduction to that important source, along with links to volumes A-1, B-1, and C-1. Clicking on these links leads to digital copies and transcripts of each of these important manuscripts. Given the huge expense of print publishing, it is easy to understand why some things may be published only on the website. Essentially everything of importance will eventually be available there, if not actually in print.

The team of scholars chosen to edit *Histories* volumes 1 and 2 was remarkably experienced and competent. Karen Lynn Davidson has taught English at Brigham Young University, and she has published hymns as well as historical works. One of her most significant historical works, coedited with Jill Mulvay Derr, is *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry*.<sup>2</sup> David J. Whittaker is the author, editor, or coeditor of around ninety books and articles on LDS history and has enjoyed distinguished research fellowships at Yale University and the British Library in London. Mark Ashurst-McGee has published several articles and major works on early Mormon history, and was awarded the Gerald E. Jones Dissertation Award from the Mormon History Association in 2009. He has served with the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History at BYU, the Religious Education faculty at BYU, and the Joseph Smith Papers Project. Richard L. Jensen is author, coauthor, editor, coeditor, or translator of nearly fifty books and articles on LDS history, with particular interest in nineteenth-century European Latter-day Saints.

While not suited for casual reading, the new *Joseph Smith Papers* volumes are well worth studying. They provide the “stuff” of history: the original documents on which scholarly histories are based. In addition, the painstaking editing<sup>3</sup> and production ensures complete accuracy, and the editorial introductions provide insight into the efforts to produce a history of the Church during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. The editors have also provided several valuable study aids. The footnotes are copious and carefully prepared, providing important explanations and insights in addition to references to the source material. Source notes provide detailed information on the physical nature of each document and a bit of the document’s history. Each document is also introduced by a historical note that provides information on when and how the document was produced and why it is important. Each document replicates

---

2. *Eliza R. Snow: The Complete Poetry* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press; Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990).

3. The editors were meticulous in discovering all they could about the documents. One indication of this is seen in the source note for the first document in volume 1, “History, Circa Summer 1832.” In reconstructing the physical history of the document, they discovered that at one point the initial three leaves were excised from the book containing them. They also ascertained that eight leaves in the back of the book may have been cut out at the same time, and that these excisions took place in the mid-twentieth century. The authors discuss in detail the physical evidence that shows when the leaves were removed. In the 1990s, the three leaves were restored to the volume.

the original manuscript as nearly as possible, maintaining all the original spelling, punctuation, strikeouts, and so on.

The extensive reference material in the back of each volume begins with a chronology for the years covered by the documents therein (1805–1844 in volume 1 and 1830–1844 in volume 2). Each volume has a biographical directory identifying nearly everyone who appears in the documents, as well as a glossary of terms in Mormon usage. There are seven maps in each volume, along with a map index that shows nearly every town or city mentioned within. Each volume also contains a Joseph Smith pedigree chart. In addition, volume 2 provides a comparison chart that shows the corresponding section numbers in the Book of Commandments and the several editions of the Doctrine and Covenants. It also includes a consolidated index to both volumes. All this reference material covers over one-fourth the total pages.

### **Joseph Smith Histories, 1832–1844**

Volume 1 begins with an introduction to the series titled “Joseph Smith’s Historical Enterprise.” This essay provides a sense of how intent Joseph Smith and his associates were on preserving an accurate history. One insightful paragraph suggests that compiling history should be not just a leadership responsibility but rather a collective enterprise of the Saints:

Joseph Smith’s instructions invited all Latter-day Saints to become historians. By calling on each Saint to add a personal chapter to the collective history, Smith’s letter effectively democratized Mormon historical writing. Moving beyond the personal, religious history of Smith’s own life and the sacred history of the church, the call for Latter-day Saints to put their persecution narratives in writing helped create an enduring self-understanding. As well as providing evidence for redress petitions and attempting to draw public sympathy for their plight, the community effort to create history served to strengthen the church’s cohesion and solidify what it meant to be Mormon. History, then, became a means not only to share their story but to forge a shared Latter-day Saint identity. (xxiv)

Volume 1 reproduces seven early histories, six of which were written by Joseph Smith’s scribes and associates. Only some of these histories were dictated by Joseph, but all were written in the first person.

The first document, “History, Circa Summer 1832,” is the earliest known effort by Joseph Smith to record his own history. It is also the only account of Joseph Smith’s early experiences that includes his own handwriting. Photographs of all six manuscript pages are included. In

their discussion of this important document, the editors raise the possibility that it is not the original document but rather a copy of an earlier manuscript. They point to the handwriting, which alternates between Joseph Smith's and Frederick G. Williams's, suggesting that the two may have simply taken turns in copying from an earlier source. There are other textual clues to this possibility. However, there is also some evidence that this is, in fact, the original document. The editors take no final position on this speculation.

However, the document itself is significant. As Joseph Smith's first attempt to write his own history, it is unpolished, containing virtually no punctuation, frequent misspelling, and sometimes awkward phrasing that reflects his lack of formal education. All this only adds to its power, for it exudes sincerity as the Prophet tells of his early quest for religious knowledge and of his First Vision. As might be expected, there are differences between this and other extant accounts of these early experiences, but these differences are not irreconcilable and actually add depth to our understanding.<sup>4</sup>

The second document in volume 1 is identified as "History, 1834–1836." It reproduces the text of a book kept by Oliver Cowdery, Frederick G. Williams, Warren Parish, and Warren Cowdery. The first of its sections was intended to be a genealogical record of the new Church presidency members in 1834: Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams. However, even though there is extensive information on Joseph Smith's immediate family, there is only a sketchy entry on Cowdery and no information on the families of the other two.

The second section of this document consists of minutes of meetings held on December 5 and 6, 1834. The minutes of December 5 are especially interesting, for they include instructions and activities that did not make it into the serial publications of Joseph Smith's history in the

---

4. In fact, an amalgam of all the various accounts provides a broader, more fascinating insight into Joseph's early experience than any one of them alone. For the first discussion on this issue in an official LDS publication, see James B. Allen, "Eight Contemporary Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision—What Do We Learn from Them?" *Improvement Era* 73 (April 1970): 4–13. For an updated and more extensive version of this discussion, see James B. Allen and John W. Welch, "The Appearance of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith in 1820," in *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844*, ed. John W. Welch with Erick B. Carlson (Provo, Utah: BYU Press; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 35–77.

*Times and Seasons*.<sup>5</sup> One of the items included is a report of a very sharp rebuke, given by the “voice of the Spirit,” concerning “our former low, uncultivated, and disrespectful manner of communication, and salutation, with, and unto each other” (34). But the writer hastened to add that “though it [the rebuke] was given in sharpness, it occasioned gladness and joy, and we were willing to repent and reform, in every particular, according to the instruction given” (35). This entry also includes the words of the extensive blessing given to Oliver Cowdery as Joseph Smith laid hands on him and ordained him to the presidency of the Church.

The next section consists of transcripts of eight letters on Church history written by Oliver Cowdery in 1834 and 1835 and published in the *Latter-day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate*. For the most part, these letters focus on the Book of Mormon as well as on the character and early activity of Joseph Smith. As the editors note, “Cowdery composed the letters to inform the Latter-day Saints of the history of their church, but he also wrote for the non-Mormon public. Employing florid romantic language, frequent scriptural allusions, and much dramatic detail, he clearly intended to present a rhetorically impressive account of early Mormon history” (38).

The first letter tells of Oliver Cowdery’s early experience with Joseph Smith, including an account of John the Baptist’s visit to the two of them; the rest of the letters concern the general history of the Church, presumably written with the cooperation and approval of Joseph Smith. Cowdery mentions the unusual religious excitement described by Joseph Smith and young Joseph’s quest for truth, but he says it took place in 1823 (as opposed to Joseph Smith later dating it as occurring in 1820). Curiously, he does not mention the First Vision but moves directly to the appearance of Moroni and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The *Joseph Smith Papers* editors make no comment on this omission. However, it has been speculated that Joseph Smith had input on what Oliver was writing, but he was simply unwilling at that early date to have the sacred story of the First Vision appear in print, even though he was telling it privately.

The next section of this document is Warren Parish’s incomplete copy of a letter Joseph Smith published in the *Messenger and Advocate* in November 1835. Warren Parish began to copy the letter, but after less

---

5. When Joseph Smith’s history was eventually edited and published in six volumes by B. H. Roberts, Roberts included some of the information in a footnote for December 5.



than three paragraphs he crossed out all he had copied and did not continue. There is no explanation for this action.

This is followed by a daily narrative based on Joseph Smith's journal, covering the period from September 22, 1835, to January 18, 1836. Warren Cowdery wrote in an introductory paragraph that since Joseph was becoming "daily more and more noted, the writer deemed it proper to give a plain, simple, yet faithful narration of every important item in his every-day-occurrences" (94). Begun by Warren Cowdery and continued by Warren Parrish, it is what the editors describe as a "polished version" of the Prophet's journal, intended to be a "more refined and permanent" document (91). It is unclear why the scribes stopped where they did, but several blank pages at the end suggest that they intended to go further.

For comparison, the reader may want to refer to the Joseph Smith Papers, *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, pages 64–164. The reader will note that the narration has been changed from first person to third person. In addition, the scribes sometimes changed the straightforward tone of the narration and also filled in some details, especially if they could enhance the image of the Prophet or in some way make the narrative more faith-building. To get a flavor of such emendation, consider Warren Parrish's expansion of the entry in Joseph Smith's journal for November 27, 1835, which reads in part: "Br. [Warren] Parrish my scribe being afflicted with a cold, asked me to lay my hands on him in the name of the Lord. I did so, and in return I asked him to lay his hands on me & we were both relieved." The edited version, written by Parrish himself, reads: "[Warren] Parrish his scribe being indisposed in consequence of having taken cold called on Pres. J. Smith jun. to pray for & lay hands on him in the name of the Lord; He did so and in return Eldr. Parrish prayed for & laid hands on him, this reciprocal kindness was heard and graciously answered upon both their heads by our Heavenly Father in relieving them from their affliction" (133–34).

The third document in volume 1, identified as "History Drafts, 1838–circa 1841," presents in parallel columns three early drafts of the history that Joseph Smith began in 1838. The editors explain that these drafts were part of an "evolutionary process" (193) in Joseph Smith's history writing, and they provide extensive and intriguing detail on how that process proceeded. In addition, an interesting chart shows the relationship between these drafts and the history that was eventually published by B. H. Roberts. For anyone interested in the history of manuscripts, the long introduction to these drafts is well worth reading.

“Draft 1,” inscribed by James Mulholland, is much shorter than the other two drafts and begins with part of the story of the baptism of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. The other two drafts begin with Joseph’s birth. The speculation is that this first draft was, in fact, a continuation of an earlier history produced by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, which is no longer extant.

“Draft 2” is a larger manuscript begun by James Mulholland after Joseph Smith finished dictating history in July 1839. It was finished by Robert B. Thompson after Mulholland’s untimely death. This draft became the major source for Joseph Smith’s history as it later appeared in the *Times and Seasons*, the *Deseret News*, and, eventually, B. H. Roberts’s six-volume compilation.

“Draft 3” was an effort by Howard Coray in 1840–41 to refine the earlier draft. It appears that Coray may have been attempting to make the history more appealing to the general public, since he “deleted passages that seemed to be defensive, to plead the cause of the Saints, or to play on the reader’s sympathies. . . . The draft often softened wording about the persecution of JS, as can be seen in the omission of the first paragraph of Draft 2. Also, whereas the latter specifies that Methodists and Presbyterians treated JS and other Saints without respect, Coray’s draft avoided naming the denominations. Additionally, Draft 3 employs more moderate language in describing opposition to JS in New York, avoiding the word ‘mob’ and glossing over accounts of violence” (201).

There are other differences between the two, but in the end Joseph Smith preferred Draft 2. This became the source for the “History of Joseph Smith” published in the *Times and Seasons*. However, at the end of Draft 2, Joseph Smith indicated that since there had been rumors and false statements about Sidney Rigdon, he would proceed to give a brief history of his life. In the next four issues of the *Times and Seasons*, the “History of Joseph Smith” continued with a summary of Rigdon’s life, which is not reproduced in this volume. However, in the original manuscript volume, there are an additional thirteen pages, still in the handwriting of Robert B. Thompson, that give a brief biography of Rigdon.

The fourth document in this volume is titled “Extract, from the Private Journal of Joseph Smith Jr.” It was published in the first edition of the *Times and Seasons*, July 1839. However, after printing only two hundred copies the editors became ill. Later, they reset the type and republished the first edition, this time dating it November 1839.

The title is misleading, for even though the *Times and Seasons* called the document an “extract” from Joseph’s journal, it was not from

a journal and it was not intended to be private. Rather, the first two-thirds were based on a document titled “Bill of Damages against the state of Missouri,” prepared in the aftermath of the Missouri persecutions. Though it is in the handwriting of Robert B. Thompson, it was written in first person as Joseph Smith, and it was actually a petition to the federal government for redress. Joseph Smith had previously asked the Missouri Saints to document their sufferings and losses in Missouri, and apparently this was his own effort to do so.

This valuable piece of history is more than a bill of damages; it covers most of the Missouri conflict as seen through the eyes of Joseph Smith. While the original “Bill of Damages” ended with a list of the losses and sufferings for which the Prophet sought remuneration, the “Extract” ends with an impassioned plea to the American people “to stop this unlawful and unholy procedure; and pray that God may defend this nation from the dreadful effects of such outrages” (488). The “Extract” was distributed to the Saints across the United States, via the *Times and Seasons*, and “shaped their memory of the persecution in Missouri and their pattern for rehearsing it” (468).

In the “Extract,” the Prophet described in detail some of the persecution he both witnessed and felt, showing his anguish for the Saints and his family, yet also his faith in their ultimate triumph. A brief excerpt illustrates the content and tone of this powerful reminiscence:

[After Joseph was arrested and placed in the custody of Brigadier General Moses Wilson] I inquired of him the cause why I was thus treated. I told him I was not sensible of having done any thing worthy of such treatment; that I had always been a supporter of the constitution and of Democracy. His answer was “I know it, and that is the reason why I want to kill you, or have you killed.” The militia then went into the town and without any restraint whatever, plundered the houses, and abused the innocent and unoffending inhabitants. They went to my house and drove my family out of doors. They carried away most of my property and left many destitute.— We were taken to the town, into the public square; and before our departure from Far West, we, after much entreaties, were suffered to see our families, being attended all the while with a strong guard; I found my wife and children in tears, who expected we were shot by those who had sworn to take our lives, and that they should see me no more. (479)

The fifth document, “Church History,” is actually the well-known “Wentworth Letter” that Joseph Smith wrote to John Wentworth, owner and editor of the *Chicago Democrat*. He had requested a summary of the history and doctrine of the Church on behalf of his friend, George

Barstow. Barstow never published the letter but Joseph published it himself in the *Times and Seasons*, March 1, 1842. There is no manuscript copy of this letter extant, making it impossible to determine whether Joseph wrote it all himself or if it was originally in the handwriting of someone else. The editors assume the latter and that William W. Phelps may have been that person.

One argument for such reasoning is that a year later, Phelps revised and expanded the text of “Church History” in response to a request by the Clyde and Williams publishing company, in connection with a projected book on religious denominations in the United States. That book, edited by I. Daniel Rupp and titled *He Pasa Ekklesia* [The Whole Church]: *An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States*, was published in 1844. The article on the Church was titled “Latter Day Saints,” with Joseph Smith listed as the author. However, only the original Wentworth letter is included in *Histories, Volume 1*.

The Wentworth letter includes one of only a handful of contemporary written accounts of Joseph Smith’s First Vision that are attributable directly to him. It also provides at least a few interesting details not found in the official 1838 account (in the Pearl of Great Price). At the end of his description of the Vision, for example, he wrote to Wentworth that he was told to “go not after them [the religious denominations of the time],’ at the same time receiving a promise that the fulness of the gospel should at some future time be made known unto me” (494).

The Wentworth letter also contains the statements now known as the Articles of Faith. That fact is evidence that the letter was not completely original to Joseph, for, as the editors observe, the articles echo some of the wording of Orson Pratt’s 1840 writings. Pratt, in turn, based his summary of Church beliefs on the work of his brother, Parley P. Pratt. This should not be surprising, for it was only natural that these early Church leaders would draw upon each other for inspiration in how to succinctly word intricate doctrines.<sup>6</sup>

The final document in this book of histories is Orson Pratt’s *A[n] Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, and of the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records*. It is included as an appendix, for it is not really a Joseph Smith document. He neither wrote it, assigned it, nor in any way supervised its creation. However, Joseph Smith was clearly the source of

---

6. For a brief examination of the development of the ideas in the Articles of Faith, see John W. Welch and David J. Whittaker, “We Believe . . .: Development of the Articles of Faith,” *Ensign* 9 (September 1979): 50–55.

much of the document's content; the document itself became the source for the wording of some of Joseph Smith's histories, including the account in the Pearl of Great Price.

As a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Orson Pratt was close to Joseph Smith and had many opportunities to hear him tell of his early visionary experiences. In 1839, under instructions from the Prophet, the Twelve left for England on an important mission that eventually had a profound effect on the growth of the Church. While Orson and his brother were in New York on their way to Great Britain, Joseph Smith arrived in Philadelphia. The Pratt brothers visited him there for two days, hearing him preach and holding private conversations with him. It is likely that during these visits they heard more about Joseph Smith's early life. While in Great Britain, Orson Pratt wrote and began to distribute his pamphlet (possibly by direction of Joseph Smith). Undoubtedly it was read later by Joseph Smith and others, and some of the wording (not the specific information) was adopted in some of the published histories, including the Wentworth letter. The Papers editors have made comparison easy by highlighting passages in *Interesting Account* that provided wording for Joseph Smith's published histories. Here are just two examples:

[*Interesting Account*:] His mind was caught away, from the natural objects with which he was surrounded; and he was enwrapped in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in their features or likeness. (523)

[Wentworth letter:] My mind was taken away from the objects with which I was surrounded, and I was enwrapped in a heavenly vision and saw two glorious personages who exactly resembled each other in features, and likeness. (494)

[*Interesting Account*:] He was informed, that he was called and chosen to be an instrument in the hands of God, to bring about some of his marvellous purposes in this glorious dispensation. (525)

[Wentworth letter:] I was informed that I was chosen to be an instrument in the hands of God to bring about some of his purposes in this glorious dispensation. (495)

It should be noted that most of the information included in *Histories, Volume 1* is not new to anyone familiar with Church history. However, the value of this volume is twofold: (1) it brings these various primary documents together for easy access and comparison; and (2) the meticulous and detailed source notes, historical introductions, and explanatory

footnotes in connection with each document are invaluable tools for the careful scholar, for they present valuable information that is simply not available elsewhere (except on the Joseph Smith Papers website).

### **Assigned Histories, 1831–1847**

Volume 2 reproduces four histories that were not written or supervised by Joseph Smith but were assigned by him to others. The first item is “The Book of John Whitmer Kept by Commandment.” It has been published twice previously.<sup>7</sup> However, the editors of this volume had access to the most recent research and, as usual, have done superb editorial work. The source for this reproduction is the original manuscript, which is in the custody of the Community of Christ (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints).

Whitmer, one of the eleven witnesses to the Book of Mormon plates, was appointed by revelation through Joseph Smith, in 1831, to keep a history of the Church. He began working on drafts almost immediately, but the actual manuscript probably dates from 1838. Interestingly, he began the manuscript by writing, “I shall proceed to continue this record,” suggesting that he saw himself as completing the work begun earlier by Oliver Cowdery. His manuscript included letters, petitions, many of Joseph Smith’s revelations, and various other significant documents.

Whitmer carried out his obligations as a historian, but he was accused of financial wrongdoing and was excommunicated in March 1838. He refused to relinquish his manuscript to the Church, keeping it in his possession until his death in 1878. It was then sent to his brother, David Whitmer, and after David’s death it went to his son, David J. Whitmer. Upon the latter’s death, it went to his nephew, George Schweich, who sold it to the RLDS church in 1902. Whitmer’s history is especially interesting because it is highly personal. For example, his short, first-person discussion of the Church’s press in Jackson County says:

---

7. See F. Mark McKiernan and Roger D. Launius, eds., *An Early Latter Day Saint History: The Book of John Whitmer Kept by Commandment* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1980); and Bruce N. Westergren, ed., *From Historian to Dissident: The Book of John Whitmer* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995). However, editorial decisions differ. McKiernan and Launius chose not to reproduce the document with its various dropped letters, dropped periods, etc., while Westergren chose, as did the editors of the Joseph Smith Papers, to reproduce it as closely as possible to the original.

When they found that we were unwilling to comply with their requests, they returned to the Corthous and voted to erase the printing [office] to th[e] ground, which they immediattly did. and at the same time took Edward Partridge and Charles Allen and tarred and feathered them threatning to kill us if we did not leav the county immediately.

They were also determined to demolish the store A. S . Gilbert pre-vailed on them to let it stand until tuesday next and have time to pack his goods himself

Tuesday arrived and death and destruction stared us in the face. The whole county turned out and surrounded us came to W W Phelps, and my hous and took us upon the publick square as also Partridge Cor-rill, Morly, and gilbert and wer[e] determined to massacre us unless we agreed to leav th[e] county immediately. Finally we agreed to leave upon the following condition (55).

Whitmer's history originally comprised nineteen chapters, concluding in 1838 with his and others' excommunication from the Church. After acknowledging his excommunication, he added this impassioned paragraph:

Therefore I close the history of the church of Latter Day Saints, Hoping that I may be forgiven of my faults, and my sins be bloted out and in the last day be savd in the kingdom of God notwithstanding my presnt situation, which I hope will soon be betterd and I find favor in the eyes of God and . . . his saints Farewell (95).<sup>8</sup>

Later, however, Whitmer crossed out the reference to his excommunication as well as that final paragraph and wrote three more chapters. There is a clear change in tone in these final chapters, as Whitmer became more disillusioned with Joseph Smith and the Saints in Nauvoo, although he never denied his original testimony. In chapter 21, for example, he wrote, "Now as I said before the Lord began to prosper them in Nauvoo, and as soon as they began to prosper they began to be lifted up in pride, and behaved vilely towards the people in Hancock County" (102). Then, in the next chapter, he let loose a personal attack on Joseph Smith:

He from this time began to be lifted up in the pride of his eyes, and began to seek riches and the glory of the world, also sought to establish the ancient order of things as he & his counsellors [Sidney] Rigdon & Hyrum, Smith pleased to call it. therefore they began to form themselves into a secret Society which they termed the Brother of Gideon,

---

8. The ellipsis here is in the place where Whitmer inserted the words "All men" above the line.

in the which Society they took oaths that they would Support a brother wright or wrong even to the shedding of blood. (108)

That last sentence related to the formation of a group known as the Danites, which Joseph Smith's enemies often accused him of being associated with. The evidence for such an accusation is faulty, however, and research on the issue suggests that, though he knew of the organization and even appeared by invitation at one of its meetings, he had nothing to do with its founding and did not know or approve of its plans and methods.<sup>9</sup>

The second item in this volume is W. W. Phelps's "Rise and Progress of the Church of Christ," originally published in the Church's Missouri periodical, *The Evening and the Morning Star*, in April 1833. It covers only eight pages in the volume.

A convert to the Church in 1833, Phelps was soon directed by revelation to go to Missouri and assist in the Church's publishing work there. He founded *The Evening and the Mormon Star* and received instructions from Joseph Smith to "render the star as interesting as possible, by setting forth the use, progress, and faith of the church, as well as the doctrine, for if you do not render it more interesting, than at present, it will fall, and the church suffer a great loss thereby" (113).<sup>10</sup> Phelps responded by publishing this short history.

Phelps's history is basically a devout testimony. It begins with the briefest possible overview of the Church in New York, the decision to move to Ohio, the growth there, the sending of missionaries to Missouri, and the rapid growth in "the land of Zion." Indeed, Phelps affirmed that "the progress of the church though gradual, has been more than many of great faith had anticipated" (117). He also emphasized that the Church was taught by revelation and enjoyed spiritual gifts, such as healing the sick. He promised to correct falsehoods coming from other publications and concluded by affirming that the "progress of the chu[r]ch has been

---

9. See Leland H. Gentry, "The Danite Band of 1838," *BYU Studies* 14, no. 4 (1974): 421–50; Dean C. Jesse and David J. Whittaker, eds., "The Last Months of Mormonism in Missouri: The Albert Perry Rockwood Journal," *BYU Studies* 28, no. 1 (1988): 5–41; David J. Whittaker, "The Book of Daniel in Early Mormon Thought," in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday, 27 March 1990*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1990): 155–201; David J. Whittaker, "Danites," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 356–57.

10. "History, 1838–1856," *Joseph Smith Papers*, vol. A-1, 264.



great, and while we witness the spread of the work, knowing it is of God, we are willing to give the world all the light we can that will lead them to salvation.” For reasons unknown, he never fulfilled his promise to continue the enterprise in later editions.

After John Whitmer was excommunicated, Elias Higbee and John Corrill were appointed to replace him in keeping the Church’s history. Corrill was baptized in January 1831, and over the next several years he held several responsible positions. However, not long after his assignment as a Church historian, he found himself disillusioned with Joseph Smith and even testified against him in court. In March 1839, he was excommunicated, along with other dissenters. That incident helps account for the unusual and lengthy title of his history, published that same year in St. Louis: *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints, (Commonly Called Mormons;) Including an Account of Their Doctrine and Discipline; with the Reasons of the Author for Leaving the Church.* This history is the third item in this volume.

The version of Corrill’s history reproduced here is taken from the printed book, for even though an original handwritten manuscript exists, it is incomplete.<sup>11</sup>

Corrill’s history is, in a sense, a spiritual biography: for it tells of his joining the Church, his early experiences, his eventual disillusionment, and his reasons for leaving. He began with a note on why he wrote it, remarking that in conversing with friends, he was frequently asked, “How did you come to join the Mormons?—How could you yield to their delusions?” The best way to answer, he decided, was to give a brief history that would enable the reader to “judge correctly of the true character” of the Church and the reasons for his own conduct (129).

Corrill began with his first encounter with Mormon missionaries and the Book of Mormon. Initially, he was convinced that the Book of Mormon was “published for speculation” and decided to have nothing to do with it. However, after hearing that Sidney Rigdon had been converted, he spent about six weeks in further investigation and scripture study and concluded that there was a need for prophets in all periods. He became satisfied that Joseph Smith was the “author” of the Book of Mormon (in other words, not a fraud),<sup>12</sup> and that the testimonies of the

---

11. Identified as “Fragments of a history of the Mormons by John Corrill, 1839,” it is located in the John Fletcher Darby papers at the Missouri History Museum.

12. Note that the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon says, on the title page, “BY JOSEPH SMITH, JUNIOR, AUTHOR AND PROPRIETOR,” but the

eight witnesses were unimpeachable. After rehearsing all this, he briefly discussed the things that the Saints believed. Then, in a very revealing statement, he told of his joining the Church even though he still had reservations: “Although I was not fully satisfied, yet viewing this religion to be much nearer the religion of the Bible than any other I could find, I concluded to join the Church, with this determination, that if ever I found it to be a deception, I would leave it” (143).

The bulk of Corrill’s history focuses on the summer and fall of 1838, the period of what is often called the “Mormon War,” which ended with the expulsion of the Saints from Missouri. He had no sympathy with the mobs, but he began to be disillusioned with the Church when he saw the Saints themselves resorting to violence. He was particularly dismayed by the Danites. He was not sure how much the leaders of the Church were involved, but he suspected they were pulling the strings in the background. “How much he [Sampson Avard] was assisted by the presidency I know not, but I thought that they stood as wire workers behind the curtain. Be this as it may, they ran into awful extremes, for it seemed that they felt justified, and thought it was the will of God to use any measures whatever, whether lawful or unlawful, to accomplish their purpose, and put down those that opposed them” (167).

It is true that some Mormons used harsh defensive measures, including burning numerous buildings owned by their enemies in Daviess County.<sup>13</sup> It was these things that most disturbed Corrill, making him one of the Missouri dissenters. He said in self-justification for not speaking out more openly: “I knew that they were jealous of me as a dissenter, and that it was of no use for me to say any thing more; in fact I felt it was necessary for me to look out for my own safety. . . . I would have been

---

preface makes it clear that he translated it from plates. Corrill was obviously saying here that he was convinced that Joseph was not a fraud.

13. For a complete study of the Mormon War in Missouri, see Alexander L. Baugh, “A Call to Arms: The 1838 Mormon Defense of Northern Missouri” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1996; Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2000). Chapter 6, “The Mormon Defense of De Witt,” and chapter 7, “The Mormon Defense of Daviess County, October 1838,” discuss some of the events that seemed to concern Corrill the most. Baugh also discusses this briefly in his fine overview article in the *Ensign*: “From High Hopes to Despair: The Missouri Period, 1831–1839,” *Ensign* 31 (July 2001): 44–55. He says, in part, “The entire conflict, known as the Mormon War, grew primarily out of religious intolerance by a significant portion of the local population residing in the northern counties, but a number of Latter-day Saints were also to blame for their involvement in hostilities against their neighbors” (49).

glad to have left the county with my family, but I could not get away; the decree was passed, and there was no other chance for me and the other dissenters but to pretend to take hold with the rest" (176–77).

Corrill's last two chapters briefly discuss some of the teachings and practices of the Church, usually in a fairly positive tone, but he concluded the final chapter with a few remarks to the members of the Church. Contrary to what he felt at the time of his conversion, he wrote, "I can see nothing that convinces me that God has been our leader" (197), and he listed several reasons for this disillusionment. Then, in a bitter effort to tell his former friends in the Church where to look for "deliverance," he said, "You may say, in God, but I say, in the exercise of common sense and that sound reason with which God has endowed you; and my advice is to follow that, in preference to those pretended visions and revelations which have served no better purpose than to increase your trouble, and which would bind you, soul and body, under the most intolerable yoke" (197). Corrill was officially excommunicated in March 1839, and he published his history about the same time. He died in 1843.

Quite the opposite tone is felt as one reads the fourth and final history in this volume: "A History, of the Persecution, of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter Day Saints in Missouri," an eleven-part series published in the *Times and Seasons* from December 1839 to October 1840. It originated with a letter written by Joseph Smith from jail in Liberty, Missouri, to the Saints and, in particular, to Bishop Edward Partridge. It admonished the Saints to gather all the facts relating to their suffering so they could be published to the world. The articles eventually published in the *Times and Seasons* presented a truly poignant, heartrending account of the Missouri persecutions. They did not discuss the reasons for the persecution: their entire focus was on the brutality of the persecution itself. Their work is worth reading, however, not just because they described the mistreatment of the Saints in such abundant detail, but also because they powerfully revealed the faith and feelings of the Saints at this juncture in their history. They briefly described some of the Saints' defensive efforts but did not mention the Danites or even imply that these defensive efforts were in any way unjustified. That is to be expected, for they were engaged in a major propaganda effort, attempting to gain the sympathy of the nation by placing before it the harshness of their treatment and their truly pitiable conditions as they were driven out of Missouri.

The first three installments were written by Bishop Partridge and covered the period through 1836. Like the authors of the other essays, he quickly glossed over all other aspects of Church history and got right

into the brutalities. He was especially vivid in his description of the Saints being driven from Jackson County, invoking language reminiscent of Thomas Paine's revolutionary rhetoric. He wrote: "These were times which tried men's souls; to stay where they were was death, and to undertake to remove so large a body at once, there being about ten or twelve hundred of them, looked like destruction of much property, if not of lives. It seemed, however, to be the only alternative" (218).

Unfortunately, Partridge became ill after finishing the first three installments, but the editors of the *Times and Seasons* considered the series so important that they continued it, apparently writing the fourth installment themselves. This very brief history quickly covered the period from the end of Partridge's account to the 1838 conflicts in Caldwell and adjoining counties.

The fifth installment consisted of excerpts from Parley P. Pratt's *History of the Late Persecutions Inflicted by the State of Missouri upon the Mormons*, published in Detroit in 1839. It began with a comment on Sidney Rigdon's fiery Fourth of July 1838 speech. As described by Pratt, Rigdon "painted, in lively colors" the oppressions suffered by the Saints and vowed that they would resist all oppression and maintain their rights and freedom guaranteed by the Constitution. "This declaration was received with shouts of hosannah to God and the Lamb," wrote Pratt approvingly, "and with many and long cheers by the assembled thousands, who were determined to yield their rights no more, except compelled by a superior power" (234).

The Saints' willingness to defend themselves was also a theme in the sixth installment, which came from Sidney Rigdon's *An Appeal to the American People: Being an Account of the Persecutions of the Church of Latter Day Saints; and of the Barbarities Inflicted on Them by the Inhabitants of the State of Missouri*, published in Cincinnati in 1840. Rigdon's chronology was often inaccurate, but his impassioned language portrays his attitude, and that of the Saints in general, during the final days of their Missouri persecutions. For example, after describing how their crops had been destroyed, their goods plundered, and their houses burned, he told of how they made appeal after appeal to the authorities for redress, "but none could be had." He then said that they had never retaliated but they were not disposed to move, "and seeing Gen. Parks [Hiram Parks, a Missouri militia leader who tried to defend the Mormons] was there, they appealed to him.— Parks replied, with an oath, 'go and give them a complete dressing, for you will never have any peace with them, until you do it; and I will stand between you and all difficulty'" (241). Accordingly,

Rigdon reported, David W. Patten took a hundred men and gave battle to the mobsters. The editors round out the story in a footnote, indicating that, beginning on October 18, 1838, Patten led an attack on Gallatin, Lyman Wight led one on Millport, and Seymour Branson led one on a settlement at Grindstone Fork.

For the seventh installment, the editors drew again from Pratt's *History of the Saints*, which provided more detail on a few things, including the death of David W. Patten at the Battle of Crooked River.

The eighth installment opened with Governor Lilburn W. Boggs's infamous extermination order, along with a brief introduction by the editors of the *Times and Seasons*. The balance of this and the next three installments were taken from Rigdon's *Appeal to the American People*. Included were his version of such familiar events as Missouri's General Alexander Doniphan's preventing the execution of Joseph Smith and others, the Haw'n's Mill massacre (including detailed eyewitness accounts from John Young and David Lewis), events at Adam-ondi-Ahman, and the imprisonment and subsequent escape of Joseph Smith and others in Richmond. Rigdon's language throughout was intense, and at one point he made a statement that seems disingenuous. "In writing this narrative," he said, "it is no part of our intention to play upon the passions of the public, but give a faithful narrative of facts and then leave it." It seems apparent that the purpose of the *Appeal to the American People* was indeed to garner sympathetic support in the Mormon effort to gain redress, and is that not playing upon their passions? As Rigdon declared at the end:

But still we are, as a people, poor and destitute. We have been robbed of our all and many of us are without houses, living in tents and waggons. In consequence of our exposure, we have suffered this summer much sickness and numbers have died, and our prospects for the ensuing winter are gloomy. . . . Such is our true situation, and as such we make our Appeal to the American People. (282)

For their final installment, the editors of the *Times and Seasons* decided to reprint a speech given to the Missouri Saints at Far West on November 5, 1838, by Major General John B. Clark of the Missouri state militia. This was, indeed, a fitting conclusion to the terrible history of persecution, for there Clark affirmed his determination to carry out the governor's extermination order. Ordering the beleaguered Saints to leave the state immediately, he is reported to have said, in part:

Whatever your innocence, it is nothing to me. . . . The orders of the Governor to me were, that you should be exterminated, and not allowed to continue in the State, and had your leader not been given up and the

treaty complied with before this, you and your families would have been destroyed, and your houses in ashes.

There is a discretionary power vested in my hands which I shall try to exercise for a season. . . . but if I have to come again, because the treaty which you have made here shall be broken, you need not expect any mercy, but extermination. . . . As for your leaders, do not once think—do not imagine for a moment—do not let it enter your mind, that they will be delivered, or that you will see their faces again, for their fate is fixed, their die is cast—their doom is sealed. (283–84)

This appeared at the beginning of the October 1840 issue of the *Times and Seasons*. Toward the end of that issue, the editors included their own impassioned plea to their countrymen for something to be done. This concludes volume 2 of *Histories*.

### **A History of Faith**

Among other things, these two volumes in the Joseph Smith Papers series recount in more detail than previous compilations the horrendous persecutions suffered by the early Latter-day Saints. Readers will understand more of the Saints' impassioned reactions that followed the violence in Missouri and Illinois, more of the suffering and confusion arising from man's inhumanity to man. And yet, amid all the turmoil—whether it be the defection of John Corrill, the vehement speech of General Clark, or the persecutors driving the Mormons from place to place—the body of the Church remained steadfast. In studying these volumes, I could not help but reflect on how the faithfulness of those early Saints did so much to prepare the way for the marvelous blessings that I, as a Latter-day Saint, enjoy today. If for no other reason, I found these books well worth reading.

---

James B. Allen is Professor of History Emeritus at Brigham Young University, former assistant Church historian, and a former senior research fellow at the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History. His publications include his review of the Joseph Smith Papers, *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, found in *BYU Studies Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (2009) 152–61.

A. LeGrand Richards. *Called to Teach:  
The Legacy of Karl G. Maeser.*

Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014.

*Reviewed by Heather M. Seferovich*

Powerful and inspiring teachers can profoundly impact their students, both in this life and in the eternities. Many of us are fortunate to look back fondly on one or two influential teachers who played a critical role in shaping our personalities or careers. Anyone who is a teacher, whether in a formal or informal classroom, or anyone who has had an inspiring teacher will enjoy the educational biography of Karl G. Maeser, written by another teacher, A. LeGrand “Buddy” Richards, a professor of educational leadership in the McKay School of Education at Brigham Young University.

Richards was the ideal person to write this book. His great-great-grandfather is Franklin D. Richards, the European Mission president who baptized Maeser; these two families have been intertwined for generations. As a career educator who has also been a visiting professor at the University of Würzburg, Germany, Richards undoubtedly found insights that some classically trained historians might have missed. He wrote, “In many ways, without intentionally setting out to do so, my career has been steered so that I could be prepared to write this book” (vii). While Maeser is a significant figure who has been acknowledged primarily in articles, passing references, and footnotes—but generally overlooked by in-depth studies—he was first and foremost an educator, and this is appropriately reflected in *Called to Teach*.

Writing this biography of Maeser was a labor of love for Richards, who spent about a decade finding everything he could on Maeser; much of this thorough, painstaking research has resulted in new information, especially about the years prior to Maeser’s baptism into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. As good as the chapters are overall, I think the quality of information about Maeser’s life before baptism is well worth the price of the book.

Richards's tenacity in completing this mammoth project is also noteworthy. In the course of writing this magnum opus, he endured a massive heart attack, an accident resulting in a traumatic brain injury, a major hard drive crash and failed automatic backup that wiped out a year's worth of work, and other misfortunes before completing the project.<sup>1</sup> Many readers like myself will be forever grateful that Richards overcame all these obstacles and produced such a stellar work in spite of them. Similarly, the publisher did excellent work in editing and designing the book.

Instead of focusing on misfortunes he faced during writing, Richards talks freely about the many tender mercies he experienced. For example, on a trip to Washington, D.C., he had only one day to take the train to Philadelphia to look for a record of Karl Gustav Franklin Maeser, the infant son who died as the family's ship reached Philadelphia in 1857. (For decades many family members thought little Karl had been buried at sea.) Once there, Richards discovered the main city archives were closed, so he looked elsewhere. He happened to walk by the Historical Society of Philadelphia and decided to go in. Richards recalled, "Within 15 minutes, I found a reference to the death of Karl Maier,<sup>2</sup> who died on July 4, 1857, and was buried in the Macpelah Cemetery." The record also named the attending physician "and listed the cause of death as debility (a term used most often to refer to infants who do not have the ability to thrive)." Richards recounted other tender mercies, such as finding a letter from Julia Tyler, wife of U.S. President John Tyler, referencing Maeser's piano lessons to their children, and finding letters about Maeser's work with the Saxon Teachers' Association.<sup>3</sup>

The first two chapters of *Called to Teach* explore Maeser's educational history and explain the historical setting in which he was living during this time. I found it interesting that Maeser had both a traditional and a progressive education and worked as a private tutor during a time of social and political unrest in Saxony. Tensions in his local and professional communities ran high before and after the failed revolutions in various German states. Restrictions about what could be taught were

---

1. Personal conversation with A. LeGrand "Buddy" Richards, January 16, 2014.

2. The first name and date are correct, as is the fact that he was an infant; the misspelling of the last name is likely a result of the heavy German accent not being properly understood by the American recorder. Richards discovered that the original cemetery where little Karl was buried was moved in 1890.

3. A. LeGrand Richards to Heather M. Seferovich, email, July 21, 2014.



oppressive, as were the rules surrounding the amount of time spent on religious education. As a master teacher at the Budich Institute in Dresden, Maeser “had come to believe that education should open the doors to democratic participation, but the beloved homeland to which he had returned was dramatically suppressing public liberty and restricting the autonomy of teachers” (56).

Of particular interest to me was the explanation of Pestalozzian philosophy and politics, which laid the foundation for the way Maeser implemented Brigham Young’s guidelines—“don’t teach the alphabet or the multiplication tables without the Spirit.” As a result, throughout his life Maeser interwove intellectual and spiritual development with character and lifelong learning and service. Influenced by the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi thought that an education would be the answer to the problems that plagued the poor in his native Switzerland. Pestalozzi believed “that each person has unlimited potential,” and he disliked the stern teaching methods of the day. He advised teachers to begin with concrete principles and then move to abstract ones. “Pestalozzian thought also required teachers to never do for students what they could learn to do for themselves” (23). This revolutionary educator wanted to reach his students on many levels, so he believed “that a whole education required the proper development of the head (rational power), the hand (physical capacities), and the heart (moral dispositions)” (23–24). These were important theoretical building blocks for Maeser, and we still see them very clearly in the twentieth- and twenty-first-century Church Educational System. Unfortunately, many of these same principles “were considered dangerous to the social order” (57) in Maeser’s day and forbidden from being used by teachers in Saxony.

These conditions created a hostile environment for Maeser on nearly every level: politically, educationally, culturally, and spiritually. “Under the oppressive policies of the [Lutheran] church and state, he had become disillusioned with religion” (80). This is about the time he came across an anti-Mormon pamphlet on the Church written by Moritz Busch. Maeser read it but did not believe the author’s poorly constructed arguments. Instead, the publication inspired him to write a letter to the missionaries requesting more information.

As soon as missionaries devised a way to enter the country in September 1854, Maeser, his wife, brother-in-law, and sister-in-law were discretely taught the gospel by Franklin L. Richards and William Budge. After just a month of tutelage, Maeser and his relatives had a surreptitious

evening baptism outside the city limits. “Later Maeser wrote that as he came out of the water he promised the Lord that if he would be given a testimony that what he had just done was pleasing to the Lord, he would do whatever the Lord would require of him” (106). It seems that Heavenly Father took Karl up on that promise.

In Maeser’s case, the missionaries had to leave the country, so they called him to be the branch president in Dresden. His new religious affiliation ended up costing him his job and life in Germany. Although he artfully fulfilled his duties, the political and religious climate was so oppressive that eventually his activities were discovered by government officials. The fact that authorities wrote “handed over to Liverpool” on the back of his birth certificate implies that his departure in July 1856 was involuntary (125). It is certain that when Karl G. Maeser joined the Church, he did not foresee his future role as the father of the Church Educational System and the impact he would have on generations of Latter-day Saints. In Richards’s words, Maeser “sacrificed almost everything for his new convictions: all the comforts he had earned, the support of most of his family, his beloved homeland, and his respect in the world. . . . He was forced to learn a new language and to find employment far beneath his potential and training” (202). Yet the Lord was able to make so much more out of Maeser than he could have made on his own.

In Liverpool in 1856, Maeser was called as a missionary to the German-speaking population—a sizeable group since many had been fleeing Germany for nearly a decade because of the political climate. The Saints in England helped support Maeser and his family until they emigrated to the United States in May 1857. Since the family lacked funds for further travel and Johnston’s Army was approaching Utah that year, Maeser stayed in the East to find employment. Ultimately, however, Maeser served another mission to the German-speaking population in Philadelphia and Virginia before embarking on the westward journey in 1860.

In the Salt Lake Valley, Maeser resumed his teaching career. “Before Christmas [1860] he would organize, advertise, and begin a new school; help found the first Territorial Teachers’ Association; serve as the first president of the German Language Home Mission and attend its weekly meetings; and become a member of the board of regents for the University of Deseret” (203). After teaching at different schools in the city, his reputation grew. From 1865 to 1867, Brigham Young hired him to teach dozens of his children.

During these early years in the valley, Maeser refined his educational philosophies and honed his teaching skills with a wide variety of students with different abilities. “He learned about the challenges of building Zion and the spiritual challenges that come during temporally depressed circumstances” (215). Probably most important, he had time “to bond the educational theories of Pestalozzi with the theological doctrine of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (215–16).

Between 1867 and 1870, Maeser served a mission to Europe, where he was stationed in Switzerland and eventually became the mission president and publisher of the Church newspaper *Der Stern*. Once in Switzerland, he was able to cross the border into Germany to visit with his father and other relatives, who received him kindly but had no interest in the Church; they instead sought to bribe him and his family to return to Germany.

Upon his release and return to Salt Lake City, Maeser discovered that several of his former colleagues were involved in the Godbeite movement,<sup>4</sup> and one in particular, James Cobb, was even courting his sister-in-law. “Maeser had known or worked closely with nearly all of the leading figures in the movement through church assignments, the Territorial Teachers’ Association, and the University of Deseret” (311). Although these colleagues tried to recruit Maeser to join them, Maeser, “the man partially converted to Mormonism by Moritz Busch’s anti-Mormon text, was quick to see through the Godbeites’ rhetoric” (301).

For a few years Maeser resumed his busy teaching schedule, teaching youth as well as adults. He even taught a few courses at the University of Deseret in Latin, Greek, and German. In 1876, Brigham Young called Maeser to become the principal of Brigham Young Academy. The last half of the biography focuses on Maeser’s tenure as principal. Not only does Richards tell the history, but he also explores Maeser’s teaching philosophies.

Maeser grounded the academy “on two prophetic injunctions: Joseph’s directive to teach correct principles and let students govern themselves, and Brigham’s counsel to teach all subjects with the spirit of God” (390–91). As a master teacher, Maeser could identify students’ divine potential and then inspire them to work hard and succeed in their endeavors. Love was also a crucial component in his success. Many

---

4. See Ronald W. Walker, *Wayward Saints: The Social and Religious Protests of the Godbeites against Brigham Young* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press; Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2009).

stories from his students testify of Maeser's effective teaching methods. As "an uncompromising suffragist" (393), he believed "that both men and women should prepare themselves to become instruments in the hands of the Lord for whatever he would call them to do" (394).

Maeser, like Brigham Young, believed that all knowledge came from God and therefore was spiritual in nature. Maeser saw no conflict in intermingling education and religion. He "insisted that 'the fundamental characteristic of the work in the Church schools was that the Spirit of God permeates all the work done'" (377). And that "a method of teaching based upon and penetrated by the Spirit of the Gospel, even if not expressed in words, is superior to any other, no matter what scientific, artistic and mechanical advantages they may claim to possess" (476).

Maeser's pithy statements abound throughout the book, but they are especially prominent in the last half. For example, "It takes a stout heart to serve the Lord, but the opposite course is much easier: 'It will take you to destruction on velvet cushions'" (396). Or "One good question is often as good as ten answers" (413). Or "There are two periods in a man's labors when circumstances seem to dictate to him the advisability of making as few words as possible, they are at the beginning and at the end of his work" (492). Or "He who makes of his mind a mere storehouse of facts is not a scientist; he is only a cyclopedia" (515). Thankfully, Richards is putting together a Maeser quote book, so these quotes and many others will be easily accessible soon.

Chapter 17 explores the era when Maeser retired from the academy (to begin supervising all Church schools) and Benjamin Cluff took over. Richards masterfully compares and contrasts the two men. He accurately surmises that while both had much in common in terms of general educational and spiritual philosophies, there was a tension in the finer points of execution, and the

tension has continued [to our day]. How much should a Church school conform to the academic standards of the larger society? What is the proper balance between resisting the influences of the world and seeking to impress it? What is the proper relationship between academic expertise and priesthood authority? If Church leaders are seen as spiritual stewards over the school, what does it mean to speak of academic freedom? How should disagreements in policies or academic theories be resolved at a Church school? . . . What is the proper course of action when a faculty member loses faith in the sponsoring Church? (560)

Many of these questions are still relevant in our day, and I have watched faculty and administrators grapple with several of them over the last

quarter century. Richards does not answer these prickly questions; he only explores the differences in execution between Maeser and Cluff and carefully notes how Maeser had gained his education and then came into the Church, while Cluff had been raised in the Church and then went outside the religion to gain his education.

Maeser's legacy continues to be felt well into the twenty-first century. At this point, his educational philosophies have influenced literally millions of students. That is why Richards's new biography of Maeser is so important and will likely stand as *the* work on him for many years to come.

---

Heather M. Seferovich is curator at the Education in Zion Gallery at Brigham Young University and was previously Senior Executive Editor at BYU Studies for twelve years. She also worked on *The Story of Masada* and *The Dead Sea Scrolls* exhibitions at BYU in 1997.

Allan Kent Powell, ed. *Nels Anderson's World War I Diary*.  
Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2013.

*Reviewed by Kenneth L. Alford*

With the centennial of World War I beginning in 2014, *Nels Anderson's World War I Diary*, edited by Allan Kent Powell, is a timely and engaging firsthand account of America's involvement in "the war to end all wars." This account sees the war through the eyes of a Latter-day Saint private fighting with the American Expeditionary Force in Europe.

Anderson notes, "Writing a diary requires a lot of work and it requires a lot of scheming to find the time to write. Often I could get no candles to write by so had to get by a fire. Mine is the only diary I know of in the Battalion" (189). Powell added, "The keeping of diaries was, in fact, against army and navy regulations. . . . While some diaries were kept by soldiers in France, it is easy to understand why, under battlefield conditions, it was such a difficult endeavor and why so few diaries were kept" (267).

Like his diary, Nels Anderson's life was unique. Before enlisting in the army, Anderson was a hobo, mule skinner, ranch hand, railroad worker, carpenter, and teacher. In 1908, he was caught hopping a train near the Utah-Nevada border and was informally adopted by local Mormon families, who gave him encouragement and resources for three years of schooling. Baptized as a Latter-day Saint in January 1910, his new faith shaped many of his wartime experiences and observations. Near the end of the war, he reflected: "I joined the church 10 years ago today. I thought of that last night as I walked my post. My church has been a great help to me. It has filled me with a desire to be a good citizen. I am not the man I ought to be or could be but I mean to make a new effort when I get back. In the army I shall merely try not to lose ground" (163).

The United States declared war on Germany in April 1917, and Anderson enlisted one year later. He received initial military training at Camp Funston, Kansas, and was assigned as a combat engineer to Company E,

314th Engineers Regiment in the 89th Infantry Division.<sup>1</sup> During the following fifteen months, he faithfully kept a diary as his military service sent him to New York, England, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany. Spending much of his time at the front, he participated in both the St. Mihiel (September 1918) and Meuse-Argonne (October 1918) offensives.

The book's editor, Allan Kent Powell, earned a PhD in history from the University of Utah and is well qualified to edit Anderson's wartime diary. Recently retired as managing editor of the *Utah Historical Quarterly* and as senior state historian for the Utah State Historical Society, Powell has authored and contributed to several previous military histories, including *Utah Remembers World War II*, *Splinters of a Nation: German Prisoners of War in Utah*, and *A German Odyssey: The Journal of a German Prisoner of War*.

This book will appeal to military buffs, historians, social scientists familiar with Anderson's later work, and anyone who wants to gain a better understanding of the First World War. Powell keeps the focus on Anderson throughout the book—appropriately intervening to provide important insights and commentary. Military veterans will certainly find experiences, anecdotes, and observations that will cause them to smile as they recognize many of their own military pleasures and frustrations relayed through Anderson's eyes. Nonveterans, though, may find a few instances where they wish additional commentary had been added.

The diary provides readers with a genuine sense of “being there” as Anderson matter-of-factly shares what military life in and near the frontline trenches was like. For example, on October 25, 1918, he wrote, “I have got my self to believe that it is foolish to run for to run feeds fear and if the shells are going to get one they will get him any way. It is

---

1. Only three Latter-day Saint chaplains served on active duty during World War I, and one of them, Herbert B. Maw (who later served as governor of Utah from 1941 to 1949), was assigned as a chaplain in Anderson's division with initial service at Camp Funston, Kansas. World War I divisions contained up to twenty-eight thousand men, so it is unlikely that Maw and Anderson ever crossed paths during the war. See Kenneth L. Alford, “Joseph F. Smith and the First World War: Eventual Support and Latter-day Saint Chaplains,” in *Joseph F. Smith: Reflections on the Man and His Times*, ed. Craig K. Manscill, Brian D. Reeves, Guy L. Dorius, and J. B. Haws (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 434–55.

probably not the truth but such a fatalist philosophy is very convenient at such times” (130). Two days later he wrote:

The firing ceased after a while. . . . We had one killed, four hurt and several gassed which is quite a loss for being under cover. By that time the gas had soaked through the whole place and it was necessary for us to wear masks. I stopped to help carry wounded. It is hard work trying to carry a wounded man over a bad road at night with a gas mask on. We made a stretcher out of two sticks and a blanket that made the work more difficult for the sticks bent so. We left the dead man. He had several other dead men there to keep him company. . . . It seems hard to leave the boys unburied but its war (131).

A week later he wrote, “As we passed through this town this morning I noticed a nice gold ring on a dead German lying in the street. I thought it would make an excellent souvenir so I went around after supper to get it but when I took hold of his cold stiff hand I got ashamed of myself. It was a wedding ring I think and I am glad now I didn’t take it. I know that it would have been a reproach to me forever. I don’t need souvenirs that bad” (139). His diary contains a wide variety of emotions and thought-provoking comments.

The war ended on “the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month; 5 months to the hour almost from the time we marched on the good ship *Carpathia* (which was torpedoed on its way back)” (144). Anderson commented, “So this is peace and I am alive. I am so surprised. I don’t know how to act so I just sit and think. I don’t feel like yelling no one is yelling around here. How good it is to be alive. I had set aside all hopes and now they assert themselves one by one. I have a future again” (145).

Two weeks following the Armistice, as his unit prepared for occupation duty in Germany, Anderson wrote, “I want to get out of this. I am wasting my time now that the war is over. This is the best part of my life and I ought to be out making a name and a home” (151). His overseas deployment, though, would last another seven months; the last four months of this time was spent attending classes at a French university—an opportunity that presented itself after his commanding officer “called me up and told me that there was a chance to go to a French University if I knew French. I told him I knew French when as a matter of fact I can’t count to five” (204). Two weeks into his schooling, Anderson reported, “My prof asked me a question in French today. I answered ‘Pomme de terre’ potato and everyone laughed. I saw the point when they told me he asked me to name a kind of fish. That was beat by a major last week.



He was asked how old he was and he replied ‘Indiana.’ Many such happen every day” (223).

Anderson was discharged on August 2, 1919, and attended Brigham Young University, where he studied sociology. He served in several government positions during the 1930s and ’40s and authored numerous books and textbooks, including the influential book *Desert Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah*.

Anderson ended his daily diary entries on Sunday, April 27, 1919, with this summary: “I have been in the army a year today. I have kept this diary faithfully all the while. . . . This has been the biggest year of my life. I am glad I have gone through it. My future will be richer by the experience I have had and the observations I have made” (250). Readers, too, will be richer by sharing Anderson’s experiences.

---

Kenneth L. Alford is Associate Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. After serving almost thirty years on active duty in the United States Army, he retired as a colonel in 2008. While on active duty, Ken served in numerous assignments, including at the Pentagon, eight years teaching at the United States Military Academy at West Point, and four years as professor and department chair at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. His most recent book, *Civil War Saints* (BYU Religious Studies Center, 2012), looks at the Utah Territory during the Civil War. Ken and his wife, Sherilee, have four children and twelve grandchildren.

J. B. Haws. *The Mormon Image in the American Mind: Fifty Years of Public Perception*.  
New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

*Reviewed by Sherry Pack Baker*

J. B. Haws received his PhD from the University of Utah and is an assistant professor in the Department of Church History at Brigham Young University. His research interests include twentieth-century history of Latter-day Saints and the general public perception of the group. This book (based on his 2010 PhD dissertation) is the winner of the 2014 Mormon History Association Best Book Award.

The book focuses on the fifty-year period surrounding the presidential campaign of George Romney in 1968 to Mitt Romney's campaign in 2012. The author considers the role Mormonism played in these campaigns; the heart of the book, however, focuses on other major events that affected public perceptions of Mormonism throughout this period, and the relationships and interactions of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with various segments of American society over time (3–4).

The book is well cited, and its conclusions and commentaries are well supported. The endnotes constitute 107 of the book's total 412 pages. Some may fault its heavy reliance on secondary sources; however, Haws has made an important contribution by pulling together into new configurations a large body of previous research from diverse sources about particular historical events. He also contributes by including original sources in the form of excerpts from personal correspondence and interviews. Among the greatest contributions of this book are the following: its focus on twentieth- and twenty-first-century Mormon history and critical Mormon studies (in a field that so often is grounded in the nineteenth century); its sustained narrative, covering a fifty-year period, that makes clear the cause-and-effect relationships between past events and new events; and its emphasis on the development and implementation of Church public relations strategies and initiatives throughout each

period discussed—the Church’s conscious efforts to position itself in society, to respond to negative publicity, and to shape or influence public perceptions.<sup>1</sup>

Studies of Mormon image are a staple in Mormon studies scholarship—but this book sets a new standard in depth and breadth, and in historical context and insight.

Chapter 1 explains that the book focuses on various periods of “intense publicity” and “news-making ‘Mormon moments’ in the four decades between the Romney campaigns” (4). Chapter 2 focuses on the George Romney campaign within the context of Mormonism, the highlights of the David O. McKay era, the press coverage of Mormonism including race and priesthood issues, and the question about whether Mormons are Christians. The book follows over time the “political potency” (35) of the “Mormons are not Christians” charge. Following the George Romney campaign, “disapproval for the Latter-day Saints’ priesthood policy became more vocal and more fiery” (46). His campaign was “an early indication that Americans could hold one opinion of model Mormons who did not have skeletons in their closets, and another of a church that seemingly did” (46).

Chapter 3, entitled “Church Rites versus Civil Rights,” primarily focuses on BYU athletics and Church policies concerning race and the priesthood. It discusses in depth the public protests and censures against BYU athletics, and the Church’s efforts to respond to the criticism. The

---

1. Sherry Baker and Joel Campbell, “Mitt Romney’s Religion: A Five Factor Model for Analysis of Media Representation of Mormon Identity,” *Journal of Media and Religion* 9, no. 2 (2010): 99–121, have proposed a model for analyzing the factors that influence media representations of Mormons and Mormonism. These factors include (1) the Media Factor (their ownership, editorial perspectives, Mormon-related content); (2) the Mormon Factor (their beliefs, practices, lifestyles, public relations and self-positioning in society); (3) the Other Religions Factor (resistance to or support for Mormonism by other religions; religious rhetoric about Mormonism); (4) the Secular Factor (nonreligious perspectives on Mormon-related issues); and (5) the Political or Governmental Factor (Mormon relationships with government and political power and processes). All these factors are represented in varying configurations and with varying emphasis in each of the periods and issues that Haws discusses. His descriptions of the Mormon Factor over the fifty-year period (in terms of LDS Church institutional public relations, attempts at self-defining and self-positioning within society, and responding to negative public perceptions) is one of the unique contributions of this book.

formation in 1971 of the Genesis Group for black Mormons is discussed briefly (68). Regarding the race issue, the author notes that “this seemed only another instance where public concerns generated new awareness among the Latter-day Saint leadership” (68). The chapter ends with the June 9, 1978, announcement of the policy change about all worthy males receiving the priesthood. Haws notes, however, that by the time of this announcement, the race issue had died down somewhat, and by 1978 “national conversations were less about race and more about gender” (73).

In chapter 4, Haws describes the ways in which the Church responded through “an intensification of the Church’s public relations efforts” to the protests and censures by universities and civic and religious bodies in the early 1970s relating to its priesthood policy (74). “There was a sense that to rehabilitate the Mormon image, so pocked by the anti-BYU demonstrations, public attention needed to be refocused on core Mormon tenets” such as “the centrality of the family” (74). The chapter covers the development of the Church’s Public Communications Department, its assessments of Mormonism’s public image, and the airing of the *Homefront* series of public service announcements. This chapter also discusses LDS opposition to the proposed Equal Rights Amendment and the various public perceptions that resulted.

As this chapter ends, Haws writes that “the real drama would be enacted in the 1980s, so much so that the mid-1980s can be seen as an important turning point—and perhaps *the* important turning point, at least in the last half-century—in the trajectory of American public opinion of Mormonism” (98). He reports that in 1977, 54 percent of Gallup poll respondents rated Mormons on the “favorable” side of a scale; by 1991, the Barna Group found that only 27 percent “saw Mormons favorably” (98). He builds a case, polemical as it may be, that this was largely the result of the efforts of the rising religious (Evangelical) right—“some of Mormonism’s oldest foes” (98).

Chapter 5 documents tensions between these religious groups, including the competition for souls, the *God Makers* movies, the framing of Mormonism as a cult, and apprehension in secular presses about growing Mormon power and influence. Chapter 6 deals with the Mark Hoffman forgeries and bombings in October 1985, as well as internal Church scrutiny concerning the ways in which Mormon history should be written, and the excommunication of “prominent Mormon scholars” in September 1993 (152). “The late 1980s and early 1990s had not been kind . . . to those in church public relations who seemed to find

themselves repeatedly in the uncomfortable position of making careful press statements and answering thorny questions about church-related controversies” (155). The period prompted “a wholesale rethinking of the church’s approach to public relations and a retooling of its image, an image that had become weighed down with charges of authoritarianism, secrecy, and defensiveness” (157).

Chapter 7, “Standing a Little Taller: 1995–2005,” is about Church President Gordon B. Hinckley’s tenure, which “gave new standing to Mormonism’s public image” (191). The chapter provides important insights into the Church’s Public Affairs department, the confluence of experienced and professional PR staff with the media-friendly presidency of Gordon B. Hinckley, and the emphasis on building bridges instead of bunkers through a “door is wide open” philosophy (160).

Chapter 8 is about Mormons in popular culture in the new millennium. Chapter 9 covers the first Mitt Romney bid for the presidency, with a focus on the role his Mormonism played in the strategies of his own campaign and those of his opponents and detractors (both secular and religious). Chapter 10 covers Romney’s second bid for the presidency, *Book of Mormon the Musical*, Proposition 8, and other political and social currents about and within Mormonism that swirled throughout the campaign period. Some of this is somewhat scanty (such as the Prop 8 discussion). The author concedes that “with only a few months of historical hindsight,” reflection on the period “might seem a little premature” (239). Still, these three chapters highlight the key events of the period, provide good observations by the author and others, and are well worth reading.

The subtext of the book as a whole is about Mormons as “other” and the issues that kept them outside of the American mainstream historically. The book ends by suggesting that “Mormons are now ‘in the conversation’ in a way never before seen” (279). This book well documents that journey.

---

Sherry Pack Baker is a professor in the BYU Department of Communications. Her research focuses on Mormon Media Studies and the ethics of public relations and advertising. She chaired the Mormon Media Studies symposia in 2010 and 2012.

David J. Howlett. *Kirtland Temple:  
The Biography of a Shared Mormon Sacred Space.*

Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2014.

*Reviewed by Elwin C. Robison*

David J. Howlett, a professor and member of the Community of Christ, opens up a view of the Kirtland Temple that is not often considered by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Howlett chronicles the various ways that the Kirtland Temple has been a point of conflict and confluence, influencing the interaction between faith traditions stemming from Joseph Smith's religious experiences.

In the first section of the book, Howlett summarizes the history of the Kirtland Temple, the groups who worshipped there, and the activities that brought meaning to their worship. In the second section, Howlett selects three themes for discussion: the "Kirtland curse," the Lundgren tragedy, and the construction of the new Independence Temple by the Community of Christ. In the final section, he looks at temple pageants, the evolution of temple tours, and recent conflict over LGBT worship in the temple.

Howlett's study demonstrates that congregants who have worshipped in the temple after 1880 have claimed rich spiritual experiences. As the early RLDS members worked to "restore the temple to its original physical condition, they believed that they had restored themselves to their ancestors' spiritual condition" (46). In the early twentieth century, they conducted at the temple and its grounds week-long "grove meetings" or "reunions" for the purpose of spiritual revival (58). Many plays and pageants have been performed around the theme of the Kirtland Temple, and Howlett gives helpful context to the theatrical approaches of different faiths that desire to "possess" the temple (even if only in the metaphorical sense). The book effectively contrasts these productions, and paints a picture of the different ways the temple has been viewed by LDS and RLDS members (132–43).

Chapter 5 recounts the story of Jeffery Lundgren, a principal guide at the Kirtland Temple in the 1980s. Many people of both LDS and RLDS faiths interacted cordially with him during his years as a temple guide; I was also given my first tour of the temple by Lundgren (he seemed odd to me, but not more than others I have known with myopic interests in Christian eschatology). Unbeknown to many around to him, Lundgren came to see himself as “the Destroyer,” and he later committed mass murder in an effort to cleanse his flock before initiating his plan to seize the temple. While this gruesome history is not central to the book, it is a valuable glimpse into the anatomy of extremism and the conditions that allow it to develop.

Chapter 4 gives extensive coverage to the “Kirtland curse.” In 1841, Hyrum Smith wrote a letter urging the Saints to leave Kirtland and come to Nauvoo. He wrote that a scourge was upon that land, and that only the children of the Ohio Saints would “build up Kirtland” (80). The quantity of coverage given to this subject seems out of place in a book on the temple. I resided in the region through many of the years the “curse” was discussed; its role in the contested space of the temple seemed at most limited to a small subset of Latter-day Saints. Some LDS leaders in the late 1960s and 1970s concluded that the “curse” needed to be lifted for the faith to grow in Ohio. No doubt this interpretation was effective at channeling the enthusiasm for missionary work and perhaps for channeling interest in restoring historic Kirtland properties (94). Those raising awareness about the “curse” were often not native to the area, and they perhaps unwittingly dismissed the valiant efforts of local Latter-days Saints to establish the faith in northeast Ohio during the 1950s and 1960s.

Methodological challenges are inherent in some of the source material available to Howlett. He quotes from temple tour comment cards, which is problematic because one can miss the center and only see the fringe of opinion. More problematic is the use of comments by Internet “trolls.” Certainly everyone can find offensive, narrow-minded, and virulent discourse on any and every subject on the Internet. While Howlett’s research for the most part appears thorough, I question whether such sources should be considered in a scholarly study that seeks to understand the common ground between religious faiths.

While interpretation of events can be a matter of context, the record itself should not be dismissed due to context. Howlett’s statement that “no record of the vision [of the Kirtland Temple design] has survived” (19) does not take into account the full historical record. While Howlett is

correct in that the vision was not included in official Church publications, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams produced a set of drawings and wrote a description of the building based on the vision.<sup>1</sup> I would argue that the drawings and description constitute an important contemporary record of the vision. Another incongruity is Howlett's statement that "the vast majority of the 1836 Mormons at Kirtland had no knowledge of Smith's experience" of the vision recorded at the Kirtland Temple dedication (25, 162). I do not take exception with his opinion that not all fully understood the implications of the keys that were given to Joseph Smith during the vision, but the conclusion that few had knowledge of the experience does not match the historical record. As just one example, the mother of Mary Ann Stearns Winters showed her the "place on the pulpit" where the Savior and other prophets stood.<sup>2</sup> If a lay member and her four-year-old daughter knew of the vision, can we not assume that many others did as well? Also, while the statement that only full tithe payers are admitted to LDS temples is correct (41), that is only one requirement among many. Latter-day Saints must show their willingness to live a Christlike life by being honest, being faithful to spouse and family, and striving to serve their neighbors. By singling out tithing, it sounds like one pays admission to enter a temple.<sup>3</sup>

Howlett dwells often on the concept of "contested space," and perhaps the most interesting point of contested space I encountered in the book was Howlett's reaction to the *This is Kirtland!* theatrical production created by Latter-day Saints. His reaction, and my reaction to him, acts as something of a microcosm that demonstrates the ongoing challenge of creating civil interfaith dialogue. Howlett begins generously: "*This is Kirtland!* was a very entertaining play; it was filled with dancing, witty dialogue, and toe-tapping songs that I sang in my head for days afterward." At one point, however, Joseph Smith and his wife Emma sing a love duet. Howlett recounts from his field notes how he felt like standing up and yelling, "Hypocrite! You cheated on your wife in this time period when you were sleeping with Fanny Alger!" (142). First, Howlett assumes that a relationship with Alger is a fact, while

---

1. Elwin C. Robison, *The First Mormon Temple: Design, Construction, and Historic Context of the Kirtland Temple* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1997), 8.

2. Mary Ann Stearns Winters (1833–1912), MS 119, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

3. Howlett references this observation on tithing to Laurel B. Andrew, a scholar who has never entered an operating LDS temple.



in reality there are no documentary sources proving such a relationship. More to the point, upon reading Howlett's reaction, I found myself wanting to stand up and yell back, "So father Abraham was a hypocrite? And what about my ancestors who entered into plural marriages, loved each other, and taught their children to love God and their fellow man? Are they hypocrites too?" Judging by our immediate reactions, clearly we can find contested space in many elements of the shared history of the Mormon faith traditions. Notwithstanding this, I appreciate hearing Howlett's honest reaction to the play, for it opens the way for an increased sensitivity and better understanding of how those of other faith traditions might perceive various events.

If visitors to the Kirtland Temple were to read Howlett's book, they would have a greater appreciation of the space they were encountering. The book provides room for LDS readers to understanding other faith traditions without compromising their own beliefs. If all involved show a mutual respect for the tenets of others, the Kirtland Temple will continue as a spiritual place of refuge for many, as it was originally intended to be. While Howlett cannot speak for every member of the Community of Christ or Restoration Branch traditions, he has presented a framework within which a better understanding of the Kirtland Temple can occur from the perspectives of various Mormon belief systems.

---

Elwin C. Robison teaches architectural history in the College of Architecture and Environmental Design at Kent State University and is a professional engineer practicing in the field of historic restoration and building forensics. He has a BS in civil engineering from Brigham Young University and an MA and PhD in architectural history from Cornell University. His book, *The First Mormon Temple*, was published by BYU Press in 1997.

Andrei Orlov and Gabriele Boccaccini, eds.  
*New Perspectives on 2 Enoch: No Longer Slavonic Only.*  
Leiden: Brill, 2012.

*Reviewed by David J. Larsen*

This book contains the proceedings of the Fifth Enoch Seminar, held in Naples, Italy, on June 14–18, 2009. The theme of the conference was “Adam, Enoch, Melchizedek: Mediatorial Figures in 2 Enoch and Second Temple Judaism,” covering topics of intrinsic interest for biblical scholars generally, as well as for Latter-day Saints. The book’s subtitle, *No Longer Slavonic Only*, refers to an important discovery announced at the seminar. The book of 2 Enoch is also commonly referred to as “Slavonic Enoch” because the text has been known only in its Slavonic translation;<sup>1</sup> now Coptic fragments of the text have been found, indicating that this work was more widely used than had been previously thought. This announcement was a highlight of the gathering, and a summary of the importance of this new finding is included at the beginning of *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch*.

The vast majority of the book, however, discusses the most recent research and best conclusions regarding 2 Enoch that were available to present at the conference prior to this announcement. As 2 Enoch is generally understood to be an ancient Jewish (or perhaps Christian) text from, arguably, the first century AD, it is therefore possible that the earliest Christians, including some of the authors of the New Testament, could have known and been influenced by it.

The primary objective of this review is to look at 2 Enoch and other related texts and the involvement in these texts of characters who figure significantly in Joseph Smith’s inspired version of the early chapters of Genesis: Adam, Enoch, Noah (book of Moses), and Melchizedek

---

1. An introduction and standard translation of 2 Enoch is conveniently available in James H. Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983), 1:91–221.

(JST Gen. 14). A secondary objective is simply to encourage Latter-day Saint readers to engage on a deeper level with these texts.<sup>2</sup> By means of a brief survey of *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch*, I hope to encourage such interest and to show that the book of 2 Enoch and similar texts contain a number of elements that are not found in the Bible but that parallel details regarding these figures in Joseph Smith's revelations.

*New Perspectives* is divided into two main parts, the first focusing on the book of 2 Enoch and the second section looking at traditions concerning mediatorial figures (Adam, Enoch, and Melchizedek, specifically) in the Second Temple period. After the discussion of the discovery of the Coptic fragments of 2 Enoch and the new paradigm that this discovery has introduced, the volume moves on to targeted studies of specific aspects of the text of 2 Enoch, the Slavonic version specifically. The rest of the book is divided up into the following sections, based on the general topics of the presentations given at the conference:

- Text and Dating of 2 Enoch
- Content and Context of 2 Enoch
- Adamic Traditions
- Melchizedek Traditions
- Bibliography on 2 Enoch

The importance of the discovery of the Qasr Ibrim manuscript in Egyptian Nubia—a Coptic version of 2 Enoch—is outlined in the first chapter. This find opens and expands the boundaries and the contexts in which 2 Enoch may now be studied. This discovery helps support the idea that 2 Enoch is a more ancient text than some scholars have supposed, since the Coptic fragments found antedate the earliest Slavonic witness by about five hundred years. There is some evidence that it was perhaps written in the first century AD (although the author cannot confirm this) in Alexandria as a Jewish text composed in Greek and from thence distributed to Coptic-speaking Egypt and Nubia. This helps disprove the theory held by some that 2 Enoch was first composed in Slavonic in medieval times by a Gnostic-like group known as the

---

2. Recent articles in this journal can assist in that engagement. See George W. E. Nickelsburg, "The Temple According to 1 Enoch"; David J. Larsen, "Enoch and the City of Zion: Can an Entire Community Ascend to Heaven?"; and Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, "The LDS Story of Enoch as the Culminating Episode of a Temple Text," in *BYU Studies Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (2014): 7–73. See further Hugh W. Nibley, *Enoch the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986).

Bogomiles, who are thought to have originated in Bulgaria in the tenth century. This gives increased credibility to the theory suggested by some scholars, such as Andrei Orlov, that 2 Enoch could have been available to the earliest Christian authors and may have influenced their writings, including Matthew's Gospel.

The discovery of the Coptic version of 2 Enoch affects most conclusions in the first section of the book; however, it was not taken into consideration in preparing these conference presentations. One can only wonder how these scholars would have modified their conclusions based on these more recent findings. To some extent, we are compelled to disregard some of the discussions and conclusions because they do not take these findings into consideration. Although the volume is subtitled *No Longer Slavonic Only*, the impact of the publication is lessened because of this weakness. Having said this, the discovery of the Coptic fragments only serves, to a significant extent, to confirm what some scholars had already postulated regarding the provenance of the text.

Grant Macaskill's section, "2 Enoch: Manuscripts, Recensions, and Original Language," discusses the different versions of the text of 2 Enoch and analyzes a couple of passages included in the longer recensions of the text regarding the rebellion of Satan. Following F. I. Andersen's English translation, the text reads: "But one from the order of the archangels deviated, together with the division that was under his authority. He thought up the impossible idea that he might place his throne higher than the clouds which are above the earth, that he might become equal to my power. And I hurled him out from the height, together with his angels."<sup>3</sup> In this passage, God reveals to Enoch the story of how Satan was exiled from heaven, along with the "division" of angels who were under his authority. This idea is of course similar to the LDS understanding of Lucifer attempting to usurp God's power in the premortal realm (Moses 4:1–3; D&C 29:36–37; 76:25–29). Although some scholars note the connection here to the story of the "Watchers" in 1 Enoch (which gives an expanded version of the story of the fallen "sons of God" from Genesis 6, describing them as rebellious angels), the text of 2 Enoch goes on to connect Satan's fall from heaven to the Adam and Eve story. It explains, in God's words:

---

3. Grant Macaskill, "2 Enoch: Manuscripts, Recensions, and Original Language," in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch*, ed. Andrei A. Orlov and Gabriele Boccacini (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 93. He is citing F. I. Andersen, "2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. J. H. Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 148.

The devil understood how I wished to create another world, so that everything could be subjected to Adam on the earth, to rule and reign over it. The devil . . . will become a demon, because he fled from heaven. . . . In this way, he became different from the angels. His nature did not change, but his thought did, since his consciousness of righteous and sinful things changed. And he became aware of his condemnation and of the sin which he sinned previously. And that is why he thought up his scheme against Adam.<sup>4</sup>

Andrei Orlov's first chapter, "The Sacerdotal Traditions of 2 Enoch and the Date of the Text," argues for an early date for 2 Enoch—before the destruction of the Temple in AD 70—based on the strong priestly traditions found in the text. Although Orlov may not be taking into account the possibility of priestly circles continuing to operate and write texts beyond the destruction of the temple, the evidence he cites does seem to point to a time before the rise of Rabbinic Judaism when texts that featured the concerns of the priesthood were likely more prevalent. Orlov highlights the section of 2 Enoch that describes the miraculous birth of Melchizedek. He points out that, like the birth of Noah found in the earlier texts of 1 Enoch and the Genesis Apocryphon,<sup>5</sup> 2 Enoch tells the story of Melchizedek's birth in a way that depicts him as the "high priest *par excellence*."

For example, when Melchizedek is born, he is already able to speak and immediately blesses the Lord. He is described as being mysteriously and miraculously conceived and bearing the "badge of priesthood" on his chest when he is born.<sup>6</sup> His father dresses him in the garments of the priesthood and feeds him holy bread.<sup>7</sup> He is subsequently taken up into the heavenly Eden so that he can survive the Flood and return as a high priest in the postdiluvian era.<sup>8</sup> The significance of considering this text to be a Jewish account composed before AD 70 lies in the possibility that it was influential

---

4. Macaskill, "2 Enoch," 93; citing Andersen, "2 Enoch," 154.

5. The "Genesis Apocryphon" (1Q20/1QapGen) is a document discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran that gives an expanded telling of some of the stories in the biblical Genesis. The date of its composition is debatable, with most scholars placing it somewhere between the beginning of the third century BC and the end of the first century BC.

6. Compare to the miraculous events of his childhood mentioned in JST Genesis 14:26.

7. Compare to the idea that Melchizedek received the priesthood and ruled under his father in Alma 13:18; compare JST Gen. 14:27–33.

8. Compare this to the reference to Melchizedek and his people being taken up into heaven in JST Genesis 14:32, 34.

in the formation of early Christian traditions regarding Melchizedek, along with an understanding of Christ's mission and how he was comparable to Melchizedek.

Leading out the next section on the "Content and Context of 2 Enoch," Crispin Fletcher-Louis presents "2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic." I found this to be one of the most informative chapters of the book, worthy of extended discussion. He starts out by highlighting the fact that 2 Enoch "views both Adam and Enoch in exalted terms; as glorious, angelic, but also *human*." Fletcher-Louis suggests that when we take into consideration this positive portrayal of humanity, we must begin to reject the traditional notion that apocalypses "propound a negative anthropology." He asserts that a "new perspective" on the theology of the apocalypses is necessary, one that celebrates the redemption of mankind from the Fall in Eden and welcomes them back to their glorious position in the presence of God. The basis for this paradigm begins, he claims, with the idea that humanity is created to be in God's image. "The (true) human being was created to have a divine identity and, therefore, an epistemology grounded in the divine life. . . . Revelations of cosmic and divine secrets come directly to and through the human being."<sup>9</sup>

Fletcher-Louis goes on to explain that this true human identity can be identified in Jewish temple worship. In the temple, we are shown "the structure of the cosmos and *access to its inner secrets*."<sup>10</sup> Some of the early apocalypses (such as 1 Enoch and Daniel) display, in narrative form, the theology and practices of what is known as the temple cult. In the stories of the heavenly journeys of Enoch, Abraham, and others, we see what the rituals of the high priests were meant to signify. "Enoch is a model, in particular, of the true priest who ascends to heaven to receive divine revelation just as the high priest enters God's innermost place on the Day of Atonement. The priestly character of apocalyptic visions is grounded in the belief . . . that Israel's high priest recapitulates Adam's (otherwise lost) identity as God's image-idol (see esp. Exod 28 where Aaron is dressed in garments proper to a divine cult statue)."<sup>11</sup> Fletcher-Louis sees significance in the fact that Enoch was the seventh from Adam—the number seven standing for completion or perfection—and so is rightly depicted as the "true" human, "entitled to the recovery of the divine identity that

---

9. Crispin Fletcher-Louis, "2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic," in *New Perspectives on 2 Enoch*, 127.

10. Fletcher-Louis, "2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic," 128.

11. Fletcher-Louis, "2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic," 128.

Adam lost.”<sup>12</sup> He goes to lengths to demonstrate how traditions regarding Adam and associated themes run throughout the Enochic literature and other apocalypses.

Fletcher-Louis next goes on to highlight how 2 Enoch emphasizes the central place that the temple and priesthood hold in the apocalyptic texts. He notes how at the climax of Enoch’s heavenly ascent (as occurs in other contemporary apocalypses), he is installed as a high priest in the heavenly temple after being clothed and anointed by Michael, the archangel. In 1 Enoch, especially, we see the heavens structured in three tiers,<sup>13</sup> much like the three-zoned architecture of Solomon’s Temple. Interestingly, he points out that perhaps one of the reasons why 2 Enoch presents a heaven of seven levels is because by the time it was written, the Jerusalem temple complex had been divided up into “seven zones of holiness.” In either case, the earthly temple is meant to be understood as a microcosm of the universe, with God’s throne being in the highest (and most central) location. The earthly temple, in 2 Enoch, is also the place from which Enoch ascends into heaven. Another notion both 1 and 2 Enoch present is that, as Fletcher-Louis states, “the hero’s ascent to heaven defines the character of all subsequent (and legitimate) priestly service at Jerusalem in terms of apocalyptic ascent to heaven.”<sup>14</sup>

Priestly themes run throughout 2 Enoch, according to Fletcher-Louis. He refers to similarities between 2 Enoch and Ben Sira, a text that describes the priestly activities of Simon, the high priest, as he performs the temple rituals. In Ben Sira, Simon is described as going out of the Temple in procession and is depicted as “the Glory of God,” having been clothed in “garments of Glory.” He then, in some way, proceeds to make his brothers and fellow priests glorious as well. Fletcher-Louis describes what appears to take place: “There is a chain of glory: the high priest is glorified and then his fellow worshippers are glorified. Whether or not this is a theology and dramatic theme peculiar to Ben Sira, it is striking the way the same language is used in 2 Enoch where there is the expectation that Enoch’s peers ‘will be glorified’ just as he is glorified.”<sup>15</sup>

---

12. Fletcher-Louis, “2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic,” 129.

13. See discussion in Fletcher-Louis, “2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic,” 131. Compare to the LDS doctrine of the three degrees of glory (D&C 76).

14. Fletcher-Louis, “2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic,” 133.

15. Fletcher-Louis, “2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic,” 134.

This theme is also reminiscent of the content of Jesus's "intercessory prayer" in the Gospel of John. Also like Jesus, and in the manner of the high priest of the ancient temple cult, Enoch is said to be the one "who carries away the sin/s of mankind." This is also the role of Aaron in his priestly duties as described in Exodus 28:38. Fletcher-Louis sums up this section by explaining that the ancient temple is connected to the priestly features of the Enoch traditions: "The temple is a restored Eden, the priesthood and the wider worshipping community recover through the liturgy all the Glory of Adam."<sup>16</sup>

This leads Fletcher-Louis into his second major subject, the "theological anthropology" of a typical apocalypse. He describes how mankind is depicted as exalted and glorious when they are brought up to the heavenly realm. Adam is described as "a second angel, honored and great and glorious," incomparable on the earth among God's creations. When Enoch is taken up into heaven, he is given an exalted position and receives prostration from his fellows. He becomes an angelic/divine being of great glory. He sees God's glorious face and his own becomes like God's, just as God created Adam "in a facsimile of his own face." Fletcher-Louis emphasizes what we should understand from these texts and their relationship to temple and priesthood: this glory is not reserved for a privileged few who are divine mediators, but the intention is to share a message regarding "what it means to be human." Enoch declares, after his return from heaven to his own people, that although he has become glorified above the angels (Fletcher-Louis even uses the term "deification") and has been given more knowledge than they, he is still human. Fletcher-Louis essentially asserts that the notion of a gap between humans and the divine is artificial for the authors of the apocalypses. This "gap" is bridged in the traditions of humans ascending to heaven and gaining divine qualities—or, more correctly, having their divine qualities restored to them. He quotes Philip Alexander as saying: "Enoch, having perfected himself, in contrast to Adam, who sinned and fell, reascends to his heavenly home and takes his rightful place in the heights of the universe, above the highest angels. . . . Enoch thus becomes a redeemer figure—a second Adam through whom humanity is restored."<sup>17</sup>

---

16. Fletcher-Louis, "2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic," 135.

17. Fletcher-Louis, "2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic," 139, citing P. Alexander, "From Son of Adam to a Second God: Transformation of the Biblical Enoch," in *Biblical Figures Outside the Bible*, ed. M. Stone and T. Bergen (Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press, 1998), 104.



In another interesting passage of 2 Enoch, God explains to Enoch how he taught mankind from the beginning to choose the right and to love him over sin and darkness. Latter-day Saints may note that 2 Enoch 30:15–16 is very similar to a passage in the Pearl of Great Price:

And I gave him his free will, and I pointed out to him the two ways—light and darkness. And I said to him, “This is good for you, but that is bad,” so that I might come to know whether he has love toward me or abhorrence, and so that it might become plain who among his race loves me. Whereas I have come to know his nature, he does not know his own nature. That is why ignorance is more lamentable than the sin such as it is in him to sin. And I said, “after sin there is nothing for it but death.”<sup>18</sup>

One may compare this to lines in Moses 7:

The Lord said unto Enoch: Behold these thy brethren; they are the workmanship of mine own hands, and I gave unto them their knowledge, in the day I created them; and in the Garden of Eden, gave I unto man his agency; And unto thy brethren have I said, and also given commandment, that they should love one another, and that they should choose me, their Father; but behold, they are without affection, and they hate their own blood. . . . But behold, their sins shall be upon the heads of their fathers; Satan shall be their father, and misery shall be their doom; and the whole heavens shall weep over them, even all the workmanship of mine hands; wherefore should not the heavens weep, seeing these shall suffer? But behold, these which thine eyes are upon shall perish in the floods; and behold, I will shut them up; a prison have I prepared for them. (Moses 7:32–33, 37–38)

Just as the text of 2 Enoch ends with a description of the birth of Melchizedek, Fletcher-Louis ends his piece with a discussion of the parallels between Adam, Enoch, and Melchizedek. He argues that the author of 2 Enoch may have been interested in ending the document with the figure of Melchizedek, as he represents the dual-function of king and priest. He argues that the author had hope in the Melchizedek figure as the ultimate political realization—one who was a priest but who would also rule as king. The author’s “hopes are now pinned,” according to Fletcher-Louis, on the Melchizedek order, and the book ends with the expectation that this priest-king would return to rule on earth. The author holds on to the hope of Melchizedek, he argues, because Adam was known to be king but

---

18. As cited in Fletcher-Louis, “2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic,” 137.

not a priest, and Enoch was known to be priest but not a king, and so neither figure is able to fulfill the author's political and religious expectations.

Finally, I would point out that Fletcher-Louis does recognize that in the wider body of traditions surrounding the patriarchs, Adam and Enoch are both variously portrayed as being priests and kings. I think Fletcher-Louis correctly notes that the author of 2 Enoch denies them one of these positions in order to favor the superior position of Melchizedek as both priest and king. He states, "The author of 2 Enoch is thankful for the Enochic priesthood, but his hopes are now pinned on a new order; the order of Melchizedek. . . . It is the Melchizedek figure . . . whom he believes will embody the perfect political and cultic constitution."<sup>19</sup> Melchizedek has the combined traits of Adam and Enoch, is clearly defined in the Bible as both priest and king (Gen. 14), and a Melchizedekian ruler is declared to be seated at the right hand of God (Ps. 110). For the author of 2 Enoch, he embodies the human who is both royal and priestly and who becomes exalted to sit at the right hand of God—which is the true potential and nature of humankind.

Andrei Orlov's second chapter looks further at "the fallen angels traditions in 2 Enoch." Orlov treats a number of the same trends in 2 Enoch that were discussed in the previous chapter, especially the important role that Adam plays in 2 Enoch. Orlov brings up a side point that may be of interest to Latter-day Saints: in the traditions recorded in 1 Enoch, scholars have noticed a "remarkable leniency of the Enochic writers towards the mishap of the protological couple." He notes that when Adam and Eve are mentioned in these earliest Enochic texts, "they try to either ignore or 'soften' the story of their transgression and fall in the garden."<sup>20</sup> This leniency toward that first transgression stands in opposition to the remaining account in Genesis 3 and also to later traditions regarding the Fall.

Orlov presents other interesting details in 2 Enoch that go beyond what is evident in the biblical texts regarding Satan. Second Enoch presents Satan as "the prince" (compare John 12:31; Mark 3:22) of a group of rebellious angels that had previously fallen from heaven and that Enoch now sees imprisoned while on his otherworldly journey. Satan and his angels are cast out of heaven due to disobedience, but the commandment

---

19. Fletcher-Louis, "2 Enoch and the New Perspective on Apocalyptic," 148.

20. Andrei Orlov, "The Watchers of Satanail: The Fallen Angels Traditions in 2 Enoch," in *New Perspectives*, 151. Compare with LDS notions of the necessity and beneficial effects of the Fall (for instance, 2 Ne. 2:22–25; Moses 5:10–12; 6:48).

to which they are disobedient may be surprising to most readers. In 2 Enoch (and a few other apocalyptic texts that focus on Adamic traditions), Satan and his angels are cast out because they refuse to venerate Adam, whom God has created as his image. In what may be an act of reconciliation, when the fallen, imprisoned angels see Enoch, they bow down before him, recognizing him as a man (perhaps meant to reflect the Hebrew for “man,” *’adam*) of God. This act of veneration on the part of Satan’s demonic followers is intriguing in light of the fact that in both biblical and modern revelation, Satan tries to convince man to worship him (as with Jesus—the second Adam—in the Gospels, and Moses in Moses 1).<sup>21</sup>

Orlov brings up another Enoch tradition in later texts that mentions Enoch as his angelic alter ego, Metatron, who is presented as leader of the celestial worship of God. In these texts, he is repeatedly called “youth” or “the lad,” which is significant for Latter-day Saints in light of Joseph Smith’s revelation in Moses 6:31, where Enoch bows before the Lord and refers to himself pejoratively as “a lad.” This chapter by Andrei Orlov contains many more insights into the complex and intriguing way in which the authors of 2 Enoch combine ancient Enochic and Adamic traditions into a text that emphasizes the status of the patriarch Enoch as, in Orlov’s words, “a specimen of the theomorphic humanity.” Not only does Enoch become glorious like the angels, as we see in 1 Enoch, but now Enoch is portrayed as a being who is superior to the angels, the “lesser Yahweh,” the “replica of the divine body.”<sup>22</sup> He is a new Adam who has regained the glory initially given to the First Adam, and is now worthy of worship by the angels. This is the understanding of the redemption of humanity portrayed in 2 Enoch—that man can return to God and inherit his rightful place in the heavenly realm, exalted above the angels.

The second half of the book covers Adam, Enoch, and Melchizedek as mediatorial figures. A number of especially noteworthy items will be briefly treated here. John Levison’s chapter on “Adam as a Mediatorial Figure” provides an interesting discussion of traditions that regard Eden as a prototypical temple. He notes how many Jewish interpreters of the Adam and Eve story in Genesis “believed that Adam lost access to

---

21. See my review of Orlov’s book, *Dark Mirrors*, for more on this theme: David J. Larsen, Review of *Dark Mirrors* by Andrei Orlov, *BYU Studies* 52, no. 4 (2013): 171–75.

22. Orlov, “The Watchers of Satanail,” 178.

a templesque Eden or an edenic temple.”<sup>23</sup> He describes how the story of Eden in Genesis is full of allusions to the Israelite temple, as it is also in many of the Psalms. Connections between Eden and the temple can also be found in Isaiah, Ezekiel, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and other Jewish religious literature. The Book of Jubilees clearly describes Adam performing the duties of a priest and later states that Noah knew “that the garden of Eden was the holy of holies and the dwelling of the Lord.”<sup>24</sup> The book of 2 Baruch points to the idea that both the true Jerusalem (with its temple?) and Eden were taken up into heaven at the time of Adam’s transgression,<sup>25</sup> and 4 Ezra refers to an Eden that was planted and inhabited by Adam before the Earth was created. In the end times, mankind would once again be allowed to enter this supernal Jerusalem and Eden, partake of the tree of life, and gain immortality.

These traditions are also found in the Enochic literature. In 1 Enoch 24, Enoch sees the high mountain—the temple—where God’s throne is and receives the promise that the fruit of the tree of life which is there “in the house of the Lord” will once again become accessible to humans. This access brings about what the text seems to describe as the resurrection of the dead and extraordinarily long life for mortals, as in the days of the antediluvian patriarchs. Levison emphasizes in his paper the tendency in Second Temple Judaism to take what is written of Adam in scripture and apply it to refer to mankind in general.

Lester Grabbe, in “Better Watch Your Back, Adam,” emphasizes some Adamic traditions that Levison did not, especially those that deal with Adam being clothed in glory both before his fall and after his death. He talks about the image of Adam in the Testament of Abraham, enthroned in glory in heaven, rejoicing when he sees his children entering the celestial realm. He notes how 2 Enoch states that Adam was set up as a king in Eden and suggests that his enthronement in the Testament of Abraham and other texts is not simply a “post-mortem transformation but his original state in Eden” (280). He mentions how Philo understood Adam and Eve to have had glorious bodies before their fall, being much larger than normal humans and with more acute senses. After the Fall, these

---

23. John Levison, “Adam as a Mediatorial Figure in Second Temple Jewish Literature,” in *New Perspectives*, 252.

24. Levison, “Adam as a Mediatorial Figure,” 254.

25. Compare to the ideas in LDS Scripture of Enoch’s city being taken into heaven in the book of Moses, and also, arguably, Melchizedek’s “Salem” (Jerusalem?) as well (JST Gen. 14).

characteristics only gradually deteriorated over the space of many generations.<sup>26</sup> He discusses how in the text of *The Life of Adam and Eve*, Adam was clothed with glory before his fall. In the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, he continues, Adam's transgression brought death into the world, as well as illness and also "the conception of children" (279, compare 2 Ne. 2:22–23).

Johannes Magliano-Tromp, in "Adamic Traditions in 2 Enoch," reviews some similar traditions regarding the first man, focusing on the idea that Adam was initially set up to be the ruler of the world, but because of his fall, this potential would only be fulfilled by Christ at his second coming.

In the chapter "Adamic Traditions in Early Christian and Rabbinic Literature," Alexander Toepel discusses the *Apocalypse of Moses*, which, like the LDS *Book of Moses*, contains an account of the story of Adam and Eve that provides details not included in the biblical account. Eve retells the story of the Fall in greater detail, including the fact that God promised that Adam and Eve could be redeemed and would one day be resurrected and be able to finally partake of the fruit of the tree of life.<sup>27</sup> We also find an account of Adam's death, burial, and ascent into heaven. In the Latin version of *The Life of Adam and Eve*, we see the story of Adam and Eve's repentance after the Fall, including a ritual somewhat similar to baptism, where they are required to stand in the rivers Tigris and Jordan for forty days.<sup>28</sup> We also find here the explanation for why Satan decided to deceive Adam and Eve: he was outraged that he had been required by God to worship Adam as the image of God, and when he refused, he was cast out of heaven. As he begins to discuss later Christian and Rabbinic traditions, Toepel mentions that Christian authors saw Adam not only as king but also as prophet and priest. Some Christian writings depict Adam as wearing glorious and specifically priestly garments while he was living in the Garden of Eden. He discusses how Philo described Adam as the "chariot-driver" and "vice-regent" of God and how the animals (which may actually be a reference to the angels as created beings) worshipped Adam after his creation.

Eric Mason provides a broad survey of ancient Jewish texts that mention the figure of Melchizedek in "Melchizedek Traditions in Second Temple Judaism." This is a great paper for anyone who wants a brief

---

26. Which could be seen as an explanation for the longevity of the prediluvian patriarchs; also compare Ether 15:26; Mosiah 8:10.

27. Compare Adam and Eve discussing their fall in Moses 5.

28. Compare Moses 6:64–68.

overview of almost everything that has been said about Melchizedek in all of ancient literature.<sup>29</sup> Mason raises the point that whereas much of Jewish literature discusses Melchizedek using Genesis 14 and his meeting with Abraham as their source, the Qumran texts tend to use the mention of his name in Psalm 110:4 to depict him as a human high priest who has been exalted to sit at the right hand of God. Some texts may describe him as the leader of the angelic priesthood and as instrumental in the great battle of the last days. Divorah Dimant's paper discusses how it is not hard to see why the author of Hebrews in the New Testament would have seen it appropriate to compare Melchizedek to Jesus Christ. Charles Gieschen, Daphna Arbel, and others likewise provide very informative discussions of the Melchizedek traditions, which should be of great interest for Latter-day Saint readers.

This review has been similar to picking at a smorgasbord of delicious tidbits rather than a full-course meal. Hopefully a taste of what this marvelous volume has to offer will be enough to entice Latter-day Saints readers to engage with the volume itself. Although this book presents complex material of the highest scholarly quality, I have no reluctance in recommending it to readers of any level who have an interest in learning more about ancient traditions regarding these early biblical figures.

Extrabiblical texts like 2 Enoch have much to offer anyone fascinated by the figures of Adam, Enoch, and Melchizedek. Because of their importance to the revelations of the Restoration, LDS readers will find here many details of particular interest. However, all people are free to consider how Joseph Smith, without access to these accounts, produced translations with so many striking convergences to these ancient texts.

---

David J. Larsen is an adjunct professor for the Department of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University and is a BYU Studies research fellow. He received his PhD in divinity/biblical studies from the University of St. Andrews, his MA in biblical theology from Marquette University (where his academic advisor was Andrei A. Orlov), and a BA in Near Eastern studies from BYU. His scholarly interests include temple studies, apocalyptic writings, and pseudepigrapha. He currently resides in Springville, Utah, with his wife and their five children.

---

29. To this may be added John W. Welch, "The Melchizedek Material in Alma 13," in *By Study and Also By Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on His 80th Birthday*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and John M. Lundquist, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 2:238–72.

*For Zion: A Mormon Theology of Hope*, by Joseph M. Spencer (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2014)

In this book, Joseph Spencer uses the differences between the original manuscript and the published text of Doctrine and Covenants 42 to argue that the law of consecration is neither a bygone utopian dream nor a future demand that we are not yet qualified to live. It is a law for today, “an outline of exactly how we as Saints are to live right now, wherever we are” (105).

Before delving into the Doctrine and Covenants, however, Spencer spends the first half of his discourse anchoring his ideas in the New Testament. He then bridges these ideas to the present time by way of the Book of Mormon. This approach sets his book apart from those that focus on the law of consecration only through more recent history and nineteenth-century revelations. As he explores these three separate standard works, Spencer broadly links previously discrete topics including the law of consecration, the redemption of Israel, and the theology of hope.

Spencer’s exegesis lends insight to the parallel between the law of consecration and the virtue of hope. Readers who imagined that hope was a secondary virtue will here learn of its central importance in the law of consecration—which, as Spencer sees it, is central to the gospel in all dispensations. For humans, hope is an active focus on the perfection that only God can envision for our world. When humans focus on this perfection rather than on objects of desire, they work with God in an “experimental, exploratory” way to bring previously unanticipated perfections to reality (53). Hope grows from faith and leads to love.

Spencer’s discussion is more philosophical than practical, as he signals

early on: “The task I have appointed myself in writing this book is not to determine the way forward; instead, it is simply and solely to *clarify the stakes* of moving forward” (x). Throughout the book, Spencer outlines several important concepts, including the definition of a steward and how it has evolved over time, the many types of hope (faithful, desperate, objective, subjective), and the time of hope (it was not only in Paul’s day; it is now). He also discusses the disconnect between ownership and use. On this subject he joins a conversation that popes and Franciscan monks have held in turn. His conclusion builds on the writings of Hugh Nibley and Steven C. Harper, but he adds an enlightening twist by applying ideas from Giorgio Agamben’s *The Highest Poverty: Monastic Rules and Form-of-Life* (2013).

Memorably, Spencer dispels any accusations that the United Order was holy pre-Marxist communism by making an astute connection: in many ways, the United Order resembled an earlier Christian monastic order. Both of those religious orders were established so that members could “live together in love” (D&C 40:45), the economic consequences following only naturally. Both required that their members give up all private claims to their material wealth before joining, “let all [their] garments be plain” (D&C 42:40), and live a law of chastity. And both promised to “cast out” (D&C 42:20) any unrepentant sinners. In its simplest form, Spencer’s overall message is that Latter-day Saints must “remember the poor” (D&C 42:30). In the end, he foregoes any opportunity to list practical applications, but he makes it clear that now is the time for action and that no one can do our consecrating for us.

Spencer writes conversationally, with a structure that is at once flowing and complex. His argument is well

formulated and his conclusion is earnest. Those interested in and familiar with Mormon theology will find this a refreshing read, while the uninitiated may struggle with the sometimes-intense philosophical web weaving. Either way, Spencer's book adds freshness and credibility to the literature, and his contribution to this topic is noteworthy.

—Lauren McCombs

*Plain and Precious Things*, by D. John Butler (N.p.: D. John Butler, 2012).

D. John Butler received his law degree from New York University and currently practices law in Idaho. He is also a fiction writer and the author of *The Goodness and the Mysteries: On the Path of the Book of Mormon's Visionary Men*. In *Plain and Precious Things*, Butler casts the beginning of the Book of Mormon in a specific light: Lehi and Nephi as spiritual outsiders looking in on a corrupt Jerusalem. According to Butler, Nephi and Lehi's teachings contradict many of the Jewish doctrines in Jerusalem that are described in the latter part of 2 Kings.

Josiah was the king of Judah and a contemporary to Lehi, and although the Old Testament generally implies in its history that Josiah's reforms are positive, Butler shows, through the lives and visions of Nephi and Lehi, that many of those reforms were corrupt and contributed to Jerusalem's destruction.

Butler takes Nephi at his word about his writings: they were written to restore the "plain and precious things" that had been removed from Hebrew scripture and temple practices. In particular, Lehi's dream and Nephi's vision can be seen as temple visions that corrected and transcended the practices found in Jerusalem's temple. Scholars in biblical studies, particularly Margaret Barker

in *The Older Testament*, have taken a critical look at Josiah's influence and the changes he made to the Jewish temple and religion. Butler's argument is similar, except it is taken from the Book of Mormon and shows 1 Nephi's tree of life visions in the context of the temple—a perspective most readers may not have considered.

Those interested in temple studies will find *Plain and Precious Things* particularly interesting, but any Latter-day Saint will enjoy this book because of its straightforward style and singular interpretation. Butler guides readers through some complex reasoning in a way that is friendly both to lay readers and those who study the temple from a scholarly perspective. This book encourages readers to think deeply and discover new layers of meaning about the temple and tree of life, along with considering the inexhaustible richness of the Book of Mormon.

—Lexi Devenport

*Nauvoo & Hancock County, Illinois: A Guide to Family History and Historical Sources*, by Kip Sperry. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 2014.

For over a century, the LDS and RLDS (now Community of Christ) churches have had an interest in Nauvoo and Hancock County. Among Latter-day Saints, the Nauvoo period is seen as a kind of religious renaissance. It was there that Joseph Smith organized the Relief Society, clarified the nature of the temple and vicarious work for the dead, and forever altered the cosmological view of the Saints through sermons like the King Follett discourse. With so much interest today in what happened 170 years ago on the banks of the Mississippi, Kip Sperry's *A Guide to Family History and Historical Sources* in



Nauvoo will surely be of great value to family historians and scholars for years to come. Sperry is a well-known family historian who has published and presented on numerous family history topics. He is currently Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University, where he specializes in family history. Sperry has collected all the disparate resources on Nauvoo into one place, creating a gargantuan volume that sets out to be “a guide to many articles and books that have been published describing various aspects of family history and historical research” related to Nauvoo and western Illinois (viii).

The book is divided into five chapters. The first is a nice historical overview of the significance of Nauvoo to the Restoration traditions. The second chapter then provides an eighty-six-page chronology on the history of Nauvoo, beginning with the inclusion of Illinois in the Northwest Territory in 1787 and continuing to the present day; here there is particular emphasis on the growth of the LDS Church and also on the growth of the Community of Christ. Family historians will enjoy chapter 3,

because it contains almost 170 pages of research strategies for finding information related to Nauvoo ancestors. This chapter is the meat of the book, with over fifty sections devoted to particular resources and resource types, from diaries and gazetteers to patriarchal blessings and tax records. Each of these sections then reviews the resource type and where those resources can be found in various libraries and repositories. Church historians will be delighted by chapter 4, which has a 140-page bibliography of sources related to Nauvoo and Church history. They will also be delighted by chapter 5 and the appendices, which contain over 200 pages of information on historical repositories, maps, and even a short entry on the Icarian movement (a group of French utopians who settled in Hancock County after the Latter-day Saints went west). Readers less familiar with post-Mormon Period Nauvoo will enjoy learning about other immigrant groups who settled in Hancock County and about major events in the development of the Community of Christ and Emma Hale Smith Bidamon’s involvement.

—Gerrit van Dyk