

# The Search for Virtus et Veritas through an Inspired Scientific Method

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The idea of developing academic excellence on the basis of both *virtus* and *veritas*—virtue and truth—though not entirely a new idea, would probably present a challenge to most institutions of higher learning in the modern world. Many in the scientific community of today are proud to claim that their science is free of values. The paradigms of science, they insist, must be the very essence of objectivity. Thus, academic secularism, an orientation that excludes moral considerations in the search for truth, has become a standard in modern intellectual centers.

There are those, however, for whom academic excellence is not really possible unless morality and truth become the purpose of and incentive for all intellectual achievement.<sup>1</sup> In recent years, for example, we have seen the establishment of (or the pressure to establish) non-LDS religious sessions in several scientific and professional association meetings around the country. Some scholars even go so far as to suggest that all scientific research, at least in the Western world, should take into consideration our Judeo-Christian tradition.

In this article we attempt to show that, because all paradigms are based on *assumptions* (which, by definition, reflect individual values and therefore some degree of subjectivity), the scientific method does not totally eliminate all subjectivity, and simply to deny this subjective component is not a proper solution. A better solution would be to acknowledge assumptions explicitly, select them carefully, and understand their complementary function in all the processes of all scientific method.

Recently, some philosophers, scientists, and professionals have challenged the idea that using the scientific method guarantees utmost objectivity. Michael Polanyi, for example, claims that “the ideal of strict objectivism is absurd,” suggesting that subjectivity comes into the scientific method through “tacit knowing,” a knowledge we are only “subsidiarily aware” of. When this tacit knowledge fuses with

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our objective knowledge, it becomes our “personal knowledge” and our “intellectual commitment.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Thomas S. Kuhn sees subjectivity as an integral part of the development of scientific paradigms because new theoretical models typically emerge in response to recent societal trends and new hierarchies of values.<sup>3</sup> This is why new paradigms typically give rise to great emotional furor. This emotionalism, of course, is related to the explicit or implicit criticisms of old models by new ones. It is also related to the threat to the vested interests accumulated by the scientific community over time. But above all, theoretical controversies are heated and emotional because they are centered upon the legitimacy of the different subjective assumptions made by the theories involved. Thus because theoretical models manifest the values of their proponents, they represent a lot of emotional commitment and faith. And because their acceptance depends more on the values they imply than on their ability to explain and predict, they require extensive and persuasive arguments and counterarguments.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE DUALISM OF VIRTUS ET VERITAS

Paradigms that are created mostly by the deductive thought process are, by definition, subjective and value-laden (particularly in the social sciences).<sup>5</sup> This subjectivity, however, can be largely (but never entirely) controlled by inductive (objective and rational) observation. If we associate *virtus* with deductive (subjective) thinking and *veritas* with inductive (objective) thinking, we may begin to understand the complementarity of these two principles.

A deductive paradigm or theoretical model may be arrived at by logical human effort, may claim to be the product of divine revelation, or may actually be revealed. But whatever its origin, it is typically presented by its advocates as a tentative “truth,” an explanation by deductive thinkers who, as needed, use “pure deductive logic” to “go down” periodically to the empirical reality to make selective observations so as to corroborate what they already “know” to be true.<sup>6</sup> Deductive models, as products of the human mind are, by definition, intuitive and subjective. This is why the creators of deductive models often tend to focus on the implications of their models rather than on questions about their validity. This is also why many deductive models give rise to ideological thinking, and why those who prefer deductive thinking to inductive thinking often feel compelled to teach. And as teachers they are typically didactic and persuasive.

Margaret Wilson Vine offers, as an example of the deductive thinker, Plato when he developed his deductive model of the perfect republic. As Plato searched for an ideal model of the perfect state, he was more concerned with answers than with questions. He saw what *ought* to

be to satisfy the needs of the whole man. Therefore, Plato saw no need to separate the political from the ethical, wealth from honor, education from wisdom, the citizen from the moral agent.<sup>7</sup> In Plato's model, truth and virtue could not be separated.

On the other hand, Aristotle preferred inductive (objective) thinking and developed his ideas by carefully generalizing from empirical observations of basic aspects of reality. In so doing, he intentionally ignored what ought to be, subordinating subjective virtue to "objective" truth.<sup>8</sup> Thus, while the Platonic approach provides "answers," the Aristotelian approach encourages questions. While Plato sounds definitive, normative, final, Aristotle is (or appears) more rational, questioning, challenging.

#### THE RENAISSANCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SCIENTIFIC MIND

A brief (and admittedly oversimplified) overview of the Renaissance movement will be used here to identify the turning point when the prestige of deductive models started declining and inductive thought processes became identified with the development of the scientific method.

Soon after the fall of Rome, religious institutions gained primacy in Western Europe and imposed a deductive "Christian" model that included the only acceptable comprehensive system of beliefs, values, ethics, and truth during the Middle Ages. By then, however, the original Christian model had been lost and the medieval model no longer represented the truth, but rather man-made ideas created in an atmosphere of ignorance and repression. The medieval model of "virtue" and "truth" lasted only as long as it was protected by force. When it fell to the challenge of inductive inquiry, not only that model, but all deductive models lost prestige.

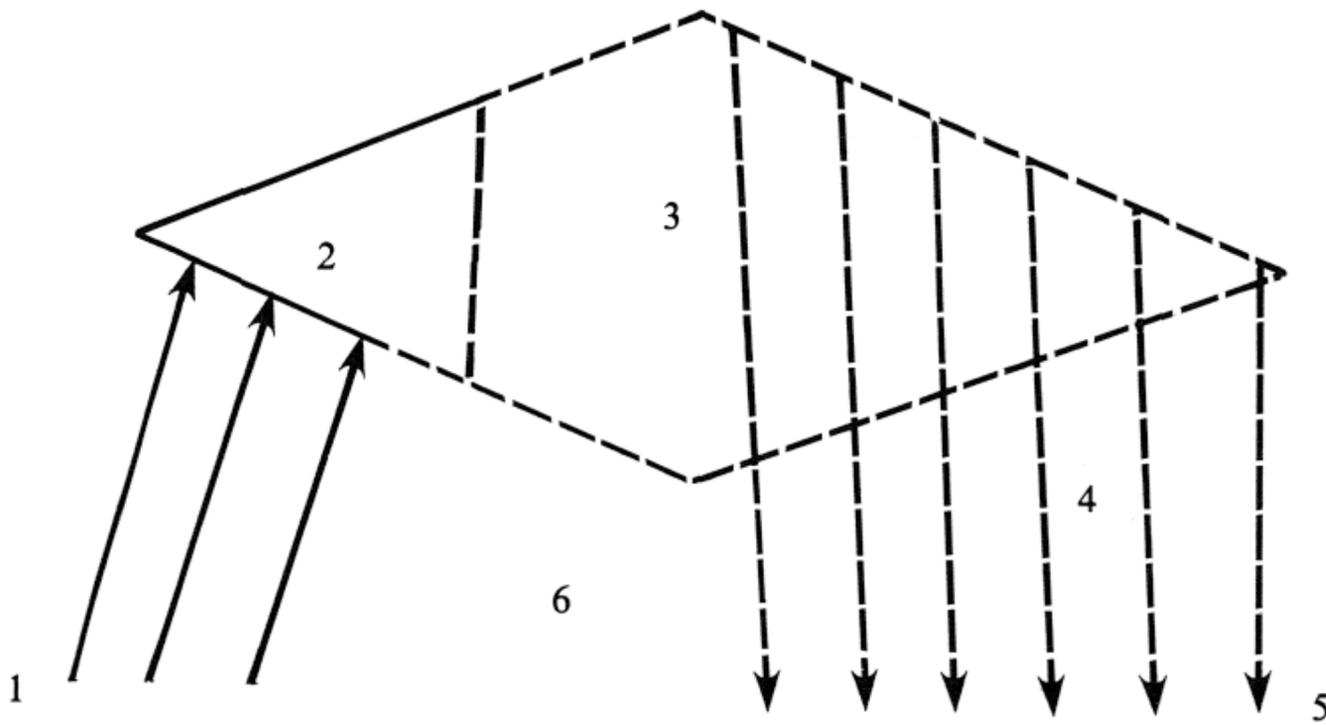
In their need to escape intellectual oppression, Renaissance thinkers introduced two distinct movements, both emphasizing inductive thinking, each challenging different aspects of the medieval "Christian" model. One movement was religious, attacking the Catholic church's practices, introducing new versions of the Bible in the vernacular of the people, and popularizing the inductive (objective) study of the scriptures that eventually gave rise to a myriad of Protestant churches.<sup>9</sup> The second movement was secular. It led the artists, influenced by the inductiveness of Greek art, to humanize European painting, statuary, and architecture. And it led inductive thinkers carefully, slowly, and often at great personal risk, to challenge and question the theoretical models that had heretofore rested on deductive assumptions.

Out of both these movements emerged a renewed commitment to the inductive approach, as well as a flurry of empirical experimentation that eventually contradicted the traditional (uninspired) religious models. In due time, the scientific method was developed, combining the deductive (subjective) and the inductive (objective) thought processes. However, because the deductive approach had lost so much prestige, the empirical inductive approach (and therefore secularism, objectivity, and rationality) became central to the scientific method.

Today, the scientific method supposedly begins with random empirical observations so as to create inductive paradigms based on reality, rather than deductive models based on human ideation. Because of this, some scientists have been led to believe that they can actually be free from the subjectivity of values and let “facts speak for themselves.” This appears to be so among physical scientists who, unshackled from erroneous religious assumptions, have become free to face and solve issues previously considered untouchable or unreachable. Working with a relatively stable, manageable, and predictable subject matter, emphasizing rational inductive methodology, and—by design—avoiding obvious ethical issues, these scientists have upgraded health, production, and physical comfort faster than ever before in the history of

FIGURE 1

The Inductive/Deductive Thought Process  
of the Scientific Method



1. Objective empirical observations (inductive)
2. Limited generalizations (inductive-deductive)
3. Whole theoretical model (deductive)
4. Derivation of testable hypotheses (deductive-inductive)
5. Empirical test of hypotheses (inductive)
6. Acceptance-rejection of null hypotheses—expansion of empirical observations and continuing research

the world. As a result, the objective inductive approach is now acclaimed, and with it rationality and secularism are now enthroned.

The social scientists have not fared as well. Human behavior includes, by definition, emotional and moral dimensions that are more subjective and therefore less easily quantifiable or measurable than physical phenomena, and often less observable as well. Faced with this problematic reality, some social scientists, such as the behaviorists in psychology, identified with the physical scientists and sought to be totally objective, value free. To do so, they were forced to make the arbitrary decision to ignore the importance of subjective aspects of human beings, such as motivation, cognition, and other processes of the human mind. This do-or-die attitude toward objectivity, however, could not protect them from the subjectivity of their assumption that human beings are not basically different from the lower animals (an assumption that, incidentally, is strongly rejected by many social psychologists). This assumption justified their experimenting with rats, chickens, and monkeys and generalizing their findings to humans, which gave them the reputation of being the most rigorous scientists in the social sciences. Yet their findings would mean very little if their assumption of the continuity between genera were proven to be false. The point is that the empirical, objective, inductive thought process is never free from the subjectivity of its assumptions.

Not all social scientists have chosen to deny the reality of human subjectivity. But in order to maintain an objective stance, many have purposefully and carefully created and maintained a pseudo-moral vacuum—pseudo because it explicitly bars traditional Judeo-Christian ideas and values while allowing modern social trends and fashions to dictate the assumptions on which the paradigms are based. It is this world of pseudo-objective and pseudo-value-free science that we have in mind when we invite true believers to make greater use of their knowledge of religious principles.<sup>10</sup> Our point is that assumptions based on eternal truths can only suggest unimpeachable paradigms and hypotheses that no truly objective research could ultimately disprove.

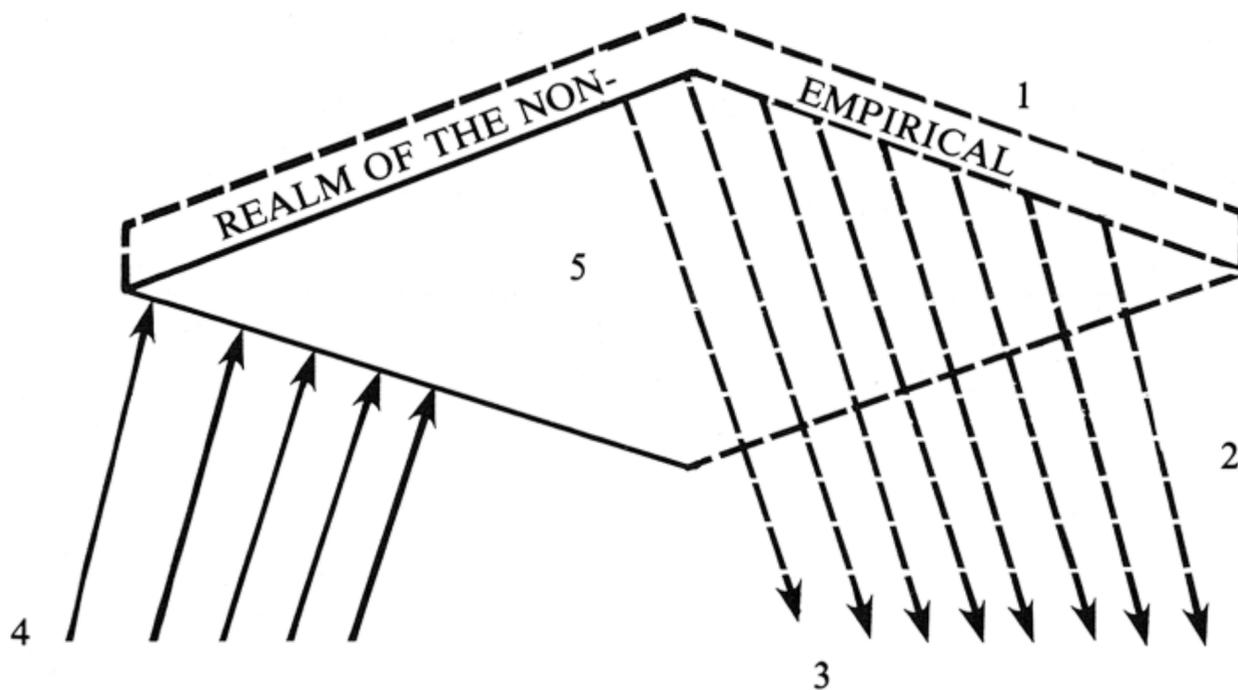
So, instead of rejecting outright the Judeo-Christian value tradition as inimical to the search for truth, we believe science should explicitly acknowledge its dependence on deductive, subjective paradigms and proceed inductively to test their predictive power. If deductive models have any merit, they would not only endure any inductive challenge; they would welcome and encourage such challenges. Any truth thus established would have its relevant virtue. And more, the realm of scientific truth would augment and expand to areas now thought to be “outside the realm of the scientific.” This boundary itself is nothing but a subjective, value-laden choice which, in being denied as such, unwittingly limits scientific inquiry to secular (though still subjective) aspects of reality.

In the past, religion objected to inductive inquiry. It should now invite it. If science once shied away from certain deductive models, it should now openly test them and show its willingness to acknowledge their validity—when those models pass the test—or show their fallacy when they do not. No religious virtue has any truth if it cannot stand the most objective inductive test that science is able to apply. Similarly, no scientific truth has any virtue if it cannot be reconciled to the time-tested values of society where that truth has meaning.

In view of the above discussion, could not Latter-day Saint scientists make a peculiar contribution to the search for truth? Could they not, explicitly or implicitly, allow gospel principles to guide their choice of assumptions about different aspects of the nature of their universe? After making this avowedly subjective selection, could they not then choose a new, a modified, or an appropriate old paradigm, and—with full rationality, objectivity, and rigor—proceed according to the tenets of the traditional scientific method? If they could do that, could not their method be called an inspired scientific method?

FIGURE 2

The Deductive-Inductive Thought Process  
of an Inspired Scientific Method



1. Theoretical assumptions about the nature of reality (deductive)
2. Derivation of testable hypotheses (deductive-inductive)
3. Empirical test of hypotheses (inductive)
4. Refinement of constructed model on the basis of empirical evidence (inductive-deductive)
5. Expansion of model on the basis of theoretical assumptions and of empirical data

THE DEDUCTIVE-INDUCTIVE THOUGHT PROCESS  
OF AN INSPIRED SCIENTIFIC METHOD

The basic difference between the traditional scientific method and an inspired scientific method is that the inspired method acknowledges openly the value of depending on deductive faith where human knowledge is temporally unavailable (in the area of assumptions), while at the same time encouraging the objective testing of anything susceptible to empirical measurement.

Before attempting to demonstrate how the inspired scientific method can be used, it is necessary to emphasize that pursuing truth and virtue through the inspired scientific method is totally different from *Mormonizing secular models*, a frequent practice among Mormon thinkers. We are well aware that many contemporary LDS scholars would never advocate (or use in research) secular models without first making them somewhat fit their religious beliefs. For example, when LDS physical scientists discuss Darwin's theory of evolution, it is typically presented as the process God may have used to create the living things on our planet. This casual accommodation of religious and secular knowledge is what we mean by *Mormonizing secular models*.

This effort at maintaining cognitive consonance has some merit. However, most of us, when confronted with dissonance, simply ignore or distort whatever appears to be a source of conflict. That is why the *Mormonizing* of secular models brings confusion rather than resolution. This confusion is obvious when some LDS social scientists can be heard bearing their testimony that such conflicting theories as structural functionalism, the conflict theory, symbolic interactionism, the developmental theory, or the learning theories truly represent the reality of the universe as well as their view of the gospel. This same confusion is obvious among LDS professionals when some testify of the "veracity" of Gestalt therapy, while others testify of behavior modification, psychoanalysis, the cognitive approach, or the ecological approach. But this confusion among LDS scientists simply reflects the confusion of the world itself.

To illustrate, many social scientists have become intrigued by Maslow's "self-actualization" model, which encourages us to go beyond society to attain a higher plane of living. Very typically, however, we fail to take into account the fact that this model has emerged out of a humanistic philosophy that is basically inimical to Christianity. Instead, we proceed to make this model fit into our LDS ethos. We may replace "social needs" with "false traditions," and we may rephrase "self-actualization" to become "reaching for perfection." And soon the model becomes what we believe to be a "true" representation of what living the gospel should be.

In the process, however, we have distorted the model and its intent. And if we teach this modified model to students as being valid, we have failed them in several ways. We have failed to make them aware of the important role played by assumptions. Therefore, they cannot see that Maslow's model is a product of the 1960s, when middle-class values were rejected, absolutes were negated, and the new ideal was individuality, "doing one's own thing." Moreover, we have failed to give our students an opportunity to be critically analytical. We have not helped them see how flimsy the term *self-actualization* really is in the absence of basic, absolute, and eternal laws and principles to guide our behavior. And we have failed to point out how inhuman the term *altruism* can become when used by the individualistic person, "the natural man," without reference to God's plan or to charity, the love of Christ. In addition, we have unwittingly undermined our societal values, norms, and laws by supporting the modern thesis that traditional societal values are so outdated that, even when we have nothing to replace them with, they can be rejected and deviated from with full impunity.

When we make one deductive model fit into another deductive model, ignoring the assumptions on which both are based, we become intellectually dishonest. The inspired scientific method, on the other hand, suggests a totally different, more rigorous and consistent method. It consists of, first, identifying the central aspect of the gospel that provides us with a deductive theoretical frame of reference; second, surveying holy writ for scriptural statements out of which basic assumptions can be drawn; and third, using these basic assumptions to develop ideal types, identify or create appropriate specific theories, and derive pertinent and testable hypotheses.

To use the inspired scientific method, Latter-day Saint scientists would start from the deductive gospel model commonly known in the Church as the plan of salvation. The plan of salvation, in this context, refers to the explanation of the purpose of the existence of humankind here on earth. This explanation tells us of a great council where we were offered a way to become like God, our Father. This way demanded that:

- (1) earths be organized to provide humans with whatever was necessary for their temporal needs;
- (2) a couple of spirits be given immortal, physical bodies and an opportunity to make them become mortal, in a proper setting for a fair test;
- (3) a set of expectations be made available to human beings (through the Spirit of Christ and through prophets) against which their performance would be judged;
- (4) redemption be provided so that all spirits may be enabled to regain their own body in a renewed and immortal form, and be given whatever reward they would gain here on earth.

This plan of salvation explains humans' *raison d'être*, as well as their origin and destiny, and provides them with an overall theoretical (explanatory) framework.

The plan of salvation, in addition to providing us with a theoretical framework, also serves as an umbrella for a myriad of what we will call here “scriptural statements”—statements found in the scriptures that many believers accept as statements of absolute truth.<sup>11</sup> These statements may be concerned with the nature of the world and of things in it; for example, our universe is an orderly universe, ruled by law through the light of Christ and the power of God (D&C 88:7–13; Abr. 4:18). Statements may relate to basic human needs, for example the need for control over property, protection of life, and free exercise of conscience (D&C 134:2). They may refer to the potentiality of human beings—“a little lower than the angels” (Heb. 2:6–8)—or their reality—“For the natural man is an enemy to God . . . unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord” (Mosiah 3:19).

In addition, some scriptural statements come in terms of what *should* be: commandments that tell us what is functional and what is dysfunctional to human beings, or events that show us what righteous and approved men and women of God do when inspired of the Lord. For example, we are told that adultery is a dysfunctional pattern (Ex. 20:14, D&C 42:24); and when we read of General Moroni gathering his people for war, we can tentatively conclude that going to war when our family, religion, freedom, and peace are threatened is acceptable to the Lord (Alma 46:11–21, 48:10).

The scriptures are full of such statements, which—because they fit within the plan of salvation—draw legitimacy from it and become part of “divinely revealed truth” and the assumptions of those who believe.

Now, having a basic deductive gospel model and explicit scriptural assumptions, we can develop general theories, middle-range theories, ideal types, and clear, testable hypotheses. Then the constant process of reconciling theory to relevant empirical reality begins. Never losing sight of the assumptions, we can empirically study specific aspects of the middle-range theory or of the ideal type, testing relevant hypotheses. Then we can interpret the findings so as to bring a sense of fit between the empirical data and the theory.

#### APPLICATION OF THE INSPIRED SCIENTIFIC METHOD TO THE UNDERSTANDING AND STUDY OF THE MODERN AMERICAN FAMILY

The following exercise is primarily designed to exemplify rather than to convince. Therefore we plead that the theoretical model not be summarily dismissed simply because the reader may not agree with our

conclusions. We hope that any disagreement will, on the contrary, fuel the desire to discuss, challenge, and modify what has been represented here, so that we eventually develop a workable model.

*The Position of the Family within the Gospel Theoretical Framework*

According to the scriptures, the family unit was established in the Garden of Eden. It functions both to provide companionship (Gen. 2:18; 23–24; Moses 3:18, 23–24; Abr. 5:14, 17–18) and to serve as a vehicle to bring forth spirit children (Gen. 1:28; Moses 2:28; Abr. 4:28; Moses 6:51) so that they may be socialized (Alma 39:12) and then tested (Abr. 3:25). Thus the family carries out a major function in the plan of salvation.

*Survey of the Scriptures to Identify Scriptural Statements*

Inductive (objective) searching, by definition, demands thoroughness. In this case, by using *A Topical Guide to the Scriptures of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* and other concordances, we may identify as many relevant scriptural statements as possible. These are our findings: first, the extended family is part of the patriarchal order, recognized as a unit here on earth and in the hereafter. The word *family*, in ancient scriptures, generally refers to the extended family, the patriarchal family. The conjugal unit, on the other hand, is typically called a household (Mosiah 2:5; Josh. 7:14). Thus, when the Lord expresses his concern with the families of Israel (Isa. 65:23; Jer. 31:1), or with the families of the earth (Gen. 10:5, 12:3), he seems to be primarily concerned with lineage, with family relations that link people and generations together even beyond the grave (Gen. 25:8; D&C 130:2, 137:5). To be established forever, these relationships require the sealing, the welding link (Mal. 4:6; D&C 2:2, 138:47–48, 128:17–18) that can only be obtained through temple ordinances. The Lord expects members of the extended family to feel love, concern, and loyalty toward one another. Thus the scriptures remind us that we should forgive one another (1 John 2:10–11; Gen. 45:5, 50:21; 1 Ne. 7:21) and demonstrate our love (Ruth 1:16), loyalty (Gen. 14:16), and sense of unity to our siblings and other relatives (Ps. 133:1). But above all, we must be concerned for one another's salvation (1 Ne. 8:12; 2 Ne. 1:12–14, 2:30).

Second, the conjugal pair must love, support, and help save one another. Although in time past the extended family has been given prominence, the Lord has also shown great concern for the conjugal family. Our sacred books have shown us the love existing between Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Rachel, Lehi and Sariah. And when King Benjamin pronounced his last sermon, he

addressed himself to the conjugal units who pitched their tents in front of the temple (Mosiah 2:6), converting them all, one by one (Mosiah 5:2). The Lord has given us a number of recommendations concerning the married state. First, he has commanded that we marry (1 Cor. 11:11; Moses 3:18; D&C 49:16) because humans should not be alone. A husband is to leave his parents and cleave to his wife, becoming one flesh (Gen. 2:24; Moses 3:24; Matt. 19:5; D&C 42:22) and having children (Ps. 127:3–5). Husbands and wives should love one another (Jacob 3:7; 1 Cor. 7:16). Husbands should give honor unto their wives (1 Pet. 3:7) and live joyfully (Eccl. 9:9), rejoicing with the wife of their youth (Prov. 5:18). Men should love their wives as Christ loves his church, willingly sacrificing themselves for her (Eph. 5:25). They certainly must not be unfaithful (D&C 42:23–26). And divorces should be few, limited to cases involving sexual infractions (Mark 10:9; Matt. 19:3–9, 5:32). Women are to love and stay with their husband and children (Titus 2:4; 1 Cor. 7:10). They are to be a comfort to their husbands (D&C 25:5), forgiving him (D&C 132:56) and submitting to his authority (1 Pet. 3:1, 5–12; Col. 3:18) as he exercises it in righteousness.

Third, the conjugal family has been structured in terms of a specific division of labor. The scriptures indicate that soon after the fall a family division of labor was established by the Lord. According to it, men are to rule (Gen. 3:16; Moses 4:22) and govern their home with all gravity and meekness (Tim. 3:4–5; D&C 31:9), mostly through persuasion (2 Ne. 25:23; D&C 121:41–44), with great respect for those governed (Matt. 18:10; Col. 3:21; Eph. 6:4; Luke 15:20, 31), praying faithfully (Jer. 10:25; 3 Ne. 18:21; Mosiah 27:14). Men are to protect their homes (Alma 43:47, 48:10, 46:12), work (Gen. 3:17–19; Moses 4:23–25), and provide for their wives (D&C 83:2) and their children (Mosiah 4:15; D&C 83:4). And they are to teach their children in both secular and religious things. Fathers must pass on to their children their language and their learning (Enos 1:1; 1 Ne. 1:2; Moses 6:5–6) and share their personal experiences (Deut. 4:9). They must bring their children up in light and truth (D&C 93:40–42) and in their testimony of the Lord (Ps. 78:5; Isa. 54:13; Deut. 6:7; 3 Ne. 22:13; Moses 5:12, 6:1, 58). They must prepare them for baptism (D&C 68:25) as well as for Christ's coming (Alma 39:16), so that they might know of our Lord, through whom they can obtain a remission of their sins (2 Ne. 25:26). This teaching must be done when the children are young (Prov. 22:6; 2 Ne. 4:5) and through personal example (Jacob 2:35, 3:10; Prov. 20:7), reinforcing all principles with firm (Gen. 18:19; Deut. 32:46; Josh. 24:15) kindness (Eph. 6:4). Otherwise, evil comes (1 Sam. 2:12, 3:13). Children are to honor their parents (Ex. 20:12; Matt. 19:19; Eph. 6:2; 1 Ne. 17:55; Mosiah 13:20; Lev. 19:32, 20:9; Mal. 1:6), accept

and live by their parents' righteous teachings and by their righteous values (Prov. 1:8, 23:22, 4:1; Col. 3:20; 1 Tim. 5:4). Women are to be mothers (Gen. 3:16; Moses 4:22). Like their husbands, they are expected to teach their children (Alma 56:47–48). And they are to be homemakers (Ps. 113:9)—but homemakers with a difference, homemakers who are good at what they do and who gain some degree of independence through industry and trust in the Lord. Thus, paraphrasing, the scriptures tell us that a virtuous woman can be trusted because she wisely administers her home; she gets up early in the morning and feeds her family and her servants; she sees to it that there is good food but no spoilage or idleness in her home; she is wise and kind; she helps the poor, she reaches out to the needy; her home is prepared to face the darkness and the cold; she excels in all things; she weaves and sells her products to the merchants; she buys a field and plants a vineyard; and above all, she fears the Lord.

As we review the above scriptural statements, the following basic assumptions emerge:

- (1) The conjugal family is a basic link to the extended family, welding the past and the future both horizontally (among the members of the extended family) and vertically (between generations), interacting with, exchanging support and good will for, and providing security to all members.
- (2) The conjugal family is to perform two major functions: tension management (providing emotional support) and procreation and socialization of children.
- (3) To provide tension management, the conjugal family requires that spouses give priority to their conjugal ties, that they share and express positive feelings, and that they respect one another and be faithful to one another.
- (4) To perform the tasks of procreation and socialization, the conjugal family must reflect a division of labor: men are to administer and protect their home, provide for their wife and children, and teach their children; women are to be mothers (and it would follow, nurturers), homemakers (creative and independent), and teachers; children are to honor, obey, and retain the functional and time-tested values of their parents.

As we draw this list, we promptly see that the scriptures do much more than provide us with basic assumptions about family structure and functioning. The scriptures tell us what the structure and functioning of the family *should* be, thereby providing us with an “ideal type” of the family.<sup>12</sup> It would follow, then, that at least in the social sciences, an inductive survey of scriptural statements would often provide us with assumptions that blend *virtus* and *veritas*. In addition, such a survey leads us to think of families as systems having various degrees of functionality and dysfunctionality.

The next step is to compare this ideal type of a functioning family with the family trends found in the United States today. The divinely inspired ideal family type suggests that the family functions best when:

- (1) The extended and the conjugal families are interrelated and interdependent.
- (2) The conjugal family functions to procreate and to socialize children; that is, to prepare them to function appropriately in their future roles.
- (3) The ideal conjugal family also functions to provide tension management for all its members.
- (4) The conjugal family employs the “traditional” division of labor to achieve its goals.
- (5) The extended family supports and absorbs the broken family in cases of divorce or death.

By contrast, the present-day American family is affected by the following societal trends:

- (1) Geographical mobility and increasing dependence on other institutions undermine the traditional interdependence between the extended and conjugal families.
- (2) The birthrate is down, and some conjugal families choose not to have any children; the youth culture tends to bring some degree of alienation between parents and children and to involve the young in “deviant” behaviors.
- (3) Many women and children are expressing a great deal of discontent and rebellion, and many men are responding with an increasing sense of insecurity.
- (4) Men have given up responsibilities of teaching and disciplining children to women; homemaking is depreciated and unrewarded, and women increasingly obtain jobs outside their homes, sending their young children to be cared for by others; as they work, women take over even more responsibilities.
- (5) Divorce has greatly increased, with mothers typically heading the broken conjugal family, helped by the government rather than by the extended family (female-headed families comprise the fastest growing poverty group).

This exercise leads us to the selection of a general theory of order and, within it, to a systems approach. Furthermore, an already existing and well-known theory of the middle range, Kingsley Davis’s theory of the conjugal family, appears to fit well our gospel-inspired view of the family.<sup>13</sup> Both Davis’s model and the gospel model see the family as existing because it performs two major functions: replacement (reproduction and socialization) and *tension management*.

Within this theoretical model of the family, much can be done. All aspects of today’s family structure and family interaction can be studied in terms of their functions and dysfunctions. Today’s American family can be compared to the ideal gospel mode. Cross-culturally,

family structures and family functions can be differentiated, compared, and objectively evaluated. Universality and cultural relativity of patterns can be properly considered. Thus the scriptures can provide Latter-day Saint scientists with information that leads them more directly to the truth.

The most intriguing (and to some perhaps the most disturbing) finding in this exploratory analysis is that, because the scriptures are often prescriptive (telling us what we should do), the inductive search for scriptural assumptions appears to lead to the construction of ideal types and to the systems approach. Therefore, using the inspired scientific model, Latter-day Saint family sociologists would view the present-day American family as pathological. In itself, this would not set them apart from many secular family sociologists who, at this time, also view the family as being unstable, as being in a state of transition. But there would be a basic difference, and this difference resides in the fact that the scriptures give us an ideal type. On this basis, Latter-day Saint family sociologists would tend to view family dysfunctions as resulting from deviance from this ideal type, and to suggest solutions in terms of returning to some version of the original model.

Without an ideal type to refer to, secular family sociologists tend to be less critical. In fact, at a time when the American family appears to be so fragile, many among them view the new emerging patterns as useful experiments that update and improve on the traditional family. Unavailingly they hope that these new trends will lead the family unit to a more creative, more adaptive, and more functional prototype.

This basic difference in frames of reference between secular and Latter-day Saint social scientists explains the corresponding differences in orientation to problems. And it takes great courage and integrity to face the scientific community, and, on the basis of gospel truths, declare: "This truth has virtue and this virtue is true!" But it is encouraging to know that a number of LDS social scientists have been doing exactly this.

For example, Kathleen Slaugh, rejecting some claims that day-care children are cognitively superior to children brought up at home, has had the courage to claim that, at home, children learn both deductive and inductive problem solving, while day-care children are only exposed to deductive decision-making.<sup>14</sup> Allen Bergin needed even more courage when he announced in national professional meetings—to his secular colleagues—that religious beliefs of patients can and must be taken into account by psychotherapists.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, Latter-day Saint educators, scientists, and professionals have been establishing organizations to explore and promote the use of gospel truths to upgrade their various endeavors.

We want to emphasize again that we regard these ideas as tentative and open to critical appraisal. Latter-day Saint thinkers are a diverse and

independent group, and we do not wish to impose a methodology upon them. We hope, however, that these ideas may serve as a springboard for thought and discussion until we the scientists and professionals of the Church can develop a style of our own.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>See Jeffrey R. Holland, "The First 100 Days" (Address delivered at Brigham Young University, 11 November 1980); "Virtus et Veritas" (Address to faculty and staff at Brigham Young University, 1 September 1981); "The Value of Values: Shared Tasks for Business and Education in the 1980s" (Address delivered to a private group of business executives, Chicago, Ill., 5 November 1981); "Unto Whom Much Is Given . . ." (Address delivered at Brigham Young University faculty meeting, 31 August 1982).

<sup>2</sup>Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), x, xi, xiii–xiv.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 43.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 162–63, 157.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 147.

<sup>6</sup>Margaret Wilson Vine, *An Introduction to Sociological Theory*, 2d ed. (New York: David McKay Co., 1969), 3.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Maren M. Mouritsen, "Total Commitment: The Harmony of Virtue and Truth" (Address delivered at the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi Initiation Ceremony, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 23 February 1982), 3.

<sup>9</sup>See Lenet H. Read, "How the Bible Came to Be," *Ensign* 12, pts. 1–8 (January to August 1982): 36–42.

<sup>10</sup>See Genevieve DeHoyos and Arturo DeHoyos, "The Mormon Psychotherapists: A Synthesis," *AMCAP: Journal of the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists* (July 1982): 21–28.

<sup>11</sup>See Spencer W. Kimball, "Absolute Truth," *Devotional Speeches of the Year, 1977* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1977), 137–43.

<sup>12</sup>See Nicholas S. Timasheff, *Sociological Theory: Its Nature and Growth*, 3d ed. (New York: Random House, 1967), 178–81; Don Martindale, *The Nature and Types of Sociological Theory* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1960), 381–83.

<sup>13</sup>Kingsley Davis, *Human Society* (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 394–95.

<sup>14</sup>See Kathleen Slaugh, "More than Clean Windows: A New Look at the Family and Housework" (Family Living Lecture, no. 21, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 18 September 1985).

<sup>15</sup>Allen E. Bergin, "In Behalf of a Revealed Approach to Counseling," *AMCAP* 4 (Winter 1978): 3–9.