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Truth, Sin, Guilt, Punishment, and Redemption
Victor L. Brown, Jr.

One half of the Welfare Services Department in the church today consists of personal welfare, or as you'll be seeing Saturday morning, the elements of family preparedness. More pertinent to this particular group here today, I think you are going to see the coming of the age of social-emotional matters as a fully developed integral part of the church effort. I am quite excited about that, and excited about personal welfare. You will be interested that yesterday we had many meetings all day long with church leaders from Europe and South America, and their major request was not exclusively for what we now call the production-distribution part of Welfare Services--that is, the traditional welfare of commodities and food and clothing and so on--but also for the personal welfare part. And so there is, as Brother Broderick said yesterday, a new day, to some extent, in the Church. I'll speak to that in a moment.

I was assigned the topic of "Sin, Guilt, and Punishment." I have taken the liberty of adding two words at each end. I would like to start off discussing truth and end up discussing redemption. I will react a little to what Brother Broderick said yesterday because I found it thought provoking, honest, and entertaining to say the least. I think that one of his themes, which is one of my themes, is that the Mormon professional--if that person feels that he or she is identified with the church--has a basic built-in dilemma or challenge, depending on your viewpoint, concerning your frame of reference as you practice your profession.

Truth. I believe in gospel terms that we are faced squarely with the issue of truth. How, I don't know how many of you remember (and I am finding that some of the things I remember are dating me) a radio program called, "The Greatest Story Ever Told." Listening to that program, one day for some reason I was deeply impressed with a particular program where the Savior confronted Pilate or Pilate confronted the Savior--I don't remember which--but Pilate was questioning the Savior. This was before the Savior had been to the Jewish leaders and it was obvious that Pilate was seriously struggling at this point. Pilate said to Jesus, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. . ." Pilate then asked with a meaning that has haunted mankind ever since, "What is truth?" (John 18:37-38)

Well, that stuck with me over the years and caused a personal search for truth, and I found that to be an employee of the Church in my particular capacity, I have had to search for truth in some ways that I never intended to. It has been a stimulating search, to say the least. I have also found, contrary to my expectations, and I have to admit this, that the Church as an institution--the administrative church that I am involved with, is an open system. I was surprised because I had grown up with some of the stereotypes that circulate particularly in this community, the Salt Lake Valley. I am not a native of the Salt Lake Valley, but coming here I think I have been struck by how fierce the debate rages at times about the church. There seems to be a constant ferment as to whether or not the church is an acceptable institution to certain people. I have found that the openness and the willingness of the Brethren to consider new ideas, new methods, and new approaches to helping people is almost frightening. Because they are so willing, there is a great weight of responsibility on the person who chooses to recommend some of those changes or some of those modifications. As we have ventured over the past several years at their invitation to develop, first, social services and now, the overall organization of personal welfare services, there has been no opposition. In fact, there has been so much support and encouragement that it has been difficult to keep up with the expectations of the Brethren. In this openness, however, we need to remember that there is a parameter, a frame of reference, and I find it unique.

When I was at a university in a nearby state, I was given a very unstructured assignment with a liberal budget to develop some programs, and we developed them successfully. But I found no guidelines, no parameters; even the budget wasn't particularly limited. Moving into the church setting, I found some definite parameters. How does this square with my statements about openness? I have found that the parameters are basic truths. That is, there are certain revealed absolutes, and when we reach the point where we are considering an issue, those absolutes must not be gone beyond. If a person finds that constraining or difficult to live by, then that person has a serious challenge as a professional within the church. I for one have not been frustrated by that. I have often been frustrated by my own inability to express what I know to be correct in language that might be more easily understood by others, especially Church officers who are not necessarily familiar with my profession.

To give you an example, I am going to refer throughout this talk to homosexuality. Homosexuality is an example of a human problem about which the church is much more open, frankly, than most homosexuals, (or that gross misnomer, "the gay community") understand. At the same
time I hope to demonstrate that there are some absolutes that we might call truth. Dr. Harry Gershman, from the Hornery Institute, in a recent discussion about homosexuality, says this, (I don't know much about Dr. Gershman, but I had the feeling just from listening to him that he is a compassionate and warm man, and apparently successful) "Homosexuality, transsexuality, transvestism, and exhibitionism are deviations that are observable in people who have failed to integrate their gender identity." Dr. Gershman goes on to say, "As a therapist of human beings who are in emotional difficulties, my main goal is to help them overcome these neurotic difficulties. To change their sexual orientation is way down on the list of my objectives." (Audio-Digest, Psychiatry, Vol. 4 #16, Aug. 25, 1975)

Dr. Gershman's main thesis is that homosexuality is a sexual gender confusion in the midst of basic and overall neurotic difficulties. And so he says that in his therapy, his hope is to resolve the neurotic difficulties, but if the person has no basic desire to deal with his sexual confusion then Dr. Gershman doesn't really deal with it.

I would suggest that is a very different view compared to the statement in the priesthood bulletin: "A homosexual relationship is viewed by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as sin, in the same degree as adultery and fornication. According to God's revealed word the only acceptable relationship occurs in a family between a man and wife. Homosexuality runs counter to these divine objectives and therefore is to be avoided and forsaken. Church members involved to any degree must repent." Now that is an absolute. There is no ambivalence in that statement, although many have tried to interpret it expediently, just as they have tried to interpret the First Presidency statement on abortion as ambivalent.

I would like to suggest another thing that is frankly a question in my mind. It is not a question as to the outcome; it is a question as to how to find the truth in the methods we use to help people. Some people feel there is evidence that masturbation therapy is "effective" with some homosexuals. There is no denying that if a person is already masturbating you are relieved of the moral responsibility of suggesting the behavior, and if you can suggest to him that he would fantasize about members of the opposite sex while he is engaged in that behavior, you have an interesting process that results in some change. I can't believe, though, that this is the valid process; it doesn't check out. It doesn't check out professionally and it doesn't check out doctrinely. There is some change mechanism occurring which we want to find out more about which can be utilized so that the ends are consistent with the means. Therefore, in a way that I am sure to be misunderstood by a non-LDS professional group, we are constrained voluntarily. We choose to be constrained within the bounds of acceptable means to achieve certain ends, and, therefore, at this point, with no particular evidence except our own testimonies, we reject masturbation therapy as a valid approach.

Sin. Now in regard to sin, if truth is an absolute, then violating truth brings us to the subject of sin. I would suggest that the LDS practitioner doesn't have the luxury of being subjective about sin. President Kimball is rather forthright, as you know. In taking the theme of the Lord in the first Section of the Doctrine and Covenants, wherein the Lord says, "For I, the Lord, cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance," President Kimball says in the Miracle of Forgiveness: "If adultery or fornication (and I say parenthetically, homosexuality, because it squares with the First Presidency statement) justified the death penalty in the old days, is the sin any less today because the laws of the land do not access death penalty for it? Is the act less grievous? There must be a washing, a purging, a changing of attitudes, a strengthening towards self-mastering. There must be many prayers and volumes of tears. There must be more than verbal acknowledgement. There must be an inner conviction giving to the sin its full diabolical weight, a feeling like, 'My sins are disgusting and loathsome.' One would come to think about his baser sins like the psalmist who used these words: 'My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness.'" (p. 155) That is strong language; that is rather plain; that is a statement of value. It is an emotionally laden statement. It states the issue squarely and I think rather powerfully. I am sure it would offend many. Dr. Karl Menninger, in Whatever Became of Sin, (I realize that it is not a secular version of Mormon Doctrine by any means) questions some of the implications of our modern amoral value system. "In all of the lamentations and reproaches made by our seers and prophets today, compared to the Old Testament and Biblical prophets one misses any mention of sin, a word which used to be a variable watchword for prophets. The word 'sin,' which seems to have disappeared, was a proud word." (p. 14) "I believe there is sin, which is expressed in ways which cannot be subsumed under verbal artifacts such as crime, disease, delinquency, and deviancy: There is immorality, there is unethical behavior and there is wrong doing." (p. 46)

The President of the American Psychological Association gave a speech recently which was reported in Time and Newsweek in which he wondered if the trend of therapists and behavioral people over the past several decades of tending to totally disregard and even attack religious beliefs was warranted. He went further and even supported some of these beliefs. I'll be interested to see the talk in its completeness.

At this point, what I am suggesting for the Latter-day Saint therapist is that he or she has to grapple with the fact that there is truth; there are absolutes and that the violation of those absolutes constitutes sin—not sickness, nor error, but sin (along with which there may be sickness, error, or confusion).

Guilt. I would like now to talk about guilt. There seem to me, as I work with LDS clients, to be three types of guilt: immobilizing
guilt, extenuating or rationalizing guilt, and therapeutic guilt.

Immobilizing guilt can be represented (again following this theme of homosexual behavior) by Brother J, as we will call him, who lives in a South American country. He is a returned missionary who is married. I don't know if they have a child now, but especially considering his family background and where he lives in South America, he has made a strong effort to be an effective member of the church. However, he is plagued with homosexual fantasies. He is not so much overt as he is covertly obsessed with it, and he writes periodically and seeks help from us. He has written the Brethren often. He is nearly immobilized by his guilt. He reaches this point not because he is acting out of guilt but because he is so filled with a sense of guilt he just slowly grinds to a halt, at which point he finds himself right now, according to his last letter.

Then there is extenuating or rationalized guilt. I had a unique experience in this regard with a person who wished to have an operation to change his sex. He was a returned missionary, a father, and an extremely capable, talented individual. He went to President Kimball and spent many sessions with him. (I am just astounded at how much time President Kimball gives to individuals.) Anyway, he went to President Kimball and over a period of several months to other church leaders throughout the western United States. It was quite a saga as he went from community to community seeking answers. He indicated that he had been obsessed with these attitudes, although he had never acted out, over the majority of his lifetime. When I met him he told me this story of 25 or 30 years of struggling with this issue. I was sort of overwhelmed with what a great fellow he was. I thought it showed tremendous strength to have never given in. He finally reached the crisis point where he just couldn't continue any further. His wife had divorced him. He had lost his children and he was broke. He was a high living person which hurt him a lot. He was, at that point, where he had to do something. So President Kimball, in his special Christianity, arranged for a blessing from President Lee, and I was privileged to be part of the circle. But before President Lee gave the blessing he spent twenty minutes rebuking the man in a kind but firm way. I confess, I sat there and thought, "President Lee, you don't understand. This is a strong fellow. He had made a magnificent effort."

I was bright enough, though, not to say anything. Then President Lee gave the blessing and rebuked him a little further. It was a beautiful blessing. He made specific promises. Then we went up to President Kimball's office and President Kimball gave him specific instructions. President Kimball didn't interfere with his free agency. He said, "I'll be able to help you if you will do these several things," and he listed them. While I was there, President Kimball called a stake president in another city and arranged for an appointment for the man. As we were leaving President Kimball's office, I was still a little concerned about President Lee's approach. However, I watched this man over the next 3 years and I watched his former wife's life and the children. I came to know her very well. They were from another state, but circumstances brought us together. I found, of course, that President Lee was inspired; he was absolutely correct. This man had put up what might be called a commendable struggle, but he was so turned inward and had become so self-focused that he could not think of anyone else but himself. And then a lot of other things began to make sense. I helped him move once, and I had helped him pack his clothing. He wore clothes that I could never afford. His indulgence in himself in every way was total to the exclusion of his very attractive and loving wife and his lovely children—-to the exclusion of any consideration, frankly, except his need to assume the woman's role, so that he could be taken care of. He had no real homosexual tendencies. He was just self-centered. There was no psychological or emotional justification for the change of sex, and President Lee had seen that as an inspired Priesthood leader. This brother had been able to assume guilt almost in a secondary-gain way and had been able to camouflage himself and to me the real reason for his guilt; it was extenuating or rationalized guilt.

Now, as to therapeutic guilt, may I read to you excerpts from two letters from homosexuals. One of these folks has been "straight" for about ten years and the other for about two years.

"My late teens and early twenties consisted of a great deal of vacillation back and forth between these two beliefs: that is, homosexuality and heterosexuality. Unfortunately, my strong desire for sexual contact always won out for my good intentions. I made no progress toward overcoming the problem. I think part of the reason was that I had not been honest. I had not really come to grips enough to courageously admit that what I had was a problem. I had been trying as hard to justify it as to overcome it. The first step for someone as deeply involved as I was, was to be honest enough to admit their problem, and forget all the hogwash that one hears and reads. For no matter how cleverly said or written the issue of morality is still plainly ignored and it cannot be. Like it or not, the moral question is there, and it matters most of all. I have to say that the turning point came when I read the chapter on homosexuality in President Kimball's The Miracle of Forgiveness. When I finished, I knew that things could never be the same again."

The following letter is from a brother that some of you would know. He has since held some responsible Priesthood positions.

"Five years ago, the spirit turned my scrutiny inward and what I saw sickened me. I saw a rebellious son
of a Heavenly Father, an ingrate steeped in wickedness, filthiness and self-indulgence. I saw a rebellious son of noble earthly parents, a prodigal unworthy of their esteemed name. No wonder I was sickened, but there was still more. I saw a faithless husband, and father whose acts, were they his companion’s or his children’s would surely have broken even his flinty heart. Summarily, I saw the face of evil on one whose heritage had been full of life. That is an ugly picture and it struck terror in my heart. Where could it lead but to destruction of self and others, and to eventual rejection of and by my precious family. Believe me, I know something about the despair of outer darkness. I have been on its fringe.”

I would suggest based on their lives and the evidence, the long range evidence in one case, and good short range evidence in the other, that this was therapeutic guilt. This can lead to an effective change.

Punishment. If there is true sin and guilt, then there must be consequences. That is what we call punishment. I would suggest again that to understand punishment in our situation as Mormon professionals, we have to understand the gospel. I don't think the gospel in regard to punishment is clearly understood. Let me read what seems to be two paradoxical scriptures. One refers to the telestial degree of glory, which by our doctrine we know is not the place that we really want to go. Nevertheless, it says in Doctrine and Covenants Section 76, verse 89: “and thus we [Joseph Smith and his associates] saw in heavenly vision the glory of the telestial which surpasses all understanding.” Then referring to what people in the telestial kingdom will do, they shall be servants of the most high.” (D & C 77:112)

Now, that is a rather wonderful blessing, to be in a glory that surpasses this world or any man’s understanding. At the same time, in the 19th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants, this is what is said about punishment specifically:

“For behold the mystery of Godliness, how great is it. For behold I am endless, and the punishment which is given from my hand is endless punishment, for Endless is my name, wherefore Eternal Punishment is God’s punishment. Endless punishment is God’s punishment.” (D & C 19:10-12)

The scriptures, especially as the Bible has been interpreted by certain folks, have always tended to be understood very harshly, especially in regard to punishment and the fate of the sinner. That interpretation continues today even within the church sometimes to the extent where some people who are very sensitive to the human condition they must reject this incorrect Calvinist approach to God’s judgment. If these people choose to study the gospel carefully enough, however, they will recognize that the Lord’s plan of punishment is actually a way to help people change. It is a means to an end, and the correct means.

I remember very vividly one of those situations where you do what you think you should do at the moment. We all have choices to make in our therapy. This was one of those situations where I really seriously wondered after the event whether I had made an error by substituting ecclesiastical for professional principles, but I learned by lesson. A bishop and I were interviewing a girl who was heavily involved with homosexual behavior. We had prayer, and then after the prayer the bishop turned to me (he is one of those wonderful bishops who is too modest and tended, unfortunately, to defer to professionals) and said, “Brother Brown, please tell Sister what is expected of her.” And so I turned to her, not as a social worker, but as a brother in the gospel and holder of the Priesthood, and I rebuked her. I said, “If you don’t repent I am going to demand that the bishop hold a court on you. I can’t influence the outcome but I will suggest that there is no alternative but excommunication.”

She started crying, escalated to hysteria, and ran out of the building. I had mixed emotions at that point to say the least. She went and drove off at a high rate of speed. I was admittedly shaken. I was afraid not so much of the emotion as I was afraid that I tipped her over the edge because she really did have a serious dilemma. She was about 25, from a small community. Well, eventually she came back and we worked on the problem. Today, three years later, her thoughts, feelings, emotions, and attitudes are still with her, but she is making progress that I didn’t think possible. She is a full tithe payer. She is supporting herself. She has a church calling. She is not “cured” by any means, but her behavior is modified by the confrontation around gospel discipline. She knows very well there is a day of reckoning. We have discussed it plainly with no ambivalence, that there is a day when she must become clean; she must pay the price for what she has done. However, the price she must pay is that “rite of passage,” repentance, that leads to the peace of mind that she seeks which is, in doctrinal terms, Eternal Life.

Redemption. Now may I read a couple of statements here, one by a homosexual and one by President Kimball, as an indication of what we need to remember as we talk about the other side of punishment—redemption.

From the man who was homosexuality involved:

“The change did not come about rapidly nor without some backsliding, but it did come. It is still in progress. The attraction for women grows stronger and the attraction for those of my own sex diminishes. The ultimate result of long, sometimes frustrating months came about when my wife and I were sealed together in a temple marriage. It has been a beautiful marriage. It has been fun. The sexual relationship has been extremely
enjoyable for both of us and very fulfilling. I know for sure now, that the power is there to change. My wife and I are anxiously awaiting the birth of our first child and this too gives me confidence and strength. My main regret is all the years I wasted listening to the paper and dribble that the world is so full of in regards to homosexuality, and I am grateful that I have found in the church positive, strong and effective ways."

President Kimball in The Miracle of Forgiveness tells some stories about folks who have come to him after many years of sin and repentance. He tells about one sister who came up to him in a conference and said, "Do you remember me?" He said, "No." She was so relieved that he didn't remember her (and I can testify that he remembers many things) and so it was significant that he didn't remember her because it meant to her that she was forgiven. At least, it validated that in her mind. She softly said as she left, "I have hoped and yearned and prayed for the assurance that the Lord had totally forgiven me and forgotten my transgressions, and now that you remember neither me nor my sins, my hope has soared. Do you think my Savior may also have forgotten my errors?" (See pages 342-3) And then President Kimball concludes his book. "What relief! What comfort! Those laden with transgressions and sorrows and sin, may be forgiven and cleansed and purified, if they will return to their Lord, learn of Him and keep His commandments. And all of us needing to repent of day-to-day follies and weaknesses can likewise share in this miracle. Can you not understand why the Lord has been pleading with men for these thousands of years to come unto Him? Surely the Lord was speaking about forgiveness through repentance, and the relief that could come from the tenseness of guilt when He followed His glorious prayer to His Father with a sublime entreaty and promise. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Then President Kimball concludes, "It is my hope and prayer that men everywhere will respond to this gentle invitation and thus let the Master work in their individual lives the great miracle of forgiveness." (p. 368)

What I'm trying to say, brothers and sisters, is that clinically speaking, not to mention doctrinally speaking, or by witness of the Spirit, there is a valid process which we alone in all the world understand, and it really does involve all the elements of truth, sin, guilt, punishment, and redemption. If we leave any of those elements out, we deny a client or friend or someone with whom we might have ecclesiastical relationship, true fulfillment. If we as professionals feel somehow we have discovered something the Lord overlooked when He created us or when He revealed the truth about our behavior or at least how we ought to be, then I would suggest we are on a dangerous track.

I want to say one thing about President Kimball. He deserves the support of this particular group, not because he needs it to succeed but because the people we work with need it. Especially in the homosexual community he has been misunderstood. They have taken advantage of him. I am sure some of you know people who abuse the President's willingness to see them, to perpetuate themselves in their behavior while having his cloak over them, protecting themselves from church action. President Kimball doesn't want a purge to occur, he wants the sinners of the church to repent. I've been with him when he has been criticized. He is willing to risk patience and mercy and work with those who deviate from gospel behavioral standards, so long as they are willing to work and make the effort to change. President Kimball has no desire to make a public issue, especially of sexual sins such as homosexuality. He has told me on several occasions that he recognized that publicizing that particular sin pretty well cuts a person off from meaningful change in the Church. It makes it almost impossible to be accepted again in the ward or the quorum, if there is too much publicity. All he wants is these folks to work it out, but coming up against that absolute truth, the Church must be protected. It is a sin. It is an excommunicable sin to disgrace the name of the Church. That is wrong. We cannot get away with some of the things we do and still call ourselves Mormons. It disgraces the name of Jesus Christ because that is the name of His Church. Therefore, some who will be deviant and remain so must make a choice between the church and their life style.

The other thing I would suggest is this. I wouldn't be overly impressed with how much acceptance the behavioral or social sciences are getting in the Church. The main reason for attention to human needs is because the Brethren are receiving revelation, not because we are doing anything all that good. I hope that doesn't come as too much of a shock. There is still a lot of suspicion and much of the suspicion is based on fact.

Most of us remember the occasion at General Conference when a statement was made over the pulpit about group therapy and so on. That was based on an actual event, or actual series of events. It was some--for lack of a better term--foolish, unethical, dishonest, etc., etc., work that was done by certain individuals, members of the church. I saw some of their clients down there. They had destroyed people and families. They had gone beyond the bounds. And so the Brethren rightly reacted and were concerned about some of these "flaky people" who called themselves professionals. Now, every time we have a meeting with the Brethren, in our capacity in Personal Welfare and Social Services, and they agree to let us do something out in the church, I always wonder, "Now, how is so and so going to handle this?" I am not insulated from the professional world, and I know this therapist in Los Angeles and that practitioner up in Seattle, and I know they are good Mormons. I also know that when they get in the clinical setting, they are a little ambivalent about what comes first. I know because I hear the reports with intensity, when some priesthood leader calls upon one of these folks to be of some help and they then do something that is a little odd. If it is not immoral, or unethical, it's dumb, and maybe that is the
greatest sin. You know, you can almost admire a brilliant crook, but dumb crooks . . .?

At least, at the very least, let's be competent in whatever we choose to do, and if it is wrong, be competent in it. At least then there is something specific to deal with and correct. I am really serious about this, because the Brethren are willing to do any righteous thing they can to help the Saints work out their salvation. As the Welfare Services of the Church expand and the social-emotional aspects of life are opened up, we are going to need mature, stable gospel professionals to do the work and to be the resource people.

I want to give you an example where Latter-day Saints who are in the profession are not thinking the way they must. A very fine therapist, one whom I respect, came to me recently. He was young in the work, yet but nonetheless, an outstanding individual. He said, "We've got to help the people with sexual problems." I said, "Fine. What do you propose to do?" He said, "I'm going to adapt Masters and Johnson." I said, "Oh, hell you are." I quoted myself here correctly. And an intense discussion ensued. He not only was going to, he had already done it. He had already gone out and taught some priesthood leaders Masters and Johnson in the name of the Church. I asked him what he had taught about Masters and Johnson, and he said, "Oh, I didn't teach them everything." I guess he meant he didn't show the films or use surrogates. He said, "We dealt with sensitization ... and pleasure . . ." I said, "What does that have to do with the Lord's plan?" He said, "Well, I hadn't thought about that. I was just thinking about my therapy." We went on, and I defined him to identify where the Lord has said that sexual technique, sexual stimulation or sexual experimentation is a foundation stone of a successful marriage. It may be a contributing factor to, or a symptom of a happy relationship, but the degree of sexual skill that is being taught by the world has no place in any doctrine or practice that the Church sponsors. I know that is offensive to some people, and it is probably offensive to some people in this room, but if we had long enough, I don't think I would have any trouble defending it. We have given this extensive consideration and discussed it with the Presiding Bishopric and the First Presidency extensively, in detail, candidly. If you read President Kimball's talks more carefully than some people do, you will see him instructing us this way. Look at his opening address of last June Conference. There is a paragraph in there about the married sexual relationship that's revolutionary to certain people, and he knew he was putting it in, and he put it in with courage because there are some who would not agree. I know a lot of people who have been pleading with the Church to come out with a statement and a priesthood bulletin or some other publicity-oriented way to say something like that. Well, the prophet said it. But he didn't say that Masters and Johnson or anything like them is the answer for Latter-day Saint marriages.

Now I'm pleading--I really am pleading--that as we do our work, we take, as the Prophet Joseph Smith said, that which is good and praiseworthy from what we know, and pass it through the screen of gospel doctrine and the whisperings of the Spirit. If it isn't clear, then go to a proper priesthood authority and get the answer, and then practice that. I don't have any control over what you would do in your private work. I hope I never do and I certainly don't want to, but I will say this as a bit of a promise. Any professional helping person who tries to "do their thing" when it is not consistent with the gospel will, of necessity, be challenged by us. We want to help the people. We want to help the Church. We want the leadership of this Church--mainly the bishops and stake presidencies--to become comfortable with the whole range of human behavior, so that rather than being shocked and offended, they can be understanding and helpful. Instead of wanting to hold a court immediately, just to punish, they can take into account the whole continuum of the helping and change process, and know that they can call upon folks like you to give them essential and crucial input. That's one of our goals, and pertains to my invitation.

We really hope that on two levels you will make yourselves useful to the Church. On the local level, we hope that you will be available and be in good standing, so that the bishop or the stake president can use you. On the general level, we have what we call a Planning and Training Department. Please send them at 50 East North Temple any ideas you want them to know and tell them about things you feel are pertinent to the work. We plead for it, we welcome it. This, of course, does not mean manuscripts for publishing. Those should go directly to the editor.

I have a testimony of the overriding truth of the gospel and the openness and inspiration of the Brethren who lead this Church. I bear that witness to you, mainly because I know it is true, but also because I want you to be warned. I have been in that situation and have seen the professional and ecclesiastical worlds. There is a harmony if we are willing to allow it to be. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Moses 6:56 — And it is given unto them to know good from evil, wherefore they are agents unto themselves . . .

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