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# From the Editor

*Steven C. Harper*

I have some exciting announcements to make in this inaugural issue of volume 58. First, I am delighted to announce that Susan Howe has been named associate editor of *BYU Studies*. Susan served previously on our Arts and Sciences Board. She is a poet and an emerita faculty member of the BYU English Department. Her most recent poetry collection, *Salt*, was published by Signature Books in 2013, and her poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry*, *Shenandoah*, and other journals. She received the 2017 Lifetime Achievement Award of the Association for Mormon Letters. She is a reviewer and contributing editor of *Tar River Poetry*. In the past, she has served as poetry editor of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, poetry editor of *Literature and Belief*, managing editor of the *Denver Quarterly*, editor of *Exponent II*, and a board member of the Utah Humanities Council.

In order to reduce and simplify, three editorial boards have been merged into one. Several of the existing board members remain. Others who have served well for many years have been released with heartfelt thanks. Many members of the editorial board are new to *BYU Studies*.

Susan and the board members are esteemed scholars in a wide range of disciplines. They are strong where I am weak. They see from perspectives different from mine and from each other. They share, however, the essential *BYU Studies* commitments of seeking truth by study and by faith, discerning the harmony between revelation and research, valuing both academic and spiritual inquiry, and recognizing that knowledge without charity is nothing. *BYU Studies* needs them. I am grateful that they are willing and able to serve at this time.

Cover art has been a strength of BYU Studies for many years. The featured images have been chosen by the editors. To expose our readers to the range of edifying, evocative art now being created by Latter-day Saint artists, we have decided to open the cover to submissions. All artists who have produced work that is informed by the restored gospel of Jesus Christ are invited to submit images, one at a time, for consideration, along with a brief essay about the artwork. To submit artwork, visit [byustudies.byu.edu](http://byustudies.byu.edu), go to the Submissions menu, choose Cover Art Submissions, and follow the directions there.

Beginning with volume 59 in 2020, all *BYU Studies Quarterly* content will be available free online through our website and the BYU Scholars Archive. Older content is currently available for free on both sites, while content published within the last few years is behind a paywall. That paywall will go away in 2020.

For those of you whose digital subscriptions extend beyond 2019, we will reach out to you this year and arrange for a refund. If you prefer to donate the surplus rather than receive a refund, let us know at [byu\\_studies@byu.edu](mailto:byu_studies@byu.edu). The print edition will continue to be sent quarterly to those who pay for a subscription.

Why this change? BYU Studies exists to publish scholarship informed by the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. We believe open access will dramatically increase exposure to what we publish, which means more than just what we print. It means everything we can communicate, make generally accessible, publicize, and shout from the housetops. I trust that you share that vision, and I thank you for supporting it.

# BAPTISMS at St. Mary's, CASTLEGATE, for the Year 1773

Infant's Christian Name and Surname.	Infant's Surname.	Father's Name, Profession and Abode.	Mother's Name and Descent.	Born.	Baptized.
John 2 <sup>d</sup> Son	Keeles	William Keeles in Coppargate Oliver Maher Son of John Master of Whitelawich Taylor do by Elizabeth Turner his wife	Sarah dau <sup>r</sup> of Andrew Brame on Thursday deceased by Douglas his wife dau <sup>r</sup> of John Fletcher of Linsfoot Turner	the 8 <sup>th</sup> of July	on Wednesday the 25 <sup>th</sup> of July
Anne illegitimate	Jordan	Father unknown.	Ann Jordan a Travelling woman at a Lodging in Thush Lane,	supposed to be 8 years old at baptism	on Sunday the 5 <sup>th</sup> of September
Jane	Scott	Robert Scott a travelling Person to China Men <sup>r</sup> of whose parentage nothing is intended he abt being in York	the Mother's name & descent not known, she having ab- sented before I took possession of the Church	on Saturday the 4 <sup>th</sup> of September	on Sunday the 5 <sup>th</sup> of September
Mary	Taylor	Nathan Taylor of Thush Lane the eldest Son of Nathan Taylor by Mary his wife the dau <sup>r</sup> of	Margaret daughter of Rich <sup>d</sup> Whitcliffe by Mary his wife	on Sunday the 26 <sup>th</sup> of September	on the same day it was born
Mary & Margaret Twins	Chapman	William Chapman, Bookbinder in Thush Lane Son of William Chapman of Ripon bookbinder by Margaret Edwards his wife	Mary daughter of William Smith of Kellogg labourer by Ann Jackson his wife	on Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> of October	on the day of their birth
William 3 <sup>d</sup> child	Whitehouse	William Whitehouse of Thush Lane Weaver Son of John Whitehouse of Farnes Bury, Wiltshire	Mary dau <sup>r</sup> of William Ridley of Walsgate by Ann Lophouse his wife	on Wednesday the 3 <sup>rd</sup> of November	on Wednesday the day it was born
Rebecca Norton	Penrose	Matthew Penrose of Thush Lane Shoemaker Son of John Penrose of Bolton, Turner deceased by Mary Smith his wife	Lydia daughter of Thomas Ratton a travelling Hair- dresser by Mary Fletcher his wife	on Thursday the 29 <sup>th</sup> of October	on Sunday the 7 <sup>th</sup> of November
William	Anderson	John Anderson, Shoemaker in the top Lane Son of Thomas Anderson Gardiner in the Farnes, Row	Margaret dau <sup>r</sup> of John Fletcher slain by a Mast falling upon him some years ago	on Monday the 8 <sup>th</sup> of November	on Wednesday the 10 <sup>th</sup> of November
John	Clayton	Humphrey Clayton, Labourer	Mary daughter of Henry Wyllie of Harlington	on Monday the 22 <sup>nd</sup> of November	on Friday the 26 <sup>th</sup> of November
John 1 <sup>st</sup> born	Wilson	Joseph Wilson of Castlegate Flax Dyest Son of Joseph Wilson of St. Michaels, by Ann Hawke his wife	Ann dau <sup>r</sup> of James Henderson labourer in Thushgate deceased by Elizabeth dau <sup>r</sup> of Wil <sup>m</sup> Johnson Turner with wife	on Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> of November	on Sunday the 28 <sup>th</sup> of November
Susanna	Lanier	George Lanier in Coppargate Joiner Son of John Lanier of Farnes by Mary Plummer his wife	Susanna dau <sup>r</sup> of William Duffield of Linsgill weaver by Mary his wife	on Wednesday the 24 <sup>th</sup> of November	on Sunday the 28 <sup>th</sup> of November

A page in the register of St. Mary's, Castlegate, York, Yorkshire, England, 1773 (PR Y/MC 137). Note the rich information recorded for these baptisms: infant's name; father's name, profession, and abode (and parents); mother's name and descent (her parents and place of birth); date of birth and baptism. This article tells how such information came to be recorded because of the efforts of one William Dade, who reached out to future generations. Courtesy Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York, Heslington, York, United Kingdom.



# How Dead Cats, Your Siblings, Eighteenth-Century English Clergy, Making Lists, TED Talks, Evolutionary Biology, Susa Young Gates, and My Mom Can Save the World from Being Utterly Wasted

*Amy Harris*

*This forum address was delivered at Brigham Young University on July 18, 2017.*

I'm going to tell you two stories today; a short one about dead cats and a long one about dead people.

First, dead cats. Now, I know you might be tired of so many talks beginning with stories about dead cats, but bear with me. My parents' views on pets, cats or otherwise, could not have been more different. My mother grew up in a household that didn't allow animals in the house; my dad grew up in a home where pets, at one point including even a monkey, *were* allowed inside. Over their sixty-some-odd years of marriage, my parents struck a bit of a compromise about pets in our home. Smaller, cage-bound animals such as hamsters, snakes, frogs, toads, and fish were allowed inside, but larger animals such as cats, dogs, and any animal destined to become dinner stayed in the garage, the doghouse, or the chicken coop. Dogs were confined, but cats were free to roam. Well, they were free to roam as long as I didn't pick them up and dress them in my doll's clothing—a fate most of them contemplated with a mixture of trepidation and resignation.

When I was very young, we lived on a busy intersection with constant traffic. The combination of this location and the pet policy meant that cats, and there seemed to be an endless parade of them that somehow ended up at our house, rarely died of old age. I liked the cats and mourned their loss, and at some point, I began to memorize the names and faces of all the cats who had lived, loved, and then shuffled off their

mortal coils at our house. Eventually I was unable to keep all of the memories and names straight, and in concern, I asked my mom if all those cats would meet us in heaven and if they would recognize us and if we would remember them. She assured me they would. That the cats would remember me and I them. Forever.

Now, the impact of that story isn't so much about the cats, but it is about my mother's assurances that relationships last—much like photographs of the two of us have lasted far beyond the moment they captured. Relationships are durable and meaningful—even beyond death. This idea was central to my childhood. As the youngest of nine children, I arrived after three of my four grandparents, a handful of cousins, and my brother had died. Knowing that death would not forever prevent me from knowing those people was deeply comforting and grounding.

In a way, that early understanding about relationships has shaped my professional pursuits. I've spent my entire adult life studying relationships, particularly family relationships and the power they have, for good or ill, to shape social, economic, religious, political, material, and emotional possibilities and realities. My research focuses mostly on eighteenth-century England. This means I study dead people and what they can teach us. As Thomas Laqueur put it, "The history . . . of the dead is a history of how they dwell in us—individually and communally. It is a history of how we imagine them to be, how they give meaning to our lives. . . . It is a history . . . of how we invest the dead . . . with meaning."<sup>1</sup> My research has taught me much about the meaning found in social and familial relationships in the past and today, as well as their undervalued potential to positively influence society and afford solutions for vexing problems.

## Dead People

So, let me talk about some of those dead people. I'm going to begin with the story of a particular dead person: William Dade. He was born in late 1740 or early 1741 in Yorkshire in northern England. His parents, who married in their early thirties, already had three children when William was born.<sup>2</sup> His father was the local vicar and had a handful of additional

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1. Thomas W. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015), 17; see PeterLLC, "Naming the Dead," By Common Consent (blog), June 27, 2017, <https://bycommonconsent.com/2017/06/27/naming-the-dead/>.

2. Baptism of Thomas Dade, September 22, 1736, Church of England, Rillington, Borthwick Institute for Archives, in "Yorkshire, Bishop's Transcripts of



livings (or parishes that supplied his employment and income), so William and his siblings—a sister and two brothers—were raised in relative comfort that typified the genteel “middling sort” of England.<sup>3</sup> William was educated in Yorkshire schools, requiring him to live away from home for long stretches of the year. Once they reached their late teens, both William and his eldest brother, Thomas, followed their father’s path, first to the University of Cambridge and then into the church.<sup>4</sup> Their mother died when William was twelve and their father when he was eighteen, around the time he entered Cambridge. Two years later his brother John died at age twenty-two and was buried alongside their parents in the parish church where their father had been vicar. A monument to their collective memory, likely commissioned by William and his surviving siblings, hangs in the church to this day.<sup>5</sup> At the time of their father’s death, Thomas, twenty-four and single, had been ordained, and his sister, twenty-three-year-old Mary, who was also single, presumably lived with him—or perhaps with William, who left Cambridge that same year. Within two years, William had his own living in the city of York, when he was only twenty-two.

So far, this is a rather unremarkable story of an eighteenth-century English family. Their parents’ marrying in their early thirties was not unusual for those who came of age in the early 1700s. On average, women married at age twenty-six and men at age twenty-eight in that period.<sup>6</sup> It

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Baptisms,” <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBPRS/YORKSHIRE/BAP/1934373>; baptism of Mary Dade, October 12, 1737, Church of England, Rillington, Borthwick Institute for Archives, Yorkshire, in “Yorkshire, Bishop’s Transcripts of Baptisms,” <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBPRS/YORKSHIRE/BAP/1934383>; baptism of John Dade, February 6, 1740, Yorkshire bishop’s transcripts, Church of England, St. Michael-le-Belfry, York, FHL film 7574348, Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City; baptism of William Dade, January 26, 1741 (NS), Church of England, Burton Agnes, Borthwick Institute for Archives, in “Yorkshire, Bishop’s Transcripts of Baptisms,” <https://search.findmypast.com/record?id=GBPRS/YORKSHIRE/BAP/1361863>.

3. W. M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680–1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 18.

4. See entries for Thomas Dade and William Dade in J. A. Venn, comp., *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, part 2, from 1752 to 1900, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944), 210, also available at [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk).

5. “Rev Thomas Dade,” St. Martin’s Church, Burton Agnes, Yorkshire, England, memorial #102828684, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/102828684>.

6. Amy Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2.

was not unusual for children to die before their parents, though it was more common for them to die in infancy and childhood than in young adulthood, as in William's brother's case. In some places, a third or more of children did not survive to see their tenth birthday.<sup>7</sup>

Children of most classes, no matter their wealth, left home for employment or schooling in their mid-teens, as the Dade brothers did.<sup>8</sup> This included most young women—though not usually women of the gentry or aristocracy. That the Dade siblings were not married in their mid-twenties was also not unusual for their cohort, which also coincided with large numbers of people who never married—somewhere between 15 and 20 percent in the middle of the eighteenth century. (For comparison, current UK statistics suggest that as little as 4 percent and perhaps no more than 9 percent of the population never marries or partners.<sup>9</sup>)

That the brothers followed their father's occupational path into the church is similarly unremarkable; between a quarter and a third of eighteenth-century English clergymen were the sons of clergy. This was typical of the eighteenth century, in which were perpetuated—often with great vigor—socioeconomic distinctions and inequalities.<sup>10</sup>

Also, typically, sibling relationships were important to the Dade family. Their parents' marrying later and dying relatively young meant that for the Dade siblings, and many people in this period, siblinghood was the most central and durable family relationship. People depended on siblings for a host of material, social, and emotional supports. They had

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7. Joanne Bailey, *Parenting in England, 1760–1830: Emotion, Identity, and Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 39.

8. Patrick Wallis, Cliff Webb, and Chris Minns, "Leaving Home and Entering Service: The Age of Apprenticeship in Early Modern London," *Continuity and Change* 25 (December 2010): 377–404.

9. I arrived at the 4 to 9 percent figure by using the UK Office for National Statistics 2014 report, specifically, "Marital Status by Age Group (Age 16 and Over), 2014," which covered England and Wales. For those over the age of seventy-five, 4 to 4.6 percent were listed as single. For those between the ages of fifty-five and sixty-five, 8 to 10.4 percent were listed as single. If most of that latter group remains unmarried the rest of their lives (which is the most likely trajectory), then the percentage of those never marrying or partnering will inch up closer to 9 percent. See "Population Estimates by Marital Status and Living Arrangements, England and Wales: 2002 to 2014," Office for National Statistics, July 8, 2015, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationestimatesbymaritalstatusandlivingarrangements/2015-07-08>.

10. Jacob, *Clerical Profession*, 38–41.

great solidarity and great power, for good or ill, that few other relationships did.<sup>11</sup>

They continue to have great power and influence today. If you ever search for photos of siblings on Google, you'll find an array of images of siblings, who, even as adults, are dressed in matching outfits—a tradition not usually practiced beyond athletic teams. Let's just say that if any other adult suggested you wear matching outfits, get matching haircuts, and have your picture taken, the happiness depicted in some of these photos would not be the likely outcome. Like they are today, eighteenth-century sibling relationships were lifelong, but unlike today, they were often on their own at the center of family relationships. Siblings came before spouses and children—who arrived late in life, if they arrived at all—and they outlasted parents who often died before all of their children reached age thirty.

These relationships weren't perfect; siblings fought and struggled with each other. Like it is for some of you and your siblings, it was not always easy to navigate a relationship they did not choose but which was freighted with so many lifelong expectations. As one eighteenth-century man wrote to his brother, "Three wise words from your lips made me think you an inhabitant of another country. . . . You have the art to set me at a distance by three words when I am with you, and to draw me to you at a hundred miles off by the same method."<sup>12</sup>

To return to William Dade, his story to this point—his late twenties—was unremarkable and like thousands of others. But in 1770, as he entered his thirties, William made a remarkable decision. He decided that Church of England parish registers should contain more information than they typically did. He wanted, in his words, to improve "the imperfect method hitherto generally pursued."<sup>13</sup> If you think that doesn't sound all that earth-shattering, just be patient with me, because

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11. Leonore Davidoff, *Thicker Than Water: Siblings and Their Relations, 1780–1920* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); see also Amy Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England: Share and Share Alike* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).

12. George Cumberland to Richard Cumberland, October 18, 1778, in *The Cumberland Letters: Being the Correspondence of Richard Dennison Cumberland and George Cumberland between the Years 1771 and 1784*, ed. Clementina Black (London: Martin Secker, 1912), 214.

13. William Dade, St. Helen's, York, parish register, 1770, cited in FamilySearch Wiki, s.v. "Dade parish registers," [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Dade\\_pariah\\_registers](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Dade_pariah_registers).

this was an astounding development—a development with untapped potential to better the world today.

### Dade's Parish Records

First, I need to put William Dade's parish registers into a bit of context. English church registers began after Henry VIII's break with Rome and the establishment of the Church of England in the 1530s. From then until the eighteenth century, entries for baptisms, marriages, and burials typically had limited information. Baptism records might record only the name of the child, the date of the baptism, and the name of the child's father. Compared to continental registers, for example, English registers contained paltry information. For comparison, a Spanish record from 1764 contains not only the child's and father's names, but also the mother's (including her original surname), both sets of grandparents', and the godparents' names.<sup>14</sup> Even in the first half of the eighteenth century, English registers became only marginally better: mothers' first names, for example, were increasingly included. Sometimes extra bits and pieces might be included, such as the birthdate of the child or the occupation of the father. William Dade himself benefited from an unusually detailed entry for his christening. Because his father was a vicar, the priest who christened William in a different parish took the time to include William's father's occupation and residence, though his mother was not named.

Dade followed common practice when he first became a curate, and he recorded the limited information other parish priests did. But then in 1770 he began to record more information, such as the father's occupation, residence, and family connections. He also encouraged other vicars and rectors to follow suit. Some did, but the real boost to his scheme came when the archbishop of York encouraged the practice throughout the diocese in 1777. Some vicars obeyed, many did not, and many resented it and gave up after a short time. William's brother Thomas might have been in one of those latter groups, for the registers in his parishes show no such effort to record additional information.

Dade was also interested in local history—but that interest seems to have come later than his scheme to improve parish registers. It was perhaps his exposure to the old records stored in parish churches that

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14. Pasquala Francisca Jacinta Alarcon Y Briz, September 11, 1764, baptism, "España, Diócesis de Albacete, registros parroquiales, 1504-1979," Family Search.org, citing Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, Jorquera, Albacete (Archivo Histórico de Archidiócesis de Albacete, Albacete), FHL microfilm 1,279,590.

inspired his interest in historical research. He was inducted into the Society of Antiquaries in 1783, and he began two books: one detailing the local history of Holderness, where he'd attended school as a boy, and the other listing the births, marriages, and deaths of prominent people.<sup>15</sup>

It wasn't just recording extra information or being a better record-keeper that set him apart; other clergy had similar inclinations.<sup>16</sup> For Dade, the switch to record more information did not come from a historical interest or passion for the past so much as it came from a concern for the future. As he wrote in the register when he began his efforts, "This scheme if properly put in execution will afford much clearer intelligence to the researches of posterity than the imperfect method hitherto generally pursued."<sup>17</sup> He reasoned that families in the future would want to know more about the past, particularly their personal past. What motivated him was future people and their needs; Dade was thinking of how his actions would echo beyond his lifetime into strangers' lives. At its heart, this is what Ari Wallach, in a recent TED talk, described as transgenerational thinking. Wallach is referring to an ethic that thinks beyond one's own comfort and considers how actions ripple into the future, long beyond an individual lifespan.<sup>18</sup>

## Two Aspects of Human Instinct

Implicit in Dade's actions and Wallach's argument are two aspects of human instinct: first, the ability to think about, imagine, and plan for the future, and second, the impulse and capacity to think of strangers—to think beyond ourselves.

The ability to plan for the future, to think about how today's actions will shape tomorrow, is unique to humans.<sup>19</sup> It is an ability that separates

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15. William Joseph Sheils, "Dade, William (*bap.* 1741, *d.* 1790)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004–16), [www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com).

16. Ackworth, Yorkshire, parish registers kept by Timothy Lee, 1744–77, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield, Yorkshire, D 77/3, in "West Yorkshire, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1512–1812," <https://www.ancestry.com/>.

17. Dade, St. Helen's, York, parish register, cited in "Dade Parish Registers," FamilySearch Research Wiki, [https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Dade\\_parish\\_registers](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Dade_parish_registers).

18. Ari Wallach, "Three Ways to Plan for the (Very) Long Term," TedxMid Atlantic talk, filmed October 2016, [https://www.ted.com/talks/ari\\_wallach\\_3\\_ways\\_to\\_plan\\_for\\_the\\_very\\_long\\_term](https://www.ted.com/talks/ari_wallach_3_ways_to_plan_for_the_very_long_term).

19. Daniel Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 21–25.

us from all other living creatures. Psychologist Daniel Gilbert summed it up nicely by saying, “We think about the future in a way that no other animal can, does, or ever has, and this simple, ubiquitous, ordinary act is a defining feature of our humanity.” According to Gilbert, no chimpanzee “weeps at the thought of growing old, or smiles as it contemplates its summer vacation, or turns down a Fudgsicle because it already looks too fat in shorts.”<sup>20</sup> Only we have that honor—even though we aren’t always very good at using that skill to best serve ourselves and others.

We have another distinguishing characteristic that has great power, though we don’t always use it powerfully or for good either: the ability to cooperate with strangers and to act in their best interest, even in contradiction of our own interests. In fact, the ability to act cooperatively and even altruistically is one of the greatest achievements of humanity. Evolutionary biologists remark on this and assert that we are literally built to cooperate with others—not just with those we know or are related to but with innumerable strangers.<sup>21</sup> And it isn’t just cooperation; humans have evolved a unique capacity to *care* about and have compassion for strangers—to take responsibility for strangers.<sup>22</sup> We are built, in other words, to belong to one another.

In fact, without this ability we could not form effective groups much larger than 150 people, but with this ability, we harness the power of millions and billions. In such large groups, when we ignore this capacity for caring, then suicide, addiction, unhappiness, and avariciousness expand. But when we act on this impulse, large groups of humans are capable of—and are biologically built for—great goodness.<sup>23</sup> I don’t think I need to detail the ways in which we have clearly not fully tapped into this goodness. Though we are built for compassion, for care, and for love, we are also—in King Benjamin’s formulation—fallen, weak, incapable of acting on our best instincts, and enemies to all our best, even divine, impulses (see Mosiah 2–4). But the fact remains that we are built to cooperate with and belong to not just our kin but to all humanity.<sup>24</sup>

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20. Gilbert, *Stumbling on Happiness*, 4.

21. Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (New York: Harper, 2015), 25, 38.

22. Sebastian Junger, *Tribe: On Homecoming and Belonging* (New York: Twelve, 2016), xvi.

23. Junger, *Tribe*, 25–27.

24. Dacher Keltner, *Born to Be Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life* (New York: Norton, 2009); Christopher Bergland, “The Evolutionary Biology of Altruism,” *The Athlete’s Way* (blog), *Psychology Today*, December 25, 2012,



Atheists, philosophers, historians, podcasters, Holocaust survivors, writers, therapists, military veterans, ministers, and psychologists concur with the biologists: building lasting relationships and connections with other people is the only way to live happy and meaningful lives. Author and atheist Alain de Botton, whose essay on marriage relationships was the most-read article on the *New York Times* website in 2016; *On Being* podcast host Krista Tippett; concentration camp survivor Viktor Frankl; Christian social worker Brené Brown; war veteran and journalist Sebastian Junger; historian of Latter-day Saint theology Samuel Brown; Congregationalist historian and archivist Margaret Bendroth; Methodism's founder, John Wesley; and BYU's own psychology professor Brent Slife do not, on the surface, seem to have much in common. But they all landed in the same spot: asserting that building relationships with others, loving others, is the most important work of humanity—not the byproduct but the purpose of life. In Slife's words at a recent forum, loving others “must be an end, not . . . a means.”<sup>25</sup> And in John Wesley's words, “The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness.”<sup>26</sup>

### Genealogical Consciousness

This winding through fields decidedly not related to my research, experience, and training may seem like a long sidetrack, but it demonstrates that when William Dade stated his reasons for adding more information to parish registers, he tapped into the apparently universal human ability to think about the future and the inclination to belong, to connect. In that respect, he was maybe not so exceptional, and his actions are ones we could replicate. But it was his combination of these two human behaviors that made him exceptional. The social scientists, authors, and journalists I listed have emphasized the importance of relationships or have discussed the ability to plan for the future, but Dade did both

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<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-athletes-way/201212/the-evolutionary-biology-altruism>.

25. Brent Slife, “The Experience of Love and the Limitations of Psychological Explanation,” forum address, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, May 16, 2017, [https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/brent-d-sliffe\\_experience-love-limitations-psychological-explanation/](https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/brent-d-sliffe_experience-love-limitations-psychological-explanation/).

26. John Wesley and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: Strahan, 1743), v. My thanks to Rachel Cope, who exposed me to this line of Methodist thinking.

simultaneously. He was thinking about *relationships across time*—across vast stretches of time—and he was thinking beyond the barrier of personal acquaintance to encompass strangers.

Many people before him thought of their famous ancestors or about their posterity or about enforcing rules about who constituted sufficiently illustrious ancestors and sufficiently legitimate posterity. Dade, on the other hand, stitched together his interest in the past to the lived daily lives of the people whose details filled the books he kept and then stitched that to the concerns and desires of future strangers. That is not just transgenerational thinking; that is what I call genealogical consciousness. Genealogical consciousness is an ethic, a moral way of behaving based on seeing oneself and one's actions as inextricably linked with past, present, and future people's lives and hopes. Hoping future genealogists would have "clearer intelligence" in their research doesn't sound like much of a gift, but the real power in Dade's actions is that he considered himself and all those future strangers to be connected—and he could do something for them, something that came with no possibility of reward for himself, something they would be grateful for. He saw them, frankly, as people, not as objects, not as abstractions, not as something unimportant to himself.

Genealogical consciousness means seeing how past, present, and future are connected—again not in an abstract sense but in the lived reality of actual thinking and feeling people—and how they and we are connected over time and space. This echoes an idea from Margaret Bendroth, the executive director at the Congregational Library and Archives: "Instead of defining ourselves through associations with once-famous people, or taking our ancestors too lightly by assuming they were not as complex as we are, we should want an encounter with the past that will challenge and deepen [us]."<sup>27</sup> Similarly, we need an encounter with the future that challenges and deepens us.

### A Need to Be Remembered

Most humans want to be remembered, to leave something that lasts beyond their lifespan, no matter the scale of that remembrance. In the words of Umberto Eco, we make lists "because we do not want to die."<sup>28</sup>

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27. Margaret Bendroth, *The Spiritual Practice of Remembering* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2013), 10.

28. Umberto Eco, from an interview with Suzanne Byers and Lothar Gorris, "We Like Lists Because We Don't Want to Die," *Speigel* online, November 11, 2009, quoted in Laqueur, *Work of the Dead*, 374.

Indeed, what are the book of *Chronicles* and all the pyramids, tombs, and masses for the dead if not hopeful expressions that we will be remembered? What else would have motivated the builder of my home in 1951 to write his name on plaster that was about to be canvassed and painted over, if not some vestigial hope that the recording of his name would grant him a measure of immortality that the bricks he used and the walls he built could not?

But Dade wasn't thinking of himself; he wasn't clamoring to be remembered. He was thinking of, well, us—of future strangers he would never know and of our need to belong and be connected to something larger and longer lasting than ourselves.

The posterity William Dade imagined appreciating his efforts was not his own. He remained childless until his death in 1790, as did his sister, who died in 1782, and his remaining brother, who died in 1806.<sup>29</sup> The detailed forms William Dade created and which recorded his and his sister's deaths versus the sloppy but more typical account of their brother's burial show that Dade's innovation had limited reach. He and his family passed into obscurity. In fact, despite his importance to English genealogy, his family did not appear as a group on either of the two largest collections of online family trees until this summer, when in researching this talk I organized and grouped together the Dade family files on FamilySearch's family tree.

It wasn't just the knowledge of Dade's family that died out. Despite additional Church of England clergy adopting Dade's pattern, his remarkable idea did not survive long. The practice largely disappeared after 1813, when regulations about Church of England registers changed. Parish registers were then required to be kept in preprinted books that limited the flexibility that had allowed Dade to think of registers more expansively. Some vicars continued to squeeze the extra bits of information into the printed boxes, even into the 1840s. But the practice largely disappeared, never to return. And other than the people researching

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29. Death of William Dade, July 26, 1790, Church of England, Barmston, East Riding Archives and Local Studies Service, PE6/4, in "Yorkshire Burials," <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBPRS/YORKSHIRE/BUR/500480584>; death of Mary Dade, April 20, 1782, Church of England, St. Mary Castlegate, Borthwick Institute for Archives, PR Y/MC 138, in "Yorkshire Burials," <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBPRS/YORKSHIRE/BUR/204151938>; and burial of Thomas Dade, November 24, 1806, Church of England, Burton Agnes, East Riding Archives and Local Studies Service, PEC60/2, in "Yorkshire Burials," <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBPRS/YORKSHIRE/BUR/500225892>.

their ancestors in these records, not many people know about William Dade anymore.

But all was not lost for genealogical consciousness. Joseph Smith, Wilford Woodruff, and Susa Young Gates all took their personal religious and spiritual experiences and used them to think about all of humanity across all time and about our connections to one another and to God.<sup>30</sup>

### Susa Young Gates

We should pause here and recognize Susa Young Gates's remarkable work that is often less known than Joseph Smith's or Wilford Woodruff's. Prominent in late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century Latter-day Saint leadership, founder of the *Young Woman's Journal* and the *Relief Society Magazine*, and active in the struggle for women's suffrage, Gates was also passionate about genealogy. In the 1890s, she collected information from living relatives and traveled to archives in the East to conduct research.

In 1902, she fell seriously ill and received a blessing. In the blessing, she was told that she would continue to perform temple work but that she would also "do a greater work than [she had] ever done before."<sup>31</sup> Her understanding of this blessing turned her from someone acquiring genealogical knowledge for herself and her family to someone deeply committed to genealogical consciousness. She wrote that while she had already been interested in temple work, she now "felt that I must do something more, something to help all the members of the Church."<sup>32</sup> After this, Gates became a formidable force in genealogical efforts for others.

Though the Church had established the Genealogical Society of Utah (GSU) (now the Family History Department of the Church) in 1894 and had genealogical libraries housed at temples, there was no

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30. Richard Turley, "The Latter-day Saint Doctrine of Baptism for the Dead," family history fireside, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, November 9, 2001, <https://cfhg.byu.edu/pdf/firesides/2001-11-09.pdf>.

31. "Susa Young Gates," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 24 (July 1933): 98, cited in Lisa Olsen Tait, "Susa Young Gates and the Vision of the Redemption of the Dead: D&C 138," *Church History: Revelations in Context*, August 14, 2015, <https://www.lds.org/study/manual/revelations-in-context/susa-young-gates-and-the-vision-of-the-redemption-of-the-dead?lang=eng>.

32. "Susa Young Gates," 99; quoted also in Tait, "Susa Young Gates."

sustained Churchwide effort at genealogical education and training at the turn of the twentieth century. Gates worked with the GSU, published genealogical articles, worked to improve the indexing of temple ordinances, founded the Daughters of Utah Pioneers, wrote genealogy lessons, wrote the first genealogical how-to manual in the United States in 1912, and made family history work central to the work of the Relief Society. She did this for two decades, until the Church gradually assumed greater involvement and centralized genealogical efforts after the 1920s—which was her hoped-for goal all along.<sup>33</sup> Gates’s perseverance is partly attributed to her strength of character, but I would assert that it was powered by genealogical consciousness—a power that came when she felt called to do something more to benefit people beyond her own kin.

### Genealogical Knowledge and Identity

So, what is genealogical consciousness for us? Some would claim a largely Latter-day Saint audience is full of genealogical consciousness, but I want to push that idea a bit further and assert that a largely Latter-day Saint audience is full of genealogical knowledge and perhaps even a genealogically based identity, but those aren’t the same as genealogical consciousness. Genealogical consciousness brings along with it an empathetic wisdom that knowledge alone cannot possess.

For me, genealogical knowledge is intriguing and thrilling. I’ve been filling out pedigree charts since I learned to write, and finding genealogical information is satisfying and exciting on its own terms. I dare say some of you find it equally satisfying and exciting—probably about 2 to 5 percent of you (if my ward’s statistics on family history work are typical). And while that group can and should expand—which is, frankly, what my colleagues and I who teach family history majors hope will happen—it is unlikely it will ever be the majority of people.

The good news is that though a passionate interest in gathering genealogical knowledge itself is far from widespread, a much larger group is interested in what genealogy can do for them and their families. For example, it is estimated that a third of adults in the United Kingdom

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33. James B. Allen, Jessie L. Embry, and Kahlile B. Mehr, “The Hearts Turned to the Fathers,” *BYU Studies* 34, no. 2 (1994–95), 59–84; Jessie L. Embry and James B. Allen, “‘Provoking the Brethren to Good Works’: Susan Young Gates, the Relief Society and Genealogy,” *BYU Studies* 31, no. 2 (1991): 115–38.

have been online to look for their ancestors.<sup>34</sup> Most argue that this prevalent interest comes from genealogy's ability to give people a sense of identity. Undoubtedly, the focus on identity is the current obsession in Western genealogy, in the marketing schemes of the three-billion-dollar-a-year genealogical industry, and even in some aspects of Latter-day Saint genealogical practice.

But William Dade and Susa Young Gates didn't stop with personal identity. Finding an anchor for identity is valuable because it gives a sense of roots in a time that feels rootless—even replacing religion, in one Englishman's estimation, as something one can believe in.<sup>35</sup> But on its own, the search for identity can bring only partial belonging.

Rattling on about “endless genealogies” in order to prove our special status is not only a tedious thing to do; it is, if we take Paul literally, a destructive practice (1 Tim. 1:4; see Titus 3:9). And the Savior himself warned that being Abraham's seed was as meaningless as being a rock if it was not accompanied by a humbler way of living (see Matt 3:9; John 8:33).

If genealogy stops with individual identity, it will never fully jettison its exclusionary tendencies. Genealogy's historical association with elitist and racist claims shows that it is too easy to slip into tribalism, eugenics, racism, rabid isolationist nationalism, and us-versus-them-ism. If we focus solely on our own identity, it is easy to myopically think only *our* ancestors matter. We become “all manner of -ites,” to borrow a phrase (see 4 Ne. 1:17). A genealogical understanding based solely on personal identity inevitably leads to excluding others' identities, whether they are based in race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, DNA, nationality, or any other category. Genealogical consciousness, on the other hand, doesn't just avoid these pitfalls—it prevents them. It has the power to obliterate them, to completely dissolve the destructive boundaries between us and them, to starkly remind us that there is no “them” and that there is only “us,” to pull people together *despite* differences.

If instead we see genealogical knowledge and even identity as tools, as means to an end, then we're on the way to genealogical consciousness. We often reverse this, prizing knowledge over the wisdom of consciousness. We race to find more names and make the consumption of more information more important than getting to know those who held the names we seek. This is meaningless and exhausting as we chase after

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34. Deborah Cohen, *Family Secrets: Shame and Privacy in Modern Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 258.

35. Cohen, *Family Secrets*, 264.



ever more elusive proof of our righteous genealogical knowledge, as we constantly learn, but never come to a knowledge of the truth (see 2 Tim. 3:7). We tire ourselves endlessly in the doing and miss the opportunity to become, thinking we can save getting to know them for later. But getting to know them is the point. It is where the real power lies—not the other way around. To quote from Philippians, “If . . . there is . . . any consolation from love” or “any compassion and sympathy” in Christ, we need to also find them in one another. We should “do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than [ourselves].”<sup>36</sup>

### True Genealogical Consciousness

Genealogical consciousness goes beyond mere knowledge or pursuit of personal or group identity. Instead, it makes us stop to consider and to reckon both with others’ lives and choices and with our own. We can also imagine our shared humanity with people in the past and the choices they confronted.

I remember sitting in an English archive reading the papers of the Travell family. One day, while reading Anne Travell’s diary from August 1780, I discovered that her “dear sister[-in-law] and friend” Martha had died suddenly at the age of forty-one.<sup>37</sup> I teared up, mourning the loss of Martha. I stopped myself when I realized *everyone* from 1780 is dead. But then as I considered my response further, I realized I was not shedding tears for Martha’s death as much as I was for the pain her death caused her family and friends. Anne wrote that she spent the rest of that evening writing twenty “dreadful” letters informing friends and family of Martha’s death.<sup>38</sup> I could imagine how dreadful that was, and I could imagine the pain of losing a lifelong friend and a much-loved sister-in-law—a person I too had grown to love as I read her letters. I further considered what a devastating blow it would be to me to lose a sibling or sibling-in-law. It was as if, in that moment, time and distance between Anne and me collapsed and virtually disappeared, replaced with a brief moment of connection and empathy.

If, like Dade, we pause to consider the long-since dead, we can pivot to considering present and future relationships. As Margaret Bendroth

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36. Philippians 2:1–4 (New Revised Standard Version).

37. Anne Travell, day book, August 27, 1780, Lloyd-Baker Family of Hardwicke Court Collection, Gloucestershire Archives, D4582/4/17.

38. Travell, day book, August 27, 1780.

put it, “The choice is not to load our ancestors down with honors or run away from them as fast as we can—our . . . faith requires us to take the past seriously and to receive its people warmly and wisely. It requires us to be generous, and in a fundamental way truly inclusive.”<sup>39</sup> And I would say, it doesn’t stop there. Because developing genealogical consciousness requires that we think about strangers in the past, it develops the possibility of thinking about strangers in the present and strangers in the future and about how our relationships and actions will last beyond death and echo into future strangers’ lives. In doing so, genealogical consciousness makes heavy demands: it demands that we act more compassionately and more Christlike.

In conclusion, I’m going to explain my title. As a historian of the eighteenth century, I’ve grown accustomed to long, narrative titles typically used by that century’s authors. And as a lover of fine children’s literature, I’m amused by E. L. Konigsburg’s title of one of my favorite children’s books: *Jennifer, Hecate, Macbeth, William McKinley, and Me, Elizabeth*. But while those facts explain the long, narrative style of my title, they don’t explain the content. And they certainly don’t explain the dead cats. Why didn’t I just title the talk “Developing a Genealogical Consciousness,” since that’s the point of the talk? Because I had the suspicion—backed by decades of personal experience—that if any words resembling *genealogy* or *family history* were used to describe something to be presented to an audience of Latter-day Saints, attendance would either be virtually nonexistent or would consist entirely of those already seriously, passionately, rabidly interested in family history. And as much as I love that latter group—and in fact count myself among them—I wanted to reach an audience who might not think they have anything to learn about the reasons for genealogical pursuits or who feel guilty or overwhelmed when the words *family history* are uttered. I did not want to burden that group any further; I wanted to offer an additional perspective or alternative approach.

Our shared theology is replete with genealogical consciousness and its potential to create meaningful change for the better. As Patrick Mason has put it, “This [Mormon] image of being knit together, with the children of God in all our diversity inextricably and intricately interwoven, is at the heart of Mormonism’s social ideal. It reflects a life-affirming theology predicated on the notion that the entire family of God can and will be eternally bound together—that heaven is less about where we are

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39. Bendroth, *Spiritual Practice of Remembering*, 97.

than who we are with and the quality of our relationships.”<sup>40</sup> Genealogical consciousness is merely a label meant to underscore that relationships with other people in the past, present, and future are durable, built for the eternities, and from them we can access previously untapped mines of divine power. Simply put, we cannot afford to treat genealogy the way we have—as something, to quote an acquaintance of mine, “that dude in the Third Ward does” or as something that is satisfied by producing stacks and stacks of temple names in order to show them off or rattle off numbers during Sunday School to impress or guilt others. If that is why we do it, then doing so is the only reward we will ever have.

More than something that dude in the Third Ward or your great-aunt does, genealogical consciousness is a way of being, a way of thinking about your place within and responsibility to the generations surrounding you. It holds a promise to erode racism and sexism; to reduce to rubble centuries of hatred and discrimination; to bind us together when all other ways of connecting only seem to drive us ever further apart; to take our instinct to belong, shatter its tribal proclivities, and replace them with inclinations to Zion. If Elijah was meant to return in order to save the world from being an utter waste, then there is more for us to do with the manifestation of the Spirit that bears his name.

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40. Patrick Mason, *Planted: Belief and Belonging in an Age of Doubt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2015), 171.



Sarah Louisa Bouton Felt. Courtesy International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

# Sarah Louisa Bouton Felt

## Thousands Called Her Mother

RoseAnn Benson

A tribute to Sarah Louisa (“Louie”) Bouton Felt declared her “a beautiful lady whose name we all should know.”<sup>1</sup> Although many members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are familiar with two names important to the organization of the Primary Association, Aurelia Spencer Rogers (1834–1922) and Eliza R. Snow (1804–1887), the name Louie B. Felt (1850–1928) is relatively unknown. However, Louie was the second person called to be a ward Primary president and at age thirty was selected to preside over all the Primary Associations in Utah Territory, serving as the first general superintendent of the Primary for forty-five years.

This article reveals how Sarah Louisa Bouton Felt developed from a shy, young girl into an innovative and progressive leader.<sup>2</sup> Her determination to stick with whatever the Lord asked, her readiness to learn

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1. “The Lessons—Church History, Subject for the Year 1924—Character Study: ‘By Their Fruits Shall Ye Know Them’: Lesson I,” *Children’s Friend* 23 (December 1924): 378.

2. This article will draw on contemporary writings by Louie Bouton Felt, Eliza R. Snow, Emmeline B. Wells, Louisa Morris White, Lillie Tuckett Freeze, Aurelia Rogers, and Augusta Joyce Crocheron. Other primary sources include numerous articles about Louie in the *Woman’s Exponent* and *The Children’s Friend* by those who knew her well. Records of the early Primary leadership meetings and works on the history of Primary by Conrad Harward, Jill Mulvay Derr, Carol Cornwall Madsen, and Susan Staker Oman have been consulted. Susan Staker Oman has written on Louie’s friendship with May Anderson, and this article places that friendship in the context of Louie’s life.

more about the gospel she knew to be true, her eagerness to love and rejoice in the children of others, her perseverance in spite of illness and poor health, and her willingness to sacrifice her financial resources for the Primary shaped her into a beloved and memorable first general Primary president. Louie was young when she was called as a leader, did not have an assertive personality, and had no children of her own and thus felt inadequate, but when she was placed in a calling she did not anticipate, she rose to the challenge and spoke, taught, made decisions, and led adults and children. Her work was appreciated in her own lifetime, but hers is an unfamiliar name today, and her pioneering efforts are deserving of greater awareness.

### **The Beginnings of the Primary Association**

Aurelia Rogers lived in Farmington, Utah, about thirty miles north of Salt Lake City, and felt a need for more “cultivation and improvement of the children morally and spiritually than was being done through the influence of day and Sunday-Schools.”<sup>3</sup> She expressed this need to Eliza R. Snow in August 1878, and Eliza took the plan to John Taylor, head of the Church as the presiding Apostle, who approved a new organization for the teaching of children. Aurelia’s bishop called her to serve as the first Primary president in August 1878, and she served in that capacity and later as part of the Primary general board for many years.

Eliza organized the second Primary, in the Salt Lake City Eleventh Ward, on September 14, 1878, only weeks after the organization of the Farmington Primary. She selected Louie Bouton Felt to be the president, presaging the call she would receive just two years later to be the general superintendent of the Primary. The organization of local Primary Associations began in earnest soon thereafter. In 1879, Eliza—who was about seventy-four years old—began organizing Primaries in conjunction with her role as acting general Relief Society president as she traveled throughout the territory of Utah and into Idaho.<sup>4</sup>

Aurelia, Eliza, and Louie each recognized and addressed the problems of founding a children’s organization and dedicated their lives to ensuring the success of the Primary. Aurelia advocated the spiritual welfare of

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3. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, ed., *The Personal Writings of Eliza Roxcy Snow* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995), 36–37.

4. Marion Belnap Kerr, “Consistent and Rapid Growth of the Primary Work,” *Children’s Friend* 27 (January 1928): 29. Kerr described the rapid growth of Primary Associations “as if by Magic.”



the children, promoted the need for such an association, and has since been considered the founding mother of the organization.<sup>5</sup> Traveling throughout Utah Territory, Eliza expanded the organization to branches and wards. She also created materials unique for Primary use, such as two music books, a Bible question-and-answer book, and two Primary speaker books. These materials united the widely separated associations in singing, reciting, and teaching in their weekly meetings. Louie was also an innovator, with many new ideas, and she faced the challenge of convincing Church leaders, parents, and teachers of the importance of the great work that could be accomplished in Primary. All three women showed a willingness to step forward into uncharted territory to initiate and contribute to an organization they were convinced was of divine origin. Heroically, they broke new ground, gave their hearts and countless hours of hard work to making the Primary successful, and as a result left a lasting legacy.<sup>6</sup> As the first general superintendent, young Louie Felt carried the responsibility for seeing the Primary Association become a stable, recognized, and well-run organization.

### Early Life of Louie Bouton

Sarah Louisa Bouton was born May 5, 1850, in South Norwalk, Connecticut, the third child of Joseph Bouton and Mary Rebecca Barto Bouton. The Bouton family joined the Church in the late 1840s, shortly before Louie's birth. As a child, Louie enjoyed living in New England. She loved winter sports and became a particularly proficient ice skater. She and her brothers tapped syrup from their grandfather's grove of maple trees; gathered flowers, berries, and nuts in the woods; sailed or rowed in Long Island Sound to dredge for oysters; and dug clams at the seashore for clambakes. They shared this food with the missionaries and members of the small Latter-day Saint branch that her father presided over. In addition to helping supply food for the family, as a teenager Louie learned

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5. On Aurelia Rogers's contributions to the Primary Association, see RoseAnn Benson, "Aurelia Spencer Rogers," in *Women of Faith in the Latter Days*, vol. 2, ed. Britany A. Chapman and Richard E. Turley Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012), 303–14.

6. On the early history of the Primary Association, see RoseAnn Benson, "Primary Association Pioneers: An Early History," in *A Firm Foundation: Church Organization and Administration*, ed. Arnold K. Garr and David J. Whittaker (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011), 245–75.

to bake bread and pies from a black woman who worked for her family.<sup>7</sup> Louie's mother taught her housekeeping skills; however, perhaps the most important lesson Louie learned from her mother was by way of example. Two women once came to their home and began gossiping. Her mother simply left the room. When Louie went to find out where she went, her mother explained, "They were talking about the personal affairs of people, which I had no right to hear and did not wish to." Louie commented, "I had not realized until then, but I always noted it after, that other people's weaknesses and mistakes were not topics for discussion in our home, and it has been one of the guiding factors of my life."<sup>8</sup>

The family initially left Connecticut in 1864 to join the Saints in Utah but were thwarted by a fire in the baggage train that destroyed all their belongings but the clothes they were wearing. They started out again in 1866 by train and then by boat for Omaha, Nebraska. Louie, just sixteen, was later described as "full of life and animation, with sparkling blue eyes, beautiful golden hair, and a tall, graceful, slender figure. Though but a young teenage girl, she was self-possessed and dignified in her manner. By birth and education she was a gentlewoman."<sup>9</sup> Joseph Henry Felt, a recently returned missionary who had served in the northern European countries, was in charge of the Saints in Omaha and drove the carriage to meet the Boutons' boat. He was impressed with his good luck at having drawn the lot for this privilege over the other young men living there. It appears she and Joseph were attracted to each other from the outset. Louie's father was very ill, and it was necessary for the family to wait six weeks in Omaha until he recovered before continuing to Utah. During this time, young Louie and Joseph became better acquainted and fell in love. Sixteen-year-old Louie and twenty-six-year-old Joseph married in the Endowment House on December 29, 1866, a few months after arriving in the Salt Lake Valley.<sup>10</sup>

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7. "Louie B. Felt," *Children's Friend* 13 (November 1914): 597; "Lesson Department: Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt," *Children's Friend* 18 (October 1919): 404–6. See also Conrad Harward, "A History of the Growth and Development of the Primary Association of the LDS Church from 1878 to 1928" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1976), 178–97.

8. Adelaide U. Hardy, "Librarian's Department: Living for a Purpose," *Children's Friend* 17 (December 1918): 474.

9. "Louie B. Felt" (November 1914): 599. See also "Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt," 407–8.

10. Hardy, "Living for a Purpose," 476. At this time in the nineteenth century in most states and in Utah Territory, the age of consent to marry was ten,

## Early Married Life

As part of his colonization efforts, Brigham Young established settlements between Utah and California to act as way stations and as missions to Native Americans, creating a corridor that extended from Salt Lake to Las Vegas and on to San Bernardino.<sup>11</sup> The first Latter-day Saint pioneers to the Muddy River Valley, in present-day Nevada, worked diligently from the day they arrived in June 1855 to grow warm-weather crops such as cotton. The settlement was mostly abandoned in 1858 because the Saints felt threatened by the U.S. Army marching to Utah.<sup>12</sup> Settlers were again called to the Muddy River in 1865, and the newly formed Felt family was called, along with nine other young couples, at the 1867 October general conference to help pioneer the area. They left the next month for their mission. Although the Saints had been settling Utah for almost eighteen years, the Felt family had their own unique and difficult pioneering experience.

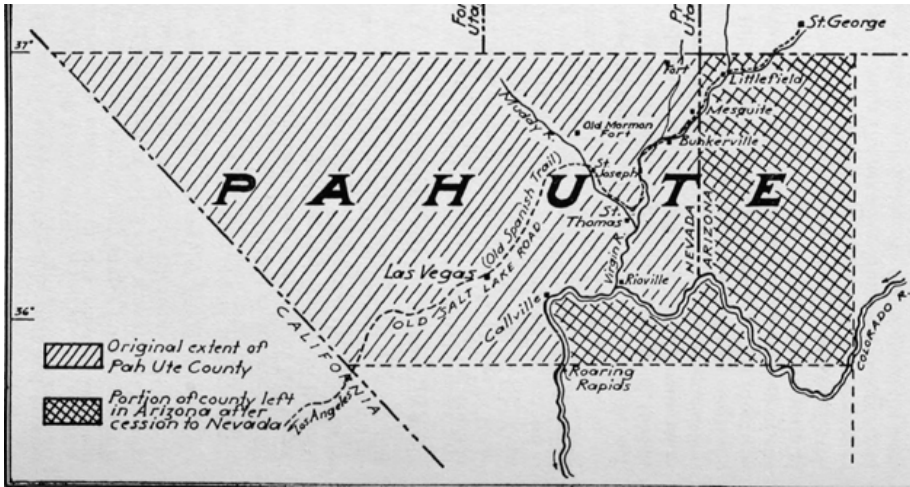
The Felts, on their way through St. George, met an old friend of Joseph's who suggested it would be much easier and more pleasant for his young wife to remain there rather than continuing into a wilder and less-civilized part of the country. Louie as a young girl was described as active and sporty, but for unknown reasons, as a seventeen-year-old and thereafter, her health was described as frail. With health concerns and the difficulties already encountered, Joseph was tempted to remain. When Joseph asked her opinion, Louie demonstrated her own faith and courage: "We were not sent to St. George; we were sent to the

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and the marriage of a young woman to an older, financially established man was common, although in this instance Joseph was a mature returned missionary, but not yet financially secure. "To be marriageable was the same as being ready for motherhood, which was determined by physical development, not age." Thomas Hine, *The Rise and Fall of the American Teenager: A New History of the American Adolescent Experience* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 16. See also "Joseph Smith's Marriages to Young Women," FairMormon, accessed February 1, 2019, [https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Joseph\\_Smith/Polygamy/Marriages\\_to\\_young\\_women](https://www.fairmormon.org/answers/Joseph_Smith/Polygamy/Marriages_to_young_women).

11. Richard L. Jensen, "Colonization," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:290.

12. Sondra Cosgrove, "The Muddy Mission," Online Nevada Encyclopedia, updated April 20, 2011, [http://www.onlinenevada.org/the\\_muddy\\_mission](http://www.onlinenevada.org/the_muddy_mission). As the U.S. Army, led by Albert Sidney Johnston, marched to Utah to install federal appointees in Utah's territorial government in 1857, Brigham Young called missionaries and settlers back to Utah to defend the Saints.



This historic map shows the “Old Mormon Fort,” St. Joseph, and St. Thomas along the Muddy River, which fed into the Virgin River and then the Colorado River. The settlements were along the Old Spanish Trail (also called the Old Salt Lake Road, the Arrowhead Trail, and the Mormon Trail) between St. George and Las Vegas. “Muddy Settlements in Pahute County, Arizona,” in James H. McClintock, *Mormon Settlement in Arizona: A Record of Peaceful Conquest of the Desert* (Phoenix, Ariz.: n.p., 1921), 103.

Muddy,” she told Joseph. “You may do as you please; I am going on.”<sup>13</sup> Louie’s tenacity in the face of a daunting assignment foreshadowed her long-term service as general Primary president despite a weak physical constitution.

By 1867, both the St. Thomas and the St. Joseph settlements were established. Until they could build adobe homes, most of the colonizers lived in tents or wagons within a small fort built a decade earlier.<sup>14</sup> Because of Louie’s youth and frail health, the Felts were lent what had once been a chicken coop in which to make a temporary home within the fort at St. Thomas. Soon they set to work making their own adobe bricks to build a small

13. “Louie B. Felt” (November 1914): 601. See also “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt,” 408; Marion Belnap Kerr, “A Tribute to Louie B. Felt,” *Children’s Friend* 27 (March 1928): 99.

14. The original fort measured 150 feet on all four sides, with bastions on the northwest and southeast corners, and was made of sun-dried adobe bricks. Margo Bartlett Pesek, “Old Mormon Fort Preserves Las Vegas’ Early Roots,” *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, February 3, 2013, <https://www.reviewjournal.com/entertainment/entertainment-columns/trip-of-the-week/old-mormon-fort-preserves-las-vegas-early-roots/>.

home in St. Joseph, Louie working alongside Joseph in a pair of bloomers she had made for herself.<sup>15</sup> He shoveled the clay and added the water; then, bare footed, she tramped and mixed the clay until it was smooth and of the proper consistency to pour into molds they had made. The décor of their new home included a smooth clay floor covered by carpet, window openings with muslin stretched over them, a doorway enclosed by a blanket, and a brush-and-mud roof. Their furniture consisted of two chairs and a rocker, an adobe wheat storage bin upon which they placed their bed, a dry goods box covered by a curtain with a tin washbasin set on it, and a table made from brush limbs and packing boxes.<sup>16</sup>

Life in the Muddy River settlements was difficult from the outset because of the poor soil and harsh climate. Prior to the encroachment of white civilization in the 1800s, the Piutes had lived there comfortably with a combination of farming, hunting, and gathering.<sup>17</sup> Their lives were disturbed with the introduction of new diseases and the demand to share land, and those who survived were also trying to eke out an existence in the area. In an 1884 account, Latter-day Saint historian Augusta Crocheron described, however, the local Paiutes as “friendly Indians who were willing to work and learn civilization, but who were so hungry they could not resist the temptation to pluck the young watermelons and squashes planted by the missionaries, as fast as they approached the size of walnuts. . . . President Erastus Snow,<sup>18</sup> with fatherly kindness, sent beef, cattle and flour to the Indians, to stay their increasing instincts

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15. “Louie B. Felt” (November 1914): 602; “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt,” 408–9. See also Kerr, “A Tribute to Louie B. Felt,” 99.

16. “Louie B. Felt” (November 1914): 602–3. See also “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt,” 409.

17. “The Mormons arrived at the Muddy in January 1865 and established St. Thomas; six months later a second group founded St. Joseph nine miles to the north. Both discovered ample evidence that local Paiutes were growing crops along the Muddy River, yet the settlers saw nothing wrong with expropriating the Native Americans’ property. It was the Paiute practice to plant corn, beans, squash, and wheat before migrating to the cooler uplands for gathering and hunting. They returned every fall to harvest surviving crops. Needless to say, their 1865 return was an unhappy one.” Cosgrove, “Muddy Mission.” On early Utah missions, see also S. George Ellsworth, “Heeding the Prophet’s Call,” *Ensign* 25 (October 1995): 30–44; Susan Lyman-Whitney, “The Muddy Mission,” *Deseret News*, January 30, 1992, C1–C2.

18. Erastus Snow was the Apostle presiding over the missionary colonization settlements in southern Utah.

for self-preservation by way of appropriation.”<sup>19</sup> Other monumental difficulties included salts from a mineral spring feeding the Muddy, which made large-scale irrigation impossible; severe heat—above one hundred degrees at midnight in summer; drought, along with violent wind and biting sand; no stores or freight trains from which to purchase goods; and the annexation of the territory by Nevada, which demanded back taxes in gold or silver. These were all factors that caused Latter-day Saints to abandon the Muddy River Valley by 1871.<sup>20</sup> However, despite the hardships, Louie demonstrated her tenacity with this comment: “I never felt to murmur, but to stay as long as required.”<sup>21</sup> In 1869, the Felts returned to Salt Lake City.<sup>22</sup>

Joseph had saved no money to buy a home, having served a mission for the Church to England from 1863 to 1866, but Louie’s father had left her a small inheritance, which she used in 1872 to purchase land and to have a small cottage built for them on the southwest corner of First South and Seventh East in Salt Lake City.<sup>23</sup> Lillie Tuckett Freeze, a neighbor, described Louie as “thoroughly domestic, clean, orderly, a good housekeeper, an excellent cook; a real homemaker.” The two women became close friends in the Salt Lake Eleventh Ward, and Louie referred to her as Aunt Lillie, although Lillie was only five years her senior. Lillie described Louie as “intensely magnetic and sympathetic. Outside of her

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19. Augusta Joyce Crocheron, “Louie B. Felt, President of the Primary Associations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” in *Representative Women of Deseret* (Salt Lake City: J. C. Graham, 1884), 57–59.

20. Cosgrove, “Muddy Mission.” The settlement was reestablished in later decades.

21. Crocheron, “Louie B. Felt, President of the Primary Associations,” 58.

22. In 1869, likely after their return to Salt Lake City, Louie went back to Connecticut for three months to visit her father, who was not expected to live. Crocheron, “Louie B. Felt, President of the Primary Associations,” 58. A neighbor wrote, “Bro and sister Felt Jos. H. And Louie came in 1871 or 72—I think—we each lived on a corner—Felts on 1<sup>st</sup> So and 7<sup>th</sup> East and Freezes on 2<sup>nd</sup> So. And 7<sup>th</sup> East.” Lillie Tuckett Freeze, “A Bit of History Prior to 1880, 11th Ward,” Lillie Tuckett Freeze Papers, 1886–1928, MS 316, folder 2, p. 1, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

23. “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt,” 409. As unique as female ownership of land was at that time, Martha Sonntag Bradley wrote that as early as 1847, forty-one single women were apportioned city lots in Salt Lake City. As cited in Jill Thorley Warnick, “Women Homesteaders in Utah, 1869–1934” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1985), 23–24.



home life at this time she was a bright star in the social world. She loved parties and dances and was very popular. She and I were the leading ones in dramatics in the ward.”<sup>24</sup>

Having been faithful to the difficult mission to the Muddy, Louie now developed spiritual roots to her testimony. Although raised by faithful Latter-day Saint converts, Louie expressed her lack of gospel understanding until she served in Church auxiliaries. Rather than mourn her inability to have children, she involved herself in her ward, serving in the Sunday School as a secretary and promoting the new Young Ladies’ Retrenchment Association.<sup>25</sup> She professed, “Then . . . began some of the happiest days of my life. I soon became a member of the Y.L.M.I.A., and thereby received a better understanding of my religion, which brought me peace and happiness, such as I had never known before.”<sup>26</sup> Louie attributed much of her spiritual development to early meetings in the home of Mary Ann Freeze and Lillie Tuckett Freeze at the beginning of the Retrenchment Association. In 1878, Mary Ann designated Louie as first counselor when the stake YLMIA was organized.<sup>27</sup> In September 1878, she was also called to be the first ward Primary president in the second Primary organized in the Utah Territory.

Her more deeply established testimony of the Church included plural marriage. She bore testimony of the principle with these words: “Having no children of my own [I] was very desirous my husband should

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24. “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt,” 409–10.

25. President Brigham Young asked his wife Eliza to assist bishops in organizing ward Relief Societies in 1868 for adult Latter-day Saint women. The Relief Society that existed in Nauvoo had ceased to function as a Church organization. In 1869, President Brigham Young organized his teenage daughters into the Cooperative Retrenchment Association and asked Eliza Snow to establish similar organizations in each ward of the Church she visited. He challenged the girls “to grow spiritually, to resist idleness and gossip, to retrench from the styles of the world in dress and deportment. . . . They were not to give in to rude or harsh frontier ways” and to serve as “proper examples of Latter-day Saints.” Elaine Anderson Cannon, “Young Women,” and Carol Cornwall Madsen, “Retrenchment Association,” in Ludlow, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1616–19; Jill Mulvay Derr and others, *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women’s History* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2016), 168–71, 262.

26. Crocheron, “Louie B. Felt, President of the Primary Associations,” 58. See also “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt,” 411–12.

27. “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt,” 411–13.



take other wives that he might have a posterity to do him honor.”<sup>28</sup> She encouraged her husband to marry women she loved as friends: Elizabeth Mineer in 1875 and Elizabeth Liddell six years later; both women bore children. Louie related, “After he took another wife and had children born to him, the Lord gave me a mother’s love for them; they seemed as if they were indeed my own, and they seem to have the same love for me they do for their own mother.”<sup>29</sup> Louie helped raise “Lizzie Ma’s” and “Aunt Dell’s” children and grandchildren and was called “Louie Ma” by them.<sup>30</sup> Louie, although childless, seemed to have a deep, innate ability to love and nurture children, which brought her great joy.

### Organizing the Primary Association

Under the direction of Church President John Taylor, Eliza Snow, with Zina Diantha Young, selected twenty-eight-year-old Louie to be president of the first Primary in Salt Lake City.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps Eliza saw in her a younger version of herself, a childless polygamous wife fully committed to helping children. Augusta Crocheron described Louie as tall, slender, and with delicate health—pale and with a countenance that was innocent, pure, refined, and spiritual in expression.<sup>32</sup> Her good friend of three years, Louisa Morris (White), illustrated Louie’s sense of humor: when Louie told her of the new calling, she engaged Louisa in a guessing game as to the names of her two counselors, finally telling her that one was to be Elizabeth Mineer Felt and she, Louisa Morris, was to be the other. Louisa declared herself “willing to obey the instructions which I knew Sister Felt was capable of giving.”<sup>33</sup> Louie, however, was not so confident of her own abilities, thinking herself too “uneducated, undisciplined in motherhood, unqualified, [and] unprepared” for her new

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28. Crocheron, “Louie B. Felt, President of the Primary Associations,” 58.

29. Crocheron, “Louie B. Felt, President of the Primary Associations,” 58–59.

30. “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt,” 410–11.

31. Hardy, “Living for a Purpose,” 476. See also Kerr, “Tribute to Louie B. Felt,” 100.

32. Crocheron, “Louie B. Felt, President of the Primary Associations,” 59.

33. Louisa Morris White, “Recalling the Past,” Record of Louisa Morris White, MS 5568, folder 1, Church History Library. Later in her life, Louisa would add these words of thanksgiving regarding this call to her record: “Dear Sister Louie, during all the years that have intervened, my heart has gone out to you in loving gratitude for the opportunity you gave me in my girlhood of working by your side.”

calling. When Eliza and Zina informed Louie the call was from priesthood leaders, she pledged to do her very best.<sup>34</sup>

During the time Louie worked in the Salt Lake Eleventh Ward Primary and also the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association, Eliza R. Snow, Zina D. Young, Mary I. Horn, and other sisters and brothers from the stake took note of her "great ability and charm as a leader and speaker in the Stake M.I.A." and as the ward Primary president.<sup>35</sup> Lillie Freeze wrote, "Louie had a most wonderful influence over the little children of the Eleventh Ward. They were fascinated by her gracious manner. Every child was willing and anxious to do whatever she suggested."<sup>36</sup> Louisa Morris White wrote, "President Felt was beloved by officers and children alike. She was continually studying up something that would be of benefit or interest to the children. Many times I have been summoned to her home to discuss some plan pertaining to their welfare or entertainment."<sup>37</sup> Louie honed her testimony and abilities in the ward Primary and YLMIA, overcoming some of her feelings of timidity and emerging as one who motivated and encouraged others.<sup>38</sup>

In 1879, Eliza suggested to Aurelia Rogers, Primary president in Farmington and the first in all the Church, that she thought it wise "to have some one appointed to preside over all the Primary Associations in the Territory."<sup>39</sup> She [Eliza] suggested that the person should reside in Salt Lake City, as that was the center; and asked me whom I would propose to fill the office." Upon a few moments of reflection, Aurelia confessed that "the

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34. Hardy, "Living for a Purpose," 476.

35. Freeze, "A Bit of History Prior to 1880," 2. See also Susan Staker Oman, "Nurturing LDS Primaries: Louie Felt and May Anderson, 1880–1940," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 49 (Summer 1981): 265.

36. "Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt," 413.

37. White, "Recalling the Past."

38. Even after serving many years in her calling, Louie referred to her timidity as one of her weaknesses. See Louie B. Felt, "Loyalty: President Louie B. Felt," Report of the Sixth Annual Convention of Primary Association Workers, *Children's Friend* 7 (July 1908): 276.

39. Aurelia Rogers recorded April 1879 as the date she was asked by Eliza about Louie. Rogers, *Life Sketches*, 222. However, Rogers set the date as "in the spring of 1880" in her article "After Forty Years," *Children's Friend* 17 (September 1918): 357. Crocheron lists September 1879 as the date Eliza Snow appointed Louie as "Territorial President of the Primary Improvement Associations." Crocheron, "Louie B. Felt, President of the Primary Associations," 59.

name of Sister Louie B. Felt came to my mind.” Eliza confirmed that Louie was also her choice. When Aurelia first met Louie Felt, she acknowledged even then she had “an unusually warm feeling of sympathetic friendship” toward her.<sup>40</sup> When others suggested it was Aurelia’s rightful place to preside, Aurelia declared she “never had a moment’s jealousy over anyone holding office; for no person will ever take my honors from me; I shall have all that I deserve.”<sup>41</sup> Louie recorded the visit of several “leading sisters” from the Church to her home.<sup>42</sup>

In the last week in May 1880 Sisters Eliza R. Snow Young, Prendia [Prescendia] Kimball and Aunt Zina Young came to my house on the corner of 1st South and 7th East SL and said a Central Board of the Primary Association was soon to be organized to look after the interest of the stake organizations and they desired to have a President of the Org. I remarked that I thought Sister Aurelia S. Rogers would be just the right [person]. But said Sister Eliza it will be necessary to have at the head ones living in the city that we may easily consult with them about the work. I also suggested the name of Sister Ellen S. Clawson who was Prest of the 12 Ward Ass[ociation].

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40. Rogers, *Life Sketches*, 222–23.

41. Rogers, *Life Sketches*, 222; Aurelia Rogers noted her sister, Salt Lake Twelfth Ward Primary president Ellen C. Clawson, who had also been asked who should preside over all the Primaries, selected Louie B. Felt. Rogers, “After Forty Years,” 357.

42. There was an unofficial female elite that led in spiritual and organizational matters. They had not yet been officially called or sustained to positions of authority; however, several had been members of the original Relief Society organized in Nauvoo. Eliza Snow was the hub around which she gathered similarly strong, faithful women. One list of who belonged to that special group of women appears in Augusta Joyce Crocheron’s book, *Representative Women of Deseret*: Eliza R. Snow, Zina D. H. Young, Mary Isabella Horne, Sarah M. Kimball, Prescendia L. Kimball, Phoebe W. Woodruff, Bathsheba W. Smith, Elizabeth Howard, Elmina S. Taylor, Mary A. Freeze, Louie B. Felt, Ellen C. Clawson, Emmeline B. Wells, Romania B. Pratt, Elvira S. Barney, Emily Hill Woodmansee, Hannah T. King, Augusta Joyce Crocheron, Helen Mar Whitney, Zina Y. Williams, and Louise M. Wells. Crocheron identified Eliza R. Snow as the “First Lady” and “President of Latter Day Saints’ Women’s Organizations” with her presiding board: Zina D. H. Young, Mary Isabella Horne, and Sarah M. Kimball (iv, 7). See also Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, “The ‘Leading Sisters’: A Female Hierarchy in Nineteenth-Century Mormon Society,” in *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past*, ed. D. Michael Quinn (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 153–68.

Despite Louie's good suggestions, the women already knew whom they were to choose: "Sister Felt we have chosen you for this place." Louie's surprise and alarm was evident in her response: "I am not worthy and am so ignorant. I could not fill that position. I'm sure I could not." Eliza reassured her with this comment: "If you thought you could we would not want you." Louie was finally comforted when the sisters gathered around her and Eliza gave her a "grand blessing" employing her gift for speaking in tongues.<sup>43</sup>

Eliza Snow had long been recognized as the leading lady in the Church and was referred to as the "president of the entire Female Relief Societies" but had not yet been sustained as general president. Nevertheless, she was at the head of all the Latter-day Saint women's organizations and stood preeminent among women in organizing.<sup>44</sup> Even in her unofficial capacity, Eliza had taken the lead in organizing both the "Retrenchment Associations" (later called the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Associations, YLMIA) and the Primary Associations, considering them auxiliaries under the responsibility of the Relief Society.<sup>45</sup>

From the reports recorded in the *Woman's Exponent*, it does not appear Louie traveled to organize any of the early Primary Associations, apparently not having the authority to do so. Lillie Freeze in cryptic notes explained, "Eliza R. Snow spoke on organization[,] said women

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43. Louie Bouton Felt, "Sarah Louisa B. Felt Reminiscence," Sarah Louisa Bouton Felt Papers, 1850–1928, MS 354, folder 1, Church History Library. See also Oman, "Nurturing LDS Primaries," 265; Derr and others, *First Fifty Years of Relief Society*, 464–65, 474.

44. Emmeline B. Wells, "Pen Sketch of an Illustrious Woman," *Woman's Exponent* 9 (February 1, 1881): 131.

45. The *Woman's Exponent* regularly reported events in the Primary, YLMIA, and Relief Society auxiliaries. See, for example, *Woman's Exponent* 1 (June 15, 1872): 2; *Woman's Exponent* 9 (July 1, 1880): 19, 22; "Aunt Lillie's President's Party," *Children's Friend* 14 (February 1915): 67. See also Jill Mulvay Derr, "'Strength in Our Union': The Making of Mormon Sisterhood," in *Sisters in Spirit: Mormon Women in Historical and Cultural Perspective*, ed. Maureen Ursenbach Beecher and Lavina Fielding Anderson (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1987), 172; "Lesson Department: Eliza R. Snow," *Children's Friend* 18 (February 1919): 72. In 1867, almost two decades since arriving in Salt Lake Valley, the Relief Society was formally reorganized and local units established with the leadership of Eliza R. Snow under the direction of Brigham Young. In 1869, Eliza also organized the "Retrenchment Associations" for teenage women to build their testimonies and learn frugality and moderation.

could organize a primary or YL asso[ciation] but had no right—Relief Society, but could assist the Priesthood in doing so.”<sup>46</sup> Perhaps what Lillie’s record refers to is explained in this 1928 historical overview of those first years of Primary by Marion Belnap Kerr:

In the early days of the Church the Sisters’ Associations were presided over by Sister Eliza R. Snow (Smith). She was known as “The Elect Lady.” Although we are not sure that she was publicly sustained to such a position, she with the sisters [Zina D. H. Young, Emmeline B. Wells, M. Isabelle Horne, E. Howard, Lula Greene Richards, Sarah M. Kimball, and other associates] . . . represented the First Presidency in organizing under the direction of the Bishops and the Presidents of stakes and in supervising all organizations presided over by women.<sup>47</sup>

These women remembered how Joseph Smith had “turn[ed] the key to you in the name of God”<sup>48</sup> in 1842, and they considered Relief Society the restoration of an ancient pattern.<sup>49</sup> Sarah M. Kimball recalled that Joseph Smith declared, “I will organize the women under the priesthood after the pattern of the priesthood. . . . The Church was never perfectly organized until the women were thus organized.”<sup>50</sup> Eliza used this foundation as a vital point to appeal to the importance of Relief Society. Procedurally, the organization of Relief Societies required priesthood leaders’ approval and participation; however, the organization of the Young Ladies and Primary Associations was done with local priesthood leader approval but without priesthood leaders’ participation in the calling and setting apart of ward and stake presidencies.<sup>51</sup> As soon as Primary Associations were organized, they became part of the

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46. Lillie Tuckett Freeze, “Minutes of RS Severe [Sevier] Stake Oct 24 & 25, 1880,” Freeze Papers.

47. Kerr, “Consistent and Rapid Growth of the Primary Work,” 29–30. See also Carol Cornwall Madsen and Susan Staker Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints: One Hundred Years of Primary* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 4–5.

48. “Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book,” April 28, 1842, 40, Joseph Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book/1>.

49. “Although the name may be of modern date, the institution is of ancient origin. We were told by our martyred prophet, that the same organization existed in the church anciently.” Eliza R. Snow, “Female Relief Society,” *Deseret Evening News* 1 (April 18, 1868): 2; *Deseret Evening News* 1 (April 20, 1868): 2.

50. Sarah M. Kimball, “Auto-biography,” *Woman’s Exponent* 12 (September 1, 1883): 51.

51. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 10.

Relief Society quarterly meetings, which also included the Young Ladies Mutual Improvement Association.

The women recognized that what was de facto leadership in the women's organizations needed to become official:

In 1880 Sister Wells, in speaking to Sister Eliza R. Snow, addressed her as President. Sister Snow said, "I am not the President." "Then," said Sister Wells, "I will see that you are the President." . . .

One evening, Sister Wells went to see President John Taylor, and explained the conditions existing and the necessity for some system of general supervision in the organizations officered by women. President Taylor approved of the suggestions made by Sister Wells, and asked that he be informed of the first meeting of the sisters when he would come and attend to the matter.

In the meantime Sister Eliza R. Snow submitted the names of Mrs. Elmina S. Taylor and Mrs. Louie B. Felt as the ones suitable to preside over the Y.L.M.I.A. and the Primary Associations of the Church.<sup>52</sup>

Fittingly, during the year of the Church's jubilee celebration, on June 18 and 19, 1880, at a conference of the associations of the Salt Lake Stake—which included the Relief Society, the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association, and the Primary Association—several important Church responsibilities became official.<sup>53</sup> On Saturday morning, July 19, "the middle seats of the tabernacle were filled with the children of the Primary Association of the city. . . . The first business to be transacted was to appoint a central committee to preside over the Primary Associations of the Salt Lake Stake of Zion." Following this, "Sister Eliza," then nominated Mrs. Louie Felt as General Superintendent

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52. "Aunt Lillie's President's Party," 67.

53. See Emmeline B. Wells, "Salt Lake Stake Relief Society Conference," *Woman's Exponent* 9 (July 1, 1880): 21–22. At a later date, Emmeline B. Wells gave additional and slightly different information about what occurred that day. President Taylor was notified that there would be a conference of the sisters on June 19, 1880. He came to the morning meeting and "neither Sisters Snow nor Taylor were present, so President John Taylor, after talking for a while to the children, presented the name of Mrs. Louie B. Felt to be sustained as General President of all the Primary Associations throughout the Church." Eliza R. Snow and Elmina S. Taylor were sustained in the afternoon. "So concluded Sister Wells, 'Sister Felt is not only the President who has presided the longest, but she is the first woman in the history of the Church to be sustained as a general president.'" "Aunt Lillie's President's Party," 67. On the jubilee celebration, see Margaret F. Maxwell, "Year of Jubilee," *New Era* 10 (July 1980): 44–51.

to preside over all the Primary Associations of all the stakes of Zion, which was unanimously carried.”<sup>54</sup> President Taylor, in his remarks to the conference, emphasized the important duty of Relief Society in teaching the children, the young men, and young women. He asked L. John Nuttall to read from “The Law of the Lord” regarding the organization of the Relief Society. President Taylor then “made explanatory remarks concerning the organization and the powers and duties it gave to women.” This was followed by the nomination and sustaining of Eliza as president of all the Relief Societies. He concluded with an apostolic blessing: “God bless the children and God bless the sisters with Sister Snow at their head.”<sup>55</sup> In his actions and remarks, President Taylor again recognized the Relief Society and its president as the presiding organization over all the women and children of the Church.

### Finding Her Place

In May 1880, Louie had just turned thirty years old when she was chosen by Eliza to preside over all the Primary Associations in the territory.<sup>56</sup> With limited training as ward Primary president for less than two years, combined with apparent inborn talents others recognized, she was selected to be the first Primary general superintendent. It appears, however, that her new calling did not mean she was automatically released from other responsibilities. According to Lillie Freeze, Louie “held 3 offices at once—ward treasurer<sup>57</sup> stake coun[selor in the YLMIA] and General Primary Prest. during the time between 1878 and 85.”<sup>58</sup> For a time, Louie seems to have concentrated on her responsibilities as the Salt Lake Eleventh Ward Primary president, as a counselor to Mary Ann Freeze on the Salt Lake Board for the Young Ladies’ Mutual Improvement Association, and as ward treasurer until she felt forced to give up these responsibilities.<sup>59</sup>

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54. Wells, “Salt Lake Stake Relief Society Conference,” 21; Kerr, “Consistent and Rapid Growth,” 31.

55. Kerr, “Consistent and Rapid Growth,” 31; see also Derr and others, *First Fifty Years of Relief Society*, 470–79.

56. Crocheron, “Louie B. Felt, President of the Primary Associations,” 59.

57. “Ward treasurer” likely refers to management of funds raised for and spent on the YLMIA.

58. Freeze, “A Bit of History Prior to 1880,” 3, underlining in original.

59. Emmeline B. Wells, “R. S., Y. L. M. I. A. and Primary Reports,” *Woman’s Exponent* 9 (August 1, 1880): 35; Lillie Tuckett Freeze, “Primary Work from 1880 to 1890,” 2–4, Freeze Papers; White, “Recalling the Past.”



In her new calling, Louie faced challenges finding her place in the large shadow cast by Eliza R. Snow. Her youth, the newness of the calling, and her lack of the executive expertise that Eliza had all caused her to willingly seek advice and counsel from those who were older, wiser, and more experienced—Eliza, Aurelia, Emmeline, Zina, and other women—on how to fulfill her new responsibilities as the general Primary leader.<sup>60</sup> Although described by her friend Lillie Freeze as very popular and enjoying parties and dances, “she was personally shy and preferred to remain in the background.” Having grown up in the East and then moving immediately after her marriage to the Muddy, “she was not well acquainted with either the leading sisters or the leading brethren of the Church.”<sup>61</sup> Although she had returned to Salt Lake City from the Muddy River and had resided there for nine years prior to her call to be general Primary president, perhaps her popularity and familiarity were within the confines of her Eleventh Ward and the neighborhood.

Louie’s position as head of the Primary Association was referred to with various names: “General Superintendent to preside over all the Primary Associations of all the Stakes of Zion,” “Territorial President of the Primary Improvement Associations,” and “General President of all the Primary Associations throughout the Church.” It appears the terms “superintendent” (of Primary) and “president” (of Relief Society) may have indicated a hierarchal status in the initial governance of the women’s organizations, as Louie continued to defer to Eliza and other leading women of the Relief Society.

Louie had an enormous responsibility to fulfill in getting the Primary to be accepted throughout the territory. Initially, the Primary Association was not readily received by the general Church membership. From a number of editorials and letters in the *Woman’s Exponent* and Eliza R. Snow’s several personal exhortations, it appears that support for the Primary Association was not unanimous even after more than a year of organizing associations throughout the territory.<sup>62</sup> Attendance was disappointing: “Reports from the 1880s indicate that attendance averaged

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60. Freeze, “Primary Work from 1880 to 1890,” 1. See also Oman, “Nurturing LDS Primaries,” 266.

61. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 30.

62. See Homespun [Susa Young Gates], “Talk,” *Woman’s Exponent* 9 (December 15, 1880): 106; and M. J. C., “Education and Occupation,” *Woman’s Exponent* 9 (December 15, 1880): 106.

about half the number of children enrolled.”<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, most priesthood leaders, from the prophet on down to the stake presidents, were united regarding the importance of Primary work.

Several personal problems surfaced early in Louie’s presidency in response to the 1882 Edmunds Anti-Polygamy Act.<sup>64</sup> Lillie Freeze recorded, “The raid began and we all scattered for nearly four years. . . . Nothing much could be done; only as the stakes and wards kept the work going.” Many Church leaders were in hiding and, according to Lillie, approximately fifteen hundred men were imprisoned. Louie’s husband, Joseph, who had at this time two additional wives, went “underground,” and Louie twice traveled East to an undisclosed location to avoid testifying against her husband that indeed he had more than one wife.<sup>65</sup> It appears Louie may have had to leave town very quickly in 1886: a letter written by general Relief Society secretary Emmeline B. Wells to Primary secretary Lillie Freeze stated: “Louie . . . asked Sister Aurelia Rogers to take her place until she returned. But she never went to see ‘Aunt Eliza.’”<sup>66</sup>

Nevertheless, somehow “from 1880 to 1890 Louie visited a number of Stakes some of them a number of times in company with the Leading sisters [in Relief Society and the YLMIA] for all went together in those days and helped each other.”<sup>67</sup> In October 1880, Louie, in company with Mary Ann Freeze and Clara Conrad took the train from Salt Lake to Provo to visit, “by invitation, the Primary Mutual Improvement Associations of Spanish Fork.”<sup>68</sup> Of the meeting, Louie remarked on the

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63. Jill Mulvay Derr, “Sisters and Little Saints: One Hundred Years of Mormon Primaries,” in *The Mormon People: Their Character and Traditions*, ed. Thomas G. Alexander (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), 80.

64. In 1887, the Edmunds-Tucker Act strengthened the previous antipolygamy act and provided serious consequences for those who practiced polygamy as well as for the financial well-being of the Church.

65. Freeze, “Primary Work from 1880 to 1890,” 2; Freeze, “Bit of History Prior to 1880,” 3–4. Orson Whitney recorded that Lucy Devereau, a plural wife, was imprisoned in 1885 for refusing to answer certain questions regarding her husband. *History of Utah*, vol. 3 (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1898), 394. The estimate of the imprisonment of fifteen hundred men may be high; other estimates are a little more than half that amount.

66. Emmeline B. Wells to Lillie Freeze, September 11, 1886, Freeze Papers, folder 1.

67. Freeze, “Bit of History Prior to 1880,” 4.

68. L. B., “A Pleasant Visit to Spanish Fork,” *Woman’s Exponent* 9 (November 15, 1880): 91.

quiet and attentive order of the children, their ability to answer gospel questions, and particularly the singing of the small children. She might have gleaned the giving of such compliments from watching Eliza R. Snow interact at similar meetings with Primary children. The Spanish Fork minutes of the meeting report, “Mrs. Louie Felt addressed the meeting, praising and encouraging the little ones; engaging their attention by her pleasing and lovable manner.”<sup>69</sup> It appears she traveled only as invited and without her counselors, perhaps partly because there was no general Church operating fund to pay for travel; Louie’s husband paid her expenses.<sup>70</sup>

Lillie Freeze confirmed the sentiments of the Spanish Fork Primary: “Louie Because of her charming magnetic personallity, her sweet winning ways, her peculiar adaptability in handlin[g] and appealing to children—made her the idol of the day—she was sought after—by women and children[,] feted, praised, honored, and adored—no woman in the church has been more beloved[,] no woman has received such manifestations of loving admiration from co-workers—especially from her own board—no woman filled her positions better—no one is entitled to more honor.”<sup>71</sup>

A second challenge emerged at the death of Eliza R. Snow in 1887. Thirty-seven-year-old Louie felt a keen loss of “good support and council.”<sup>72</sup> The transition from having Eliza’s strong, sure hand and close proximity to priesthood leaders to working with her own skills and gifts took Louie some time. After almost ten years of learning from the “Elect Lady,” Louie now began to slowly emerge as a strong leader in her own right.<sup>73</sup> In October 1888, the Primary presidency was sustained in

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69. Hannah Cornaby, “Meeting at Spanish Fork,” *Woman’s Exponent* 9 (November 15, 1880): 95.

70. “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt,” 414; Janet Peterson and LaRene Gaunt, *Children’s Friends: Primary Presidents and Their Lives of Service* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1996), 13. I have been unable to find information on Joseph Felt’s employment, but evidently it was sufficient for him to take care of Louie’s train fare, despite the fact that in 1883 he served a six-month mission to the Cherokee Nation Indian Territory and another mission in December 1885 for an unknown length of time to the United States and Europe.

71. Freeze, “Bit of History Prior to 1880,” 4, underlining in original; see also Kerr, “Consistent and Rapid Growth,” 32.

72. Freeze, “Primary Work from 1880 to 1890,” 2. See also Oman, “Nurturing LDS Primaries,” 266.

73. Kerr, “Consistent and Rapid Growth,” 29–30.

the general conference of the Church, with Lillie Tuckett Freeze as first counselor. Lillie recorded, "Joseph F. Smith blessed Louie." Louie and Lillie Freeze attended the Utah Stake conference together, where "Louie told of her happiness in having a [traveling] companion [from the Primary] for the first-time in 8 years."<sup>74</sup>

Louie was beset with an additional personal issue, an undefined intermittent illness.<sup>75</sup> According to Lillie Freeze, "In 1889 Louie had a long severe illness and the [Scott and Mary] Anderson family rented her home." Scott and Mary Anderson had a daughter, Mary, known as May, age twenty-five, who became Louie's "most attentive nurse and help in many ways."<sup>76</sup> An article in *The Children's Friend* recalled the first meeting between the Andersons and the Felts. The Andersons, after sailing across the Atlantic from Liverpool, continued to Utah in 1883 by train. En route to Salt Lake City the family met Joseph and Louie Felt, who were also on the train. Mary described her first impression of Louie as "a most beautiful woman with a dear little babe [a child of one of Joseph's other wives] in her arms." Mary was "fascinated by the blue eyes and lovely golden hair."<sup>77</sup> It appears the nineteen-year-old Mary, from the beginning, was in awe of the thirty-three-year-old Louie and enchanted by the baby. Shortly after their arrival in Salt Lake City, Mary and her mother began to visit the Felt home, and a wonderful friendship developed. At some point Louie suggested she change her name to May to avoid confusion with Mary [Ann] Freeze, another close friend of Louie's.<sup>78</sup> May Anderson was to become Louie's dear friend, Primary co-worker, one of her long-term caregivers, and successor as the second general Primary president.

"As Sister Felt [having recovered from her illness] was about to make a trip to Springville to visit the Primaries there, May said, 'I really wish I could go too.' Brother Felt said, 'You may. I'll buy you both a ticket.'" On the way, Louie became concerned about whether or not the Primary workers in Springville could accommodate an additional visitor. The thought suddenly came to her, "Why not make May a Primary worker.

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74. Freeze, "Primary Work from 1880 to 1890," 3.

75. At one point, her condition was described as "partial paralysis" for several months, and she also suffered from "rhumatism in her foot." Crocheron, "Prominent Men and Women of the Church," 414–15.

76. Freeze, "Primary Work from 1880 to 1890," 3.

77. "The Story Hour: Mary and May," *Children's Friend* 18 (October 1919): 420.

78. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 35; "Mary and May," 421.

She would be a good one.”<sup>79</sup> On the train, Louie queried, “May why couldn’t you be a worker on the General Board[?]” May expressed her reservations with laughter: “What do I know about your work? And if you should call upon me to pray in public I would die.” Louie encouraged her, declaring, “I believe it is your calling,” and May responded, “I would like to think that I would always be with you.”<sup>80</sup> May became acting secretary to the board.

Louie’s love and the growth of her spiritual confidence are evident in the following story told much later by May Anderson. Once when Louie was visiting one of the stakes, “a note was brought to Sister Louie B. Felt asking that she and her party call at a home where there was a very sick baby.” They went to the home, and although Louie and the others were sure the child was about to die, the mother said, “‘Won’t you please pray for my child?’ We all knelt around and Sister Felt prayed humbly and fervently. She had the gift of prayer.” Later on in the day, upon reviewing in her mind what she had said, May wrote, “Sister Felt was much disturbed for she had promised that baby it would live. . . . Several months later Sister Felt received a letter from the mother expressing her gratitude and enclosed was a picture of a fine healthy child.”<sup>81</sup>

### Stagnation, Innovations, and a New Steady Course

Early on, the “untrodden and obscure way” of running the weekly meeting meant that Primary presidencies had to “catch the Spirit of their calling” and then determine their own program.<sup>82</sup> Women who knew how to discipline and teach their own children were now faced with managing up to one hundred children, with ages ranging from four to fourteen, sitting together for at least an hour.<sup>83</sup> As one large group, the children sang, were taught, and learned to bear testimony. The Primary presidency and their assistants (if such help could be enlisted)

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79. “Mary and May,” 421–22. See also Freeze, “Primary Work from 1880 to 1890,” 3.

80. “Mary and May,” 422.

81. May Anderson, “Officers Notes: The Spirit of Primary,” *Children’s Friend* 33 (October 1934): 349. See also “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt,” 415.

82. White, “Recalling the Past.”

83. In 1880, one Primary president determined that trying to maintain order and interest was too much for her presidency if the mothers were not willing to be involved. Within the month she was released and her counselors resigned. Derr, “Sisters and Little Saints,” 80.

taught the children a wide variety of topics, from honesty, punctuality, and good manners to obedience, faith in God, and prayer.<sup>84</sup> According to minute book records, mainstays of the weekly meeting included an adult lecture, adult-led stories from the Bible or the Restoration, lots of singing, recitations by the children, and occasional outings to a park.<sup>85</sup>

In organizing the individual Primary Associations, Eliza invited the children as well as their parents to attend the organizing meeting, and both sustained their new leaders. In her travels, she demonstrated a pattern for leading Primary Association meetings. She encouraged children of all ages to express their feelings, bear testimony, and express publicly what they liked about Primary, giving them the feeling that the gatherings were “their own meetings.”<sup>86</sup> With the publication of her music and recitation books, the weekly meetings began to take on a more consistent and uniform direction with songs, poems, dialogues, and other children-led activities.

Several years after Eliza’s death, Louie began her own innovations to the organization. Primary Children’s Day celebrations began in May 1889, but Louie suggested June rather than May, in honor of Brigham Young’s birthday, as the date for Primary celebrations.<sup>87</sup> June 1, 1890, began the first annual celebration of Primary Day as a children’s holiday

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84. See Rogers, *Life Sketches*, 215–17.

85. The following passage is from a typewritten copy of the history of the Provo Utah Fourth Ward Primary from October 12, 1878, to 1900, Church History Library. It is a late reminiscence written in April 1957 by Beatrice Young Moore, granddaughter of President Brigham Young, and a member of that ward’s Primary in the 1890s. She provides insight into a typical weekly Primary meeting: “In all these years there were no regular lesson outlines as we have now. A program was arranged a week in advance, either by officers or a number of children as a program committee. Bible stories were told by the sisters, poems by the children. Sometimes verses from the Sermon on the Mount, some of the Articles of Faith or Ten Commandments were recited in unison or sometimes by one or two children. Also dialogues were quite popular with two, three or four children participating.” Other activities included such things as sewing rags to help make carpet, planting beans and corn, and hosting a yearly concert. See Rogers, *Life Sketches*, 220–21.

86. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 18.

87. The announcement in *The Children’s Friend* regarding the celebration included a request of a recitation of twelve “reasons why we honor Brigham Young” and a short essay on the life of Brigham Young. “President Brigham Young’s Birthday,” *Children’s Friend* 1 (June 1902): 191–93. See also “Primary Children’s Day,” *Woman’s Exponent* 18 (June 1, 1889): 4.



Primary general board members. *Front, left to right:* Lillie T. Freeze, Louie B. Felt, and Josephine R. West. *Back, left to right:* Aurelia Spencer Rogers, May Anderson. Courtesy International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

throughout the stakes of Zion. Emmeline Wells commented that the date was the anniversary of Brigham Young's birthday and "a very fitting and beautiful tribute to his memory that the children of Zion rejoice."<sup>88</sup> Primary worker conferences began in 1889 for all who could come "to encourage, counsel and advise for the mutual benefit and advancement of the Primary associations." Although only twenty-five attended in 1889, it marked the beginning of Louie centralizing Primary leadership training.

In October 1890 (just as the manifesto ending polygamy was announced),<sup>89</sup> the second Primary conference convened. Louie voiced her concerns for the spiritual education of children. Since the Public School Act passed by the territorial legislature that year no longer allowed teaching of Latter-day Saint doctrine at secular schools, she

88. "First of June," *Woman's Exponent* 19 (June 1, 1890): 4.

89. See The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "The Manifesto and the End of Plural Marriage," <https://www.lds.org/topics/the-manifesto-and-the-end-of-plural-marriage?lang=eng>.



urged a greater focus on the welfare of the children's souls.<sup>90</sup> Despite Louie's efforts, priesthood leaders through the General Board of Education created a new organization of weekday religion classes held after school rather than turning to Primary to fill the spiritual void. Contrary to President Taylor's words in 1880 to the leaders of the women's organizations at their sustaining, it appears that Louie did not yet have the confidence of the new First Presidency and other priesthood leaders. Primary had yet to develop its own distinctive and important role separate from weekday and Sunday School classes.<sup>91</sup>

Fortuitously, in the middle of the decade new ideas were presented to Louie and May. In 1894 and 1895, the two furthered their knowledge of how to better organize the Primary by attending a class in kindergarten principles and practice and participating in a model kindergarten at the First Congregational Church led by a Miss Chapin, who had recently moved from Boston to Salt Lake City and had been trained by Elizabeth Peabody, founder of the first kindergarten. After receiving their diplomas, Louie and May started their own private kindergarten in the basement of the Eleventh Ward meetinghouse to implement these new ideas, a program that lasted for four years. Soon, the *Deseret Evening News* reported that thirty-one children between the ages of three and six were being provided interesting instruction and they were making "remarkable progress," as described by Joseph Felt, Louie's husband.<sup>92</sup> Additionally, under the direction of Miss Chapin, Louie and May opened a summer kindergarten in one of the old university buildings.<sup>93</sup> In the words of Lillie Freeze, "From that time The Primary began

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90. Primary General Board Minutes, 1889–1901 (October 3, 1890), 3–4, Church History Library.

91. Derr, "Sisters and Little Saints," 82; Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints 1890 to 1930* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 147.

92. "Kindergarten Exercises," *Deseret Evening News*, December 24, 1895, 8.

93. "Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt," 413. Although the idea of a kindergarten began about 1870, few children were enrolled in it—and likely it was nonexistent in the far reaches of the West. Initially, teaching required no special training; however, by the end of the nineteenth century, most teachers had completed a two-year normal school program. Serious educational reform began at the turn of the twentieth century with educational experts advocating compulsory public schooling for everyone up to the age of fourteen. See Lou Ann Sears, "Reaction, Initiation, and Promise: A Historical Study of the International Reading Association" (PhD diss., University of

to take on definite and steady growth.”<sup>94</sup> The experience of developing a kindergarten program gave rise in the Eleventh Ward Primary to the practice of separating the students by age and teaching them in three separate rooms with the aid of young women. These changes quickly increased activity, discovery, and participation by each child.<sup>95</sup> By 1898, the Primary general board recommended all ward Primary classes be separated by age.<sup>96</sup> Unfortunately, not all Primary workers had this professional training, and some felt uncomfortable with the new changes and desired more instruction.<sup>97</sup> As the Primary general presidency already recognized, a central mechanism was needed for disseminating information. A stopgap measure, *The Primary Helper*, was produced in 1899. The real need, their own magazine, was not to come until 1902.

At the onset of the new century, Louie expressed appreciation to educators who had provided the ideas of object lessons and kindergarten, providing for her and her co-leaders what they felt was inspired direction. Prophetically, she concluded, “The new century will see much advancement” because of these new ideas in education.<sup>98</sup> Partial fulfillment of her words took place within the next twenty years through the organization of age groups, with two age levels within each group, and the development of Seagull Girls, the Trail Builders, and the Bluebird Group to foster leadership and service in the older children.<sup>99</sup>

The year 1902 was a banner one for Primary. Louie and her counselors at that time, Lillie T. Freeze and Josephine R. West, announced that the First Presidency had approved a conference of the officers of the Primary Association in the stakes and wards and branches in May.<sup>100</sup> The necessity of holding a conference to accommodate the business

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Pittsburgh, 2007), 61, accessed July 1, 2018, [http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/7110/1/SearsLA\\_ETD4-2007.pdf](http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/7110/1/SearsLA_ETD4-2007.pdf).

94. Freeze, “Primary Work from 1880 to 1890,” 3.

95. Initially, children of various ages and abilities were taught together in a mutual instructional setting. Grading of children by age was a technique advocated by Horace Mann, Secretary of Education for Massachusetts.

96. Kerr, “Consistent and Rapid Growth,” 30; Derr, “Sisters and Little Saints,” 83–84.

97. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 43.

98. Louie B. Felt, in “Symposium: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” *Woman’s Exponent* 29 (January 1, 1901): 70.

99. “Louie B. Felt: A Tribute,” *Children’s Friend* 24 (November 1925): 424.

100. Evidently, with the creation of Primary classes, more teachers were enlisted, and these teachers did not necessarily attend the conferences. The conferences were designed for stake and ward officers.

of a growing organization had been evident for some time, and now the officers would meet the day preceding the Mutual Improvement Association conference.<sup>101</sup> Almost from the beginning, the conferences were attended by stake presidents and Apostles, lending credence to the Primary Association visible to other priesthood leaders in the Church. Additionally, permission was granted for a monthly magazine. Initially, the *Woman's Exponent* acted as an agent for informing Latter-day Saint women on a wide variety of topics, including all the female-led associations; however, by 1892, the Primary Association began discussions on developing its own publication. Stake and ward Primary presidencies requested more help in managing and teaching children. The Primary general board recognized the need for regular communication through a magazine, but the First Presidency told them "it was too great an undertaking."<sup>102</sup> Their first effort was *The Primary Helper*, a soft-covered booklet published in 1899 under the direction of the General Board of Primary Associations. It sold for fifteen cents. The preface was dedicated to "Primary Association workers, children and teachers." The booklet contained twelve lessons covering Genesis 1–18. Each lesson consisted of songs, a Bible story (beginning with "The Creation of the World" and concluding with "Sarah and Hagar—Ishmael and Isaac"). Each lesson included review questions and several recitations or a dialogue. Many also contained a "Moral Story," short "Memory Gems" from the Bible or Book of Mormon, and aphorisms to live by.<sup>103</sup> Unfortunately, it did not meet all the criteria needed by the wards and stakes, and only one volume was published.<sup>104</sup> After almost ten years and several requests, the First Presidency consented for the Primary presidency to create its own magazine with these directions and limitations: "You have our permission and blessing, providing you do not ask the Church for financial help."<sup>105</sup>

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101. Louie B. Felt, Lillie T. Freeze, and Josephine R. West, "General Conference," *Children's Friend* 1 (May 1902): 153.

102. Kerr, "Consistent and Rapid Growth," 32; Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 46.

103. William A. Morton, *The Primary Helper* (Salt Lake City: George Q. Cannon and Sons, 1899).

104. Kerr, "Consistent and Rapid Growth," 32.

105. "The Children's Friend," *Children's Friend* 21 (January 1922): 54; See also Adelaide U. Hardy, "Librarian's Department: The Children's Friend," *Children's Friend* 17 (June 1918): 230. Hardy cited this quotation: "You have our consent

The vision of the magazine Louie shared with her close friend and general Primary secretary, May Anderson, sustained their undertaking despite others' negative attitudes, their own lack of experience and money, and the addition of many more long hours of hard work.<sup>106</sup> The men in the printing office tried to discourage them: "Don't do it. Don't do it. Magazines run by women always fail. Take my advice and drop the idea." When the women pressed forward, the business manager queried, "What security have you to offer?" Louie used her home as collateral to pay for the publication of the children's magazine.<sup>107</sup> In late November 1901 they secured a small rental office, and Lula Greene Richards offered the dedicatory prayer.<sup>108</sup> In January 1902, with May Anderson as editor, Louie presided over the first publication of *The Children's Friend*, writing, "With feelings of intense joy, deep devotion and profound gratitude we introduce this little book. Hope and fear alternately plead for supremacy and we humbly ask that you will exercise charity and assist us by your faith and prayers."<sup>109</sup>

In just one year, the general board increased the number of copies published from two thousand to four thousand. Although only a portion of the officers of the Primary organizations initially supported it, *The Children's Friend* managed to survive, and Church authorities pronounced it equal to the other Church publications.<sup>110</sup> May Anderson wrote the lessons in the new magazine, changing the emphasis from Eliza's catechisms and recitations to stories and thought questions, but still including repetition and memorization. May's was a pragmatic approach employing both traditional and the new progressive methods of teaching. For three grades, there were instructions for Primary officers in addition to lessons. A yearly nickel fund from each child and officer was established to insure financial solvency from which office expenses could be paid and leadership visits could be reimbursed.<sup>111</sup>

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and our blessing, but you must take all the burden of it yourselves. If you fail, it will be impossible for us to give you any financial aid."

106. See Hardy, "Children's Friend," 230-31.

107. "Louie B. Felt," *Children's Friend* 18 (December 1919): 414; 21 (January 1922): 54-55.

108. Kerr, "Consistent and Rapid Growth," 32.

109. Louie B. Felt, "Greeting," *Children's Friend* 1 (January 1902): 2.

110. See Hardy, "Librarian's Department: The Children's Friend," *Children's Friend* (June 1918): 232.

111. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 46-47.

In 1903, the Primary conference could not be held because of cost concerns, and in its place Louie wrote a letter. She asked the Primary officers to “exercise your faith that when next June comes, we will have our conference, with the support” of Church leaders, and “all those who perhaps today do not understand us, and are a little indifferent to our work,—we will make them feel that they need us, that there must be a place for us, because we are worthy of it.” She wrote that she had not sought her position, nor would she hold it without it having been placed upon her by those in authority. In fact, she had suggested several times that someone better qualified should take her place; however, since that had not happened, she promised to do the best she could with the help of the Lord. She revealed:

Many mothers have said in my hearing, which has made me feel badly at the time, “It is all very well for Sister Felt to stand up and tell mothers what they should do when she has never been a mother.” In one sense I have not been a mother; but after all, my husband has children and I have tried to do my duty to thirteen of his children, and I know I have the respect and love of all of them. And after all I am mother over more children than any woman, for I claim 50,000 children as mine, while I hold this position; and I pray every night and morning of my life that God will give me strength and ability to help to train them.

She also delightedly announced to her co-workers, “President [Joseph F.] Smith is taking a great interest in our work; he has visited around in the different associations where he has been invited” and had been impressed with the children’s answers to his questions. He also remarked, “Sister Felt, I have never enjoyed myself better in my life than in that little meeting Sunday night.” He was willing to give his support and do all that he could for the organization.<sup>112</sup>

In the 1906 conference, Louie declared her delight in the spiritual feast that occurred when her Primary co-workers met together. She testified, “I know we are engaged in one of the noblest works here upon the earth.” She continued, “There is nothing greater than your work, when you stop to think that you are in charge of the children, the most precious gifts of God to men and women. You are teaching them to become noble men and w[o]men.”<sup>113</sup>

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112. Louie B. Felt, “Officers’ Meetings: Sister Louie B. Felt,” *Children’s Friend* 2 (July 1903): 243–45.

113. Louie B. Felt, “General Conference of Primary Officers: President Louie B. Felt,” *Children’s Friend* 5 (August 1906): 291–92.

In her 1907 address to the Primary officers, Louie urged them to love their callings and co-workers, reminding them their service should not make them feel weary. She informed them of the unity she had with her twenty-six-member board and the First Presidency. President Joseph F. Smith told the board “he wanted every Primary child enrolled on our books,” so Louie concluded, “We must do it because it has been required of us by President Smith.”<sup>114</sup> Just days after the general Primary meetings took place in early June, Joseph Felt, at the age of sixty-seven, Louie’s husband of forty years, passed away.<sup>115</sup> Surely Louie and her sister wives along with their thirteen children were devastated at their loss.



Louie B. Felt. Courtesy International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

In 1908, Elder L. W. Shurtliff, president of the Weber Stake, spoke at the Primary conference and recognized the Primary Association as “one of the most important organizations in the Church. You take the children of the people almost from infancy, . . . I know that they are taught in the correct principles of the Gospel. You will teach them to be loyal to every principle that God has revealed, as well as to the authorities that He has placed to preside over the Church. . . . There is no greater work; you are laying the foundation for lives of purity of men and women.”<sup>116</sup>

Louie, the next speaker, declared, “I have longed for twenty-eight years to hear some good brother stand up here in Salt Lake City and say that this is one of the greatest organizations, because it is the foundation. . . . You cannot realize or appreciate it to-day. . . . And if I were to stop

114. Louie B. Felt, “Report of the Annual Convention of Primary Officers: Louie B. Felt,” *Children’s Friend* 6 (August 1907): 337.

115. “Joseph H. Felt, Whose Funeral Occurred in the Eleventh Ward Meetinghouse This Afternoon,” *Deseret Evening News*, June 18, 1907, 5.

116. L. W. Shurtliff, “Loyalty: Elder L. W. Shurtliff, President of Weber Stake,” *Children’s Friend* 7 (July 1908): 275.

to-day my work in the Primary Association, I have been repaid, because of the words that I have longed for years to hear from the Priesthood of God.”<sup>117</sup> Following her expressions of appreciation, Louie’s main message to the Primary workers was love. Harkening back to the lesson she learned many years earlier from her mother to not speak ill of others, she entreated them to not judge: “If we see in some sister, or in the President of the stake, or in the President of the Church something that we do not exactly like, is it our business to set them straight? . . . I think not, I know it is not. Our duty is to shut our eyes to the faults, that is, so far as speaking of it and repeating things that we hear. Our duty is to look upon all of our fellow-creatures with love and with kindness.”<sup>118</sup>

In this meeting, Louie conveyed her feelings for her co-workers and children:

I have in my heart a love that I cannot express in words for you, my dear co-l[a]borers. . . . Perhaps, like me, there are some who have been denied the great privilege of being a mother; but, if you feel as I feel, I know it was the wisdom of God that denied me this blessing, for I am certain that I should have been more selfish than I am to-day had I been a mother. But God has given me many, many lovely children through other mothers, that I may pray for, think of, and love. . . . I feel that you are all my children.<sup>119</sup>

Indicative of Louie’s ongoing poor health, the 1911 convention report noted with pleasure that Sister Felt “was able to attend every session and preside with all her powers of dignity and grace.”<sup>120</sup> During that year, she and May observed a crippled boy trying to cross a busy intersection in Salt Lake City, and they determined to do something. Aware that there were many children without proper medical care, May recommended the idea of a hospital. Together the two women, with the approval of the board, decided that the Primary should furnish two rooms in the Latter-day Saint Hospital, one each for boys and girls. Their idea came to fruition in 1913 with the completion of a new hospital wing.<sup>121</sup>

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117. Felt, “Loyalty: President Louie B. Felt,” 276.

118. Felt, “Loyalty: President Louie B. Felt,” 277.

119. Felt, “Loyalty: President Louie B. Felt,” 276.

120. “Condensed Report of the Annual Convention of Primary Workers, Held in Salt Lake City, Utah, Jnue [sic] 2, 3, 4, 1911,” *Children’s Friend* 10 (July 1911): 365.

121. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 47–48.



The years 1912 and 1913 saw major changes in conjunction with the recommendations of the first Churchwide committee to eliminate conflicts and define areas of responsibility among the auxiliaries. Accompanying these discussions were the prayers of the Primary board for changes and new directions that had been under consideration for a decade. In 1909, Primary had two members from the Council of Twelve assigned as advisors, and a much clearer vision of Primary's goals and direction began to form. Louie, May, and the general board members were committed to the new "progressive education" promoted by G. Stanley Hall, Francis W. Parker, Marietta Pierce Johnson, and John Dewey, who emphasized "doing," such as singing, dancing, drama, arts and crafts, and exploring nature to stimulate interest in learning. Primary encouraged using the child-centered educational principles through the lessons written by May Anderson in the monthly *Children's Friend*. Primary would include social activities, ethics lessons, and music, with committees organized to develop the programs.<sup>122</sup> What began as two advisors from the Quorum of the Twelve became in 1913 a correlation committee to coordinate the various auxiliaries to avoid duplication of lessons and activities and to develop lesson materials, teacher training, and a unified church magazine. Each auxiliary was given an area of focus, and Primary's assignment was practical religion, secular subjects, and recreation.<sup>123</sup>

Louie instigated the first long-term instruction of Primary workers. In 1913, 130 Primary officers representing fifty-six stakes from Canada to New Mexico gathered for six weeks of study in Salt Lake City under the direction of the general board. They were taught folk dances, games, general health and first aid, systematic personal exercise programs, and other subjects. At the conclusion of the meetings, a special reception was organized by the officers for Louie and the general board members, honoring them with a shower of flowers and the presentation of a special painting titled *A Little Child Shall Lead Them*.<sup>124</sup> Overcome at the kind gesture, Louie apologized that she had not yet been able to overcome her natural timidity but nevertheless was pleased to represent the

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122. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 50–51, 55.

123. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 152. The unified Church magazine was not brought to fruition.

124. Louie B. Felt, "Report of Primary Officers Present at the Conference for 1913; Remarks by President Louie B. Felt," *Children's Friend* 12 (July 1913): 396; Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 55.

great Primary organization, now numbering seventy thousand workers and children.<sup>125</sup>

As evidenced by some of the training sessions, providing physical activities alongside religious instruction were two of the main focuses of Primary. Each weekly Primary meeting began to have a focused concentration: a lesson hour of scriptural topics, a story hour of moral values from good literature, a busy hour of learning everyday chores, and a social hour for marches, games, and folk dances. Although this sort of weekly concentration changed over time, Primary classes and lessons began to take on greater organization and direction under Louie's leadership. The Primary presidency, board members, and children also became involved in the wider community, forging an alliance with the American Red Cross, aiding the World War I effort, and the nonsectarian care of crippled children.<sup>126</sup> Primary was now on a firm philosophical foundation from which they could expand curriculum planning and their own magazine and aid social welfare efforts.<sup>127</sup>

In 1914, Louie's message at the annual conference included a call to be united: "If at any time there is a lack of unity among you, ask yourselves who is to blame." Louie reminded the Primary officers that their work was a privilege. She testified, "God is with us; we see it manifested more and more every day. He intended us to do the work we are doing, and if there are any not called of Him they will step down and out." She called for the women to heed the counsel of the General Authorities by dressing properly and avoiding extremes in low necks and short sleeves. She urged them to "be willing to respond to any request that comes from the priesthood of God, and strength will be given you!" Interestingly, at the conclusion of the conference, Lillie T. Freeze, an honorary member of the board, blessed the workers through the gift of tongues, declaring "the Lord was with them in their work, and would reward them according to their desires."<sup>128</sup>

In 1917, just prior to the United States entering the war, the First Presidency addressed a joint letter to all the women's organizations

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125. Felt, "Remarks by President Louie B. Felt," 395–96.

126. Derr, "Sisters and Little Saints," 86–87.

127. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 50–53, 60; Derr, "Sisters and Little Saints," 87; Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 127–28.

128. "Brief Report of the Twelfth Annual Conference of the Primary Workers," Officers' Department, *Children's Friend* 13 (July 1914): 375, 379.

declaring a need for the youth to improve dress and social customs.<sup>129</sup> Louie and her counselors urged the Primary officers to look forward to a brighter future in order for the Primary Association to “take its place in the onward movement of the Church.” She encouraged them to honor their office and their responsibility including dress and conduct so “no child may hold us guilty of setting examples unworthy to follow.”<sup>130</sup> In a prayer at the conclusion of the Friday session of the annual Primary officers’ conference, Elder William A. Morton of the Quorum of Seventy invoked the Lord’s blessing upon “Thine handmaiden, Louie B. Felt, who has presided so long and so ably over this department of Thy great latter-day work. Give unto her health and strength, vigor of body and of mind, and the spirit of her high and holy calling. May she realize more fully than she has ever realized before that in the service of the children of Zion, she is in the service of the Lord her God.”<sup>131</sup> The Primary continued its involvement with the Red Cross, and the general board was organized to coordinate “war work.” By war’s end, the children and officers of the Primary had shipped washcloths, comfort pillows and kits, tray covers, hospital bed socks, hot water covers, pajamas, sheets, and bandages; they had also planted war gardens and saved fruit stones and nut shells for use in gas masks.<sup>132</sup>

Although World War I was winding down in the fall of 1918, an influenza pandemic erupted, infecting five hundred million people and causing an estimated fifty million to one hundred million deaths. Shortly after the death of President Joseph F. Smith in 1918, Primary was suspended for a time during the winter of 1918 and 1919 because of the outbreak of this highly fatal virus. The Primary war efforts were over, but the children were asked to contribute to relief funds for Armenia, Syria, and Europe. The children were accustomed to these sorts of contributions and with the nickel fund contributed \$4,200.<sup>133</sup> The cooperative efforts by the auxiliaries and members of the Church during the war led to the feeling that more could be done to alleviate suffering at home. The Primary board chose to focus on providing a day nursery and convalescent home for needy children in Salt Lake City.

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129. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 66.

130. Louie B. Felt, May Anderson, and Clara W. Beebe, “For a Happy New Year,” *Children’s Friend* 16 (January 1917): 17.

131. “A Beautiful Prayer,” *Children’s Friend* 6 (July 1917): 267.

132. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 62–63.

133. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 65.

In January 1921, the general Primary presidency greeted the Primary officers by noting 1920 had been the most successful year in the history of the Church.<sup>134</sup> The First Presidency sent “their personal thanks and blessings to the officers and children of the Primary Association for their loyal, unselfish support in gathering funds for the little ones in the war devastated countries.”<sup>135</sup> In 1921, Louie and May traveled east to learn about establishing a hospital for needy children. In 1922, the Home and Day Nursery in the renovated Hyde home just north of the temple in Salt Lake City was dedicated.<sup>136</sup> As the time approached for opening the convalescent home and day care hospital, funding ideas were needed. The one adopted was the “birthday pennies” contribution. On “Penny Day” every person in the Church was asked to contribute pennies equal to his or her age. This became a major source for financing Primary-sponsored patients at the hospital.<sup>137</sup> Although now almost seventy-one, Louie still ably and efficiently presided over the annual June convention, much to the delight of her peers. At a special afternoon entertainment presented by children, each one presented Sister Felt with a bunch of flowers.<sup>138</sup>

In 1925, Louie looked back with pride at a well-organized and respected auxiliary whose influence was widespread. In a greeting to all Primary Association workers, she declared her delight with the increase in numbers of associations, officers, new members in the mission field, and a total membership of almost one hundred thousand.<sup>139</sup> Later that year, President Heber J. Grant lauded her remarkably long years of service and efforts on behalf of the Primary Association. He declared, “By reason of their faithfulness, they have been an inspiration; I am sure, to the Stake and Ward officers with whom they have come in contact. There is no labor in which any of us can be engaged that is

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134. Louie B. Felt, May Anderson, and Clara W. Beebe, “Greetings,” *Children’s Friend* 20 (January 1921): 20.

135. Louie B. Felt, “Our Heartfelt Thanks,” *Children’s Friend* 20 (April 1921): 157.

136. This later became the Children’s Convalescent Hospital and was the progenitor of the Primary Children’s Hospital. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition*, 148.

137. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 67–68.

138. “The Convention for 1921,” *Children’s Friend* 20 (September 1921): 367.

139. Louie B. Felt, May Anderson, and Clara W. Beebe, “Greeting: To All the Primary Association Workers at Home and Abroad,” *Children’s Friend* 24 (January 1925): 30.

more acceptable in the sight of our Heavenly Father than laboring for the children in the Church of Christ.”<sup>140</sup>

### Health and Aging

Louie’s Primary responsibilities were legion, and her health, even in her adolescence, was described as frail. As an adult she suffered from rheumatism, endured a months-long bout of partial paralysis, and another time collapsed during a Primary board meeting. Fortunately, her good friends stepped in to care for her.<sup>141</sup> In about 1889, when Joseph was going to be away on a business trip for six weeks, he asked May Anderson to stay in their home and care for Louie, who was ill at the time.<sup>142</sup> May was solicitous in caring for Louie and continued to provide helpful service thereafter, remaining in their home for twenty-five years. May’s presence provided a comfortable transition when Joseph died in 1907, leaving Louie a widow for the last twenty-two years of her life.

Observers of Louie and May’s friendship over many years of working together described it as having “ripened into love” with deep filial devotion: “never were more ardent lovers than these two.” Because of the abiding friendship between Louie and May they were called “the Primary David and Jonathan,” in a *Children’s Friend* article,<sup>143</sup> referring to the close friendship between David, the man Samuel designated as the future king of Israel, and Jonathan, King Saul’s son, as recorded in 2 Samuel 1.<sup>144</sup> Louie and May served together for about thirty-five years, wearing out their lives in service to the Primary. The two women counseled together for long hours every day regarding Primary, and “when they were too tired to sit up any longer they put on their bath-rob

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140. Heber J. Grant, “Address by President Heber J. Grant: Delivered at the Annual Convention of Primary Association Workers, June 7th, 1925,” *Children’s Friend* 24 (August 1925): 323.

141. Freeze, “Primary Work from 1880 to 1890,” 3. See also “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt,” 414–15.

142. “Mary and May,” 421.

143. “Mary and May,” 420–21.

144. David expressed his profound feelings of sadness at the death of Jonathan with these words: “I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant [the Hebrew term means pleasant, beautiful, sweet, delightful, lovely] hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women” (2 Sam. 1:26).

and crawled into bed to work until the wee small hours of the night.”<sup>145</sup> Louie described her friend May: “Although small in stature, she has wonderful force of character, resourcefulness, and business ability. But her greatest interest in life is the children. Nothing is too great a task if it will in any way be of benefit to them.”<sup>146</sup>

The overtly sentimental Victorian phraseology used to describe their friendship is not common today.<sup>147</sup> These expressions typified true Christian friendship and service to individuals and causes greater than themselves. Louie and May’s personal friendship made for an extraordinary working relationship. They complemented and compensated each other’s strengths and weaknesses, and together helped Primary grow and mature into a truly marvelous organization.<sup>148</sup> May had become a self-confident and efficient professional who filled the need for an organizer when Eliza R. Snow died, while “Louie remained the

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145. “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt,” 414.

146. Louie B. Felt, “An Appreciation,” *Children’s Friend* 11 (January 1912): 28.

147. Descriptions of the relationship between Louie and May show a godly, sisterly, and spiritual love with no evidence of erotic context. Florid expressions of love were part of Victorian prose and did not have the sexual overtones placed upon them by some today. In today’s modern society, intimacy and sex are often considered the same. These women, however, were not modern; they were in a relatively isolated Victorian-influenced culture. As an example, George Q. Cannon, a contemporary and member of the First Presidency, discoursed on true brotherly and sisterly love in the gospel: “There is one thing that distinguishes the Latter-day Saints from every other people that I know anything about . . . and that is, they love one another. . . . It exceeds any sexual love that can be conceived of, and it is this love that has bound the [Latter-day Saint] people together. It has been a cement that all the persecution, all the tribulation, and all kinds of trial could not dissolve or break. . . . It is the outpouring . . . of the Spirit of God . . . and these are the fruits of that spirit.” George Q. Cannon, “The Gathering—Miracles not Designed to Convert the World,” in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 22:365–66 (July 24, 1881).

George L. Mitton and Rhett S. James, “A Response to D. Michael Quinn’s Homosexual Distortion of Latter-day Saint History,” *FARMS Review of Books* 10, no. 1 (1998): 141–263. Overall, Mitton and James describe Quinn’s book as politically motivated, radically revisionist, and with a presentist bias. For more on platonic female relationships in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Signs* 1 (Autumn, 1975): 1–29. In the 1890s, the terms “homosexual” and “heterosexual” came into use but primarily in a clinical sense and were not part of common vocabulary. *Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com/>.

148. Madsen and Oman, *Sisters and Little Saints*, 73.

spiritual and charismatic leader and the arbiter of difficulties among board members.”<sup>149</sup>

May likely looked up to Louie as a dear mentor, friend, and kindred spirit with whom she had much in common and who also needed her help because of poor health. After Joseph died, Louie continued to carry a very heavy load as Primary president, and as she aged, she needed a good friend. As described in *The Children's Friend*, May saw to it that “Sister Felt’s attire is perfect in every detail. She pins on her collar and she combs her hair. She helps her down the stairs and into the automobile and is on a constant lookout to see that nothing disagreeable happens to her.”<sup>150</sup>

After Joseph died, other family members moved back into the home. Her closest sister wife, Elizabeth Mineer Felt; Vera, one of Elizabeth’s children; and the four children of the deceased Louie Felt Keysor (also a child of Elizabeth), moved in. Although Louie’s home likely became overcrowded, she rejoiced in having these family members live with her. She loved the grandchildren and willingly shared her income to feed, clothe, and educate them. Every night she insisted on visiting each bed and tucking each one in.<sup>151</sup>

In a 1919 private letter to then honorary board member Lillie Freeze, Louie wrote about her new home located on 1225 Third Avenue and called it “almost off the map.” In the letter, she lamented the pace of her life:

It seems to me that I never was so rushed as I am now. I never get to bed till after one-o-clock in the morning, and I am always the first one up, so you can see I am pretty well tied up . . . with home and office work. We are all fairly well and our work in the office is constantly increasing. . . . We are beginning to go out to our conventions now and of course that is always a trial to me as so many are unwilling to go, or have a reason for not going and it falls on a few, and it nearly distracts me to find enough to go.<sup>152</sup>

Lillie revealed how she and others felt about Louie: “Much sympathy has been felt for Louie’s childless life, and the death of parents—and all

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149. Oman, “Nurturing LDS Primaries,” 271.

150. “Mary and May,” 421.

151. “Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louis B. Felt,” 411; “Louie B. Felt: A Tribute,” 423.

152. Louie B. Felt to Lillie T. Freeze, May 7, 1919, Freeze Papers, folder 1, underlining in original.





Louie B. Felt with grandchildren of her sister-wives, 1919. Courtesy International Society Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

brothers and sisters—But as she has often said plural marriage gave her everything, [including] children & grandchildren.”<sup>153</sup>

In 1919, Adelaide U. Hardy wrote about God’s creation of Louie B. Felt. She observed Louie

was not born with all her present virtues, active as they are now; she has developed them through a very full life. Difficulties have been overcome, deprivations endured, sorrows suffered, patience tried and temptations conquered. . . . The great

secret of Sister Felt’s success in life is this: In her early years she learned the nearness of God to His children and His willingness to aid and direct them if they will permit Him, so that whenever a task was to be performed, or a new course pursued, she governed herself not by what this one or that one might say, but by what would be pleasing in the sight of Our Father in Heaven. . . . Sister Felt never imposes her worthiness upon one. One unwittingly senses it. . . . Her charming simplicity, natural humility and understanding heart richly qualify her to be a leader of the little ones.<sup>154</sup>

In 1924, the “Lesson Department” of the Primary general board decided that the youngest children were to be taught about the “beautiful lady whose name we all should know, who has lived for little children and served them for forty-six years. . . . She started to help little folks when she was a young woman. She has worked and prayed for them these many years until now her hair is as white as snow. She is our leader, our president and her name is Louie B. Felt.”<sup>155</sup> The lessons for

153. Freeze, “Bit of History Prior to 1880,” 5.

154. Adelaide U. Hardy, “Librarians’ Department: Louie B. Felt,” *Children’s Friend* 18 (December 1919): 492.

155. “Lessons—Church History, Subject for the Year 1924,” 378–79.

the older children focused on Louie B. Felt's acts of service and her gifts to humanity.

### Retiring

For her Primary officers and children, Louie had "lived, worked, wept, and prayed nearly half a century. She [had] grown old and young again doing for others."<sup>156</sup> She was beloved by the children, her counselors, and other Primary officers and teachers; Louie returned love to them in a long life of service. She served as Primary general president for forty-five years, even during poor health, until age seventy-five. In the fall of 1925, she asked to be released from her calling because she had grown too feeble to continue her responsibilities.

Louie died a few years later, in her seventy-ninth year. In a memorandum, Marion Kerr Belnap described Louie as "beautiful, cultured, modest, warmly sympathetic, magnetic, fun-loving, companionable, deeply spiritual and possessed [with] an extraordinary love for little children."<sup>157</sup> She further noted her devotion to her husband, Joseph, and to his children, especially those of Elizabeth Mineer Felt.

### Conclusion

Louie's determination to fulfill a mission with her husband to help settle the very difficult Muddy River Valley, although she was young and her health frail, set the stage for a woman who knew how to roll up her bloomers for hard work. Her friendship with Mary Ann Freeze and Lillie Tuckett Freeze nurtured a more mature understanding of the Church her parents had raised her in as she served with them in the YLMIA. She swallowed her disappointment at being childless by embracing the children of her husband's other two wives, the young women of the YLMIA, and then the children of the Primary Association. Through her faithful dedication to whatever the Lord called her to do, her latent spiritual gift of leadership became enlarged, and she overcame her feelings of shyness and inadequacy. She increased her abilities as a teacher and leader by taking a class in current educational philosophy and starting two kindergartens. She bridged the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with innovative educational and social work ideas that helped institutionalize a new

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156. "Prominent Men and Women of the Church: Louie B. Felt," 415.

157. Kerr, "Tribute to Louie B. Felt," 99.

organization for children. Financially, she and her husband willingly sacrificed in order for her to travel throughout the territory to meet with the young children, start *The Children's Friend* against the advice of seasoned editors, and pay for untold other expenses. Louie's long-term efforts with the Primary organization were legendary in her day—they deserve to be appreciated and acknowledged in our day as well. She gave her heart, soul, and health to building up the Primary organization from its infancy.

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# Doing Business in the World without Becoming Worldly

*Lindon J. Robison, David R. Just, and Jeffrey R. Oliver*

Doing business in the world consists of, among other things, exchanging goods and services. One way people reflect who they are and what they love most is by what they exchange and by the quantities and terms with which they exchange goods and services.

Richard Thaler, winner of the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Science, labeled persons whose behavior conforms to mainstream economic models as “econs.” Econs, according to Thaler, are perfectly selfish, informed, self-disciplined, and rational. However, Thaler and other behavioral and socio-economists have identified economic behavior that regularly contradicts the expected behavior of econs. They observed what Dan Ariely described as “predictably irrational” behavior,<sup>1</sup> or what Richard Thaler calls “misbehaving.”<sup>2</sup>

In this article, we claim that understanding much of predictably irrational economic behavior (misbehaving) requires accounting for a frequently overlooked class of goods called relational goods. Furthermore, we claim that understanding the nature of relational goods helps us understand how to do business in the world without becoming worldly.

In what follows, we first describe relational goods from both an academic and gospel perspective. Next, we contrast exchanges of commodities, the focus of modern economics, with exchanges of relational

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1. Dan Ariely, *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2008).

2. Richard H. Thaler, *Misbehaving: The Making of Behavioral Economics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2015), 4.

goods. Then, we emphasize that not exchanging relational goods for commodities is the key to not becoming worldly. Finally, this paper draws on scriptural and prophetic truths, with insights from behavioral and socio-economists, to list principles for doing business in the world without conforming to worldly values.

### **The Commandment to Flee the World**

The Savior prayed that his disciples would remain in but not become part of the evil in the world (John 17:14–15, 17; see also Rom. 12:2). He offered a similar prayer for his Nephite disciples whom he called out of the world (3 Ne. 19:29). Referring to the world as “Babylon,” the Lord commanded, “Go ye out of Babylon; gather ye out from among the nations, from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (D&C 133:7). Jeffrey R. Holland wrote: “In the history of Israel down through the ages, when things got too sinful or society became too secular or life with the Gentiles began undermining the moral code and commandments God had given, the children of the covenant would be sent fleeing into the wilderness to start all over and reestablish Zion.”<sup>3</sup>

Fleeing the world physically is no longer advisable, because it is in the world where we must do our business and encounter the opposition required for our testing and refinement (see Abr. 3:24–25). Furthermore, Church leaders now counsel the Saints to “build up Zion wherever they are living in the world.”<sup>4</sup> Not becoming worldly requires that we change our hearts rather than our addresses.

**Not of the World.** We become a Zion people while in the world by keeping the commandments to love God (see Deut. 10:12), each other, and even our enemies (see 3 Ne. 12:43–44). Instead of working to accumulate things, a Zion people “labor for Zion,” knowing that if they labor for money they will perish (see 2 Ne. 26:31). As a result, a Zion people are unified, care for the poor, and are pure in heart.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast, people of the world love themselves and things the most (2 Tim. 3:2). In Mormon’s day they loved their money, substance, fine apparel, and the adorning of their churches more than they loved the

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3. Jeffrey R. Holland, “The Call to be Christlike,” *Ensign* 44 (June 2014): 28.

4. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “Guide to the Scriptures,” s.v. “Zion,” <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/gs/zion?lang=eng>.

5. See D. Todd Christofferson, “Come to Zion,” *Ensign* 38 (November 2008): 37–40.

poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted (Morm. 8:37). Alma noted that differences in opportunities and abilities to accumulate things—and the love of things—produced both poverty and pride: “He saw great inequality among the people, some lifting themselves up with their pride, despising others, turning their backs upon the needy and the naked and those who were hungry, and those who were athirst, and those who were sick and afflicted” (Alma 4:12).

Following Christ’s visit, the Nephites lived in Zion for nearly two hundred years, where they loved God and each other. As a result, they shared and there were no poor among them. Then they began to love things more than God and each other, and “there began to be among them those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world. And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them” (4 Ne. 1:24–25).

**Doing Business in the World.** We must be in the world because we exchange commodities there. Nevertheless, how do we exchange goods and services in the world without abandoning Zion principles? To understand how to conduct business in the world without becoming worldly, we begin by defining relational goods—first from an academic perspective and then from a gospel point of view. Our goal in this effort is to better understand both economic exchange theory and Zion principles.

### Relational Goods from an Academic Perspective

Several scholars discuss the nature of relational goods.<sup>6</sup> A concise relational good definition is a good whose value and meaning depend in

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6. See, for example, Carole Jean Uhlaner, “Relational Goods and Participation: Incorporating Sociability into a Theory of Rational Action,” *Public Choice* 62 (1989): 253–85; Benedetto Gui and Robert Sugden, eds., *Economics and Social Interaction: Accounting for Interpersonal Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Benedetto Gui and Luca Stanca, “Happiness and Relational Goods: Well-Being and Interpersonal Relations in the Economic Sphere,” *International Review of Economics* 57, no. 2 (2010): 105–18; Leonardo Becchetti, Alessandra Pelloni, and Fiametta Rossetti, “Relational Goods, Sociability, and Happiness,” *Kyklos* 61, no. 3 (2008): 343–63; Bruni Luigino and Luca Stanca, “Watching Alone: Relational Goods, Television and Happiness,” *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 65, nos. 3–4 (2008): 506–28.

part on its connections to people.<sup>7</sup> Relationships of goodwill,<sup>8</sup> caring, trust, or regard<sup>9</sup> produce relational goods. Consider several types of relational goods.

**Socio-emotional Goods.** Socio-emotional goods are relational goods produced in goodwill, caring, trusting, and high-regard relationships.<sup>10</sup> We value socio-emotional goods because they satisfy people's needs for validation, belonging, and knowing.<sup>11</sup>

Socio-emotional goods are mostly intangible. We receive socio-emotional goods when we perceive that others have internalized our well-being. We receive socio-emotional goods when we perceive that others approve of who we are and what we are trying to make of our lives. We receive socio-emotional goods from helping those whose well-being we have internalized. We also receive socio-emotional goods when we act consistently with our internalized set of values, although differences in internalized values may produce different socio-emotional rewards. Finally, we receive socio-emotional goods when we learn about ourselves, our relationships to others, and our place in the world.<sup>12</sup>

We may exchange socio-emotional goods through pleasant words, which Proverbs declares are "as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones" (Prov. 16:24). The greeting card industry, for example, has made a \$7 billion business out of exchanging pleasant words because people value those socio-emotional goods. Former president of the Greeting Card Association John Beeder describes greeting cards as a way to communicate important feelings to people you care about: "Anyone feels great when they receive an unexpected card in the mail."<sup>13</sup>

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7. Jeffrey R. Oliver and Lindon J. Robison, "Rationalizing Inconsistent Definitions of Commodification: A Social Exchange Perspective," *Modern Economy* 8 (November 2017): 1314–27.

8. Paul S. Adler and Seo-Woo Kwon, "Social Capital: Prospects for a New Concept," *Academy of Management Review* 27, no. 1 (2002): 17–40.

9. Lindon J. Robison, A. Allan Schmid, and Marcelo E. Siles, "Is Social Capital Really Capital," *Review of Social Economy* 60, no. 1 (2002): 1–21.

10. Lindon J. Robison and Bryan K. Ritchie, *Relationship Economics: The Social Capital Paradigm and Its Application to Business, Politics, and Other Transactions* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 2.

11. Abraham H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation," *Psychological Review* 50, no. 4 (1943): 370–96, <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>.

12. Lindon J. Robison and David R. Just, "Motives and the Path to Perfection," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 55, no. 1 (2016): 133–50.

13. John Beeder, quoted in "Greeting Card," Wikipedia, January 9, 2019, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greeting\\_card](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greeting_card).



**Attachment-Value Goods.** Attachment-value goods are mostly tangible things embedded with intangible socio-emotional goods. Attachment-value goods are like warehouses for socio-emotional goods. By connecting with attachment-value goods, we can recreate feelings of belonging, validation, and knowing produced in relationships of goodwill, caring, trust, and regard. Attachment-value goods may include gifts from loved ones, photos of special experiences shared with others, music performed at special events, wedding rings that remind one of connections to a spouse, and hometowns where bonding relationships with friends and family occurred.<sup>14</sup>

We create attachment value when we wrap presents that strengthen the connection between the gift giver and the gift. We create attachment value for our communities when we join service clubs, participate in local elections, and volunteer in service projects. We create attachment value when we make an object ourselves and own it. We create attachment value for our homes when we maintain and improve them, use sentimental decorations, and enjoy time there with our friends and family. We create attachment value for objects when we anthropomorphize them—including naming our cars and pets. Most importantly, we create attachment value to things when we connect them to people for whom we have goodwill, care, regard, and trust.

In the movie *Cast Away*,<sup>15</sup> the main character, Chuck Noland (played by Tom Hanks), is stranded on a deserted island. Before he was stranded, Noland's fiancée gave him a pocket watch. On the island, the watch's value is unrelated to its physical function of keeping time (because it no longer works). Instead, it has attachment value because it reminds Noland of a valued relationship and the socio-emotional goods exchanged with his fiancée. Of course, just as there are relational goods, there can also be relational bads produced in relationships of ill will, with the intent to cause harm through the exchange of goods and services.

### **Relational Goods from a Gospel Perspective**

Academic works have defined and described relational goods, whose value and meaning depend on their connections to people. These relational goods include socio-emotional and attachment-value goods.

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14. Robison and Ritchie, *Relationship Economics*, 85–95.

15. *Cast Away* is a 2000 film by Twentieth Century Fox about a FedEx employee who is stranded on a deserted island after his plane goes down over the South Pacific.

Gospel references describe relational goods whose value and meaning depend on their connection to God. These include mostly intangible spiritual goods and tangible sacred symbols.

**Spiritual Goods.** Spiritual goods satisfy our needs for validation and purpose, belonging to and knowing God (1 Cor. 12:7). We receive spiritual goods when we perceive that God cares about us and has internalized our well-being. We receive spiritual goods when we perceive that God has a purpose and plan for our lives. Finally, we receive spiritual goods when his revealed truth provides us direction for and understanding about our lives and about the lives of those whose well-being we have internalized.

Alma described spiritual goods as being delicious to the soul and enlightening to the mind (Alma 32:27, 28). Other prophets have described spiritual goods as feelings of light, peace, warmth, comfort, and feelings of concern for others. The Savior referred to spiritual goods as his peace, which is not to be found in the world: “My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

Spiritual goods are gifts from God, given to those who seek to strengthen their relationship with him by keeping his commandments, by making covenants with him to reflect his goodness in their lives, and by drawing on his priesthood to bless his children. King Benjamin taught, “I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness” (Mosiah 2:41).

Sometimes spiritual goods originate with people’s actions that reflect God’s influence in their lives. Enlize do Rocio Ferreira da Silva described how one day she became ill, dehydrated, and too weak to care for her young son or call for help. Then her two visiting teachers arrived. They had felt prompted to visit her even though it was difficult to find her home. They recognized Enlize’s symptoms and ministered a remedy that had an immediate effect. They stayed for a while, washed the dishes, and watched over Enlize’s young son. Enlize recorded that these two visiting teachers “nurtured me spiritually with their example of kindness and promptness in listening to and heeding the voice of the Spirit.”<sup>16</sup>

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16. Enlize do Rocio Ferreira da Silva, “My Visiting Teachers Found Me,” *Ensign* 47 (March 2017): 77.

**Sacred Symbols.** Sacred symbols are mostly tangible things embedded with intangible spiritual goods. Sacred symbols act like a warehouse where we can return and experience spiritual goods. Sacred symbols include the sacrament, hymns, scriptures, sacred clothing, temples, and our homes.

Christian Karlsson wrote about finding his deceased grandfather's journal. His grandfather recorded in his journals the struggles he faced when investigating the Church. He also wrote about having to humble himself before he received answers to his questions. For Christian and his family, the journal became a sacred symbol of his family's faith.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, we are not surprised to find that a wide selection of sacred symbols is available at low prices from retailers—sometimes with free shipping. These include religious medals, pictures of religious figures, crosses, crescents, Stars of David, tee shirts screen-printed with various sacred symbols, and books about sacred topics. What makes the sale of sacred symbols possible is that the purchasers already have attachment value for these symbols, something that benefits retail sales.

**Preferences for Spiritual Goods.** Recent work in economics has addressed how preferences for goods may change.<sup>18</sup> The essential insight is that personal preferences correspond to an individual's frame of mind and the perceived motives of others. However, the academic literature describes preference changes as being involuntary (that is, people are "being acted upon" [2 Ne. 2:26]). In contrast to the academic literature's focus on involuntary changes in preferences, the scriptures attest to our ability to take intentional and voluntary efforts to change our preferences, and as we change our preferences, we change the value we place on spiritual goods and sacred symbols.

After learning from King Benjamin of their connection to God, the Nephites experienced a change in their hearts. They exclaimed, "Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually" (Mosiah 5:2).

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17. Christian Karlsson, "Portraits of Faith: Christian Karlsson," *Ensign* 48 (March 2018): 75.

18. Botond Köszegi and Matthew Rabin, "A Model of Reference-Dependent Preferences," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 121, no. 4 (2006): 1133–65; David R. Just and Andrew S. Hanks, "The Hidden Cost of Regulation: Emotional Responses to Command and Control," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 97, no. 5 (2015): 1385–99.

## Commodities and Relational Goods: Substitutes or Complements?

**The Nature of Commodities.** In contrast to relational goods, scriptural and academic texts describe commodities similarly—goods valued primarily for the physical satisfaction they provide and for what they can secure in exchanges for other commodities. The scriptures employ the metaphor “bread” to represent commodities. This metaphor emphasizes the role of commodities in satisfying our physical needs (see Matt. 6:11).

**Substitutes and Complements.** Substitute goods perform similar tasks and meet similar needs by different means. For example, a person may travel between points A and B on a bicycle, in a bus, on a horse, or in a car. These conveyances are substitutes for each other because they all meet transportation needs even though they do not provide the service in the same manner.

Two goods are complementary if using more of good A requires that we use more of good B. If the price of one good falls and people buy more of it, they will usually buy more of the complementary good also, whether or not its price also falls. Similarly, if the price of one good rises and reduces its demand, the demand for the complementary good may be reduced as well. When we consume complementary goods together, they produce a greater benefit than could be achieved if we consumed them individually. For example, our physical bodies need both food and drink. Many foods can substitute for other food. Many drinks can substitute for other drinks. However, most if not all foods are poor substitutes for drink. Instead, food and drink complement each other. We enjoy a meal more when both food and drink are available.<sup>19</sup>

Those who try to substitute commodities for relational goods are often disappointed. To illustrate, some individuals when faced with the loss of relational goods (such as through the breakup of a family or the death of a loved one) attempt to use commodities as a substitute—sometimes leading to emotional eating or drug abuse. These attempted substitutions of commodities for relational goods provide only temporary distraction at best because commodities cannot substitute for relational goods.<sup>20</sup>

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19. Walter Nicholson, *Microeconomic Theory: Basic Principles and Extensions*, 12th ed. (Mason, Ohio: South-Western Educational Publishing, 2005), 191.

20. Mary F. Dallman, Norman C. Pecoraro, and Susanne E. La Fleur, “Chronic Stress and Comfort Foods: Self-medication and Abdominal Obesity,” *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity* 19, no. 4 (2005): 275–80, doi:10.1016/j.bbi.2004.11.004,

In what has come to be called the “Rat Park” study, Alexander and his colleagues<sup>21</sup> gave rats the opportunity to drink fluids from two dispensers, one containing a morphine solution and the other plain tap water. Though the study is not without controversy, the researchers found that rats in isolation became addicted to the morphine solution while rats in a social environment (a rat park) mostly preferred the water. This led to the claim that some addictions reflect the substitution of drugs for social activities. These findings have prompted some to treat addictive behavior with more opportunities for social exchange.

Instead of treating commodities and relational goods as substitutes, the Lord instructs that we should treat them as complements, recognizing both the commodity value of a good and its connection to God. The Lord commands: “[Consume] every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with prudence and thanksgiving. Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are to be used sparingly” (D&C 89:11–12). God is giving direction on how to create attachment value for commodities by recognizing them as gifts from God. We should consume commodities with “prudence and thanksgiving” so their consumption strengthens us physically and builds our relationship with God (see also Eccl. 9:7).

### A Focus on Exchanges

Social life is a series of exchanges of tangible and intangible goods between at least two persons that produce both social and economic outcomes.<sup>22</sup> To understand the difference between exchanges in the world and exchanges in Zion, we consider next (1) the nature of commodity exchanges and money in the world, (2) exchanges of relational goods among a Zion people, and (3) failed attempts to exchange money for relational goods.

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PMID 15944067; C. Peter Herman, “The Social Facilitation of Eating: A Review,” *Appetite* 86 (2015): 61–73.

21. Bruce K. Alexander, Robert B. Coombs, and Patricia F. Hadaway, “The Effect of Housing and Gender on Morphine Self-administration in Rats,” *Psychopharmacology* 58, no. 2 (1978): 175–79.

22. Peter M. Blau, *Exchange and Power in Social Life* (New York: Wiley, 1964); Richard M. Emerson, “Social Exchange Theory,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 2 (1976): 335–62; George C. Homans, “Social Behavior as Exchange,” *American Journal of Sociology* 63, no. 6 (1958): 597–606.

**Commodity Exchanges and Money.** People in the world mainly exchange commodities for money. To understand the importance of money in commodity exchanges, imagine a world without it. In such a world, a barter economy, people exchange commodities for other commodities. The problem with a barter economy is that for commodity exchanges to take place, they require a lot of time and energy to connect two persons who want each other's commodities and can agree on satisfactory terms and levels of exchange. What usually happens in a barter economy is that the number of goods actually produced and exchanged becomes limited to mostly agricultural products, natural resources, land, and animals. Furthermore, in a barter economy, people consume most of what they produce and trade little with others, reducing opportunities for specialization that Adam Smith described as the engine of productivity.

Smith, the father of modern economics and the author of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), observed, for example, that pin makers working alone could barely produce one pin a day. However, when ten pin makers worked together and each one specialized in only one part of the pin production process, together they could produce 48,000 pins a day. Smith's example highlights a universally accepted economic truth: the ability to specialize increases productivity. But there is a catch: specialization requires exchanging what one produces for what one no longer produces but still needs and wants.<sup>23</sup> Smith asserted that allowing firms and individuals to freely engage in buying and selling on markets could channel individual selfish desires into a more broadly shared prosperity through mutually beneficial commodity exchanges.

An important economic question is how to facilitate exchanges of commodities. One answer is money or another medium of exchange. Money reduces the required number of transactions to two: exchanging what one person owns and is valued by others for money and exchanging one's money for what one desires and is owned by others. Furthermore, the exchange of money for commodities allows for anonymous exchanges between buyers and sellers, extending opportunities for specialization and trade across and around the world.<sup>24</sup> There are at

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23. Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 2d ed., vol. 1 (London: 1778), 5–15, [https://books.google.com/books?id=8VmkaJLyalMC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=8VmkaJLyalMC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false).

24. N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Microeconomics*, 7th ed. (Mason, Ohio: South-Western Cengage Learning, 2015): 50–51, 55.

least two kinds of money—commodity money that has value because of its physical properties (for example, gold)—and attachment-value money whose value depends on people believing that other people will accept it as a medium of exchange (for example, paper currency).

**Exchanges of Relational Goods among a Zion People.** A necessary condition for exchanging relational goods is relationships of goodwill, caring, trust, and regard. This requirement precludes anonymous relational good exchanges—people must know each other. This requirement for exchanging relational goods may at first appear to force exchanges of relational goods into some kind of barter economy, which would be the case were it not for the role of a third party in their exchange.<sup>25</sup>

When Lindon approached his future father-in-law for permission to marry his daughter, his future father-in-law gave his consent and a suggestion. He recommended to Lindon that he buy engagement and wedding rings from his jeweler friend who would offer him preferential terms of trade. Lindon recognized the advantage of the relationship triad and visited his future father-in-law's jeweler friend. All occurred as predicted. The jeweler was pleased to offer Lindon preferential terms of trade in the form of a discount.

Families benefit from relationship triads. Parents exchange their labor in the world for money that they exchange for commodities. Then, they share their commodities with family members in exchange for relational goods. Sometimes these triad relationships take place across international borders. For example, foreign workers sometimes leave their homes to work in the United States to earn money, much of which is returned to their families in their home countries. Migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean sent over \$69 billion to their families in 2017. These remittances are a lifeline for the economies of many countries.<sup>26</sup>

The most important triad facilitating exchanges of relational goods is between men, women, and God. He first loved us, and as we sense his love, we respond by loving not only him in return but also all those he loves (1 Jn. 4:19–21). The writer of Proverbs taught that when we

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25. Jeongkoo Yoon, Shane R. Thye, and Edward J. Lawler, "Exchange and Cohesion in Dyads and Triads: A Test of Simmel's Hypothesis," *Social Science Research* 42 (November 2013): 1457–66.

26. Nurith Aizenman, "Mexicans in the U.S. Are Sending Home More Money Than Ever," NPR, February 10, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/02/10/514172676/mexicans-in-the-u-s-are-sending-home-more-money-than-ever>.



donate commodities embedded with relational goods to the poor and needy, the Lord joins in the exchange: “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again” (Prov. 19:17). In other words, casting one’s “bread upon the waters” will receive divine compensation (Eccl. 11:1). According to Joseph Smith, if we are filled with God’s love, we seek to bless others in less familial relationships: “A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world anxious to bless the whole human race.”<sup>27</sup>

A poignant scene in Christ’s life emphasized the need to donate to the poor while depending on the Lord for our reward. A rich young man queried the Savior about the price of residency in Zion. The Lord directed him to sell all of his commodities and donate the proceeds to the poor. The young man turned away sorrowing, “for he had great possessions,” making the cost of living Zion principles too dear. Had he valued the Savior’s contributions to the exchange, he would have found the relational good reward he would have received from the exchange to be very generous (Matt. 19:21–22). The difficulty for the rich young man was that he had to change his heart and love God and others more than things to find the terms of exchange offered by the Lord sufficient compensation for what he had spent his entire life working to accumulate.

Exchanges of relational goods in Zion may include money and commodities embedded with socio-emotional and spiritual goods. This dual nature of attachment-value goods facilitates their exchange. To explain, consider a schedule of alternative combinations of two goods equally valued by consumers. Being able to exchange combinations of commodities and relational goods increases the likelihood of exchanges between buyers and sellers who enjoy relationships of caring, trust, and regard. Measuring the terms of trade in only commodities (for example, money) fails to capture the true nature of what is being exchanged.

To illustrate, suppose a consumer desires to purchase an airline ticket using a combination of money and airline miles. The customer can use several combinations of airline miles and money to purchase the ticket, increasing the likelihood that the consumer will have the means

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27. Joseph Smith to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, December 15, 1840, incorrectly dated October 19, 1840, in “History 1838–1856 Volume C-1 [2 November 1838–31 July 1842],” Joseph Smith Papers, <https://josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-c-1-2-november-1838-31-july-1842/1#full-transcript>.

to purchase the ticket. Similarly, the engagement and wedding rings were purchased with a combination of money and socio-emotional exchanges.

Fifteen hundred farmland owner-operators in Illinois, Michigan, and Nebraska reported that they would sell their farmland to friends and family members at a price that was 5.57 percent and 6.78 percent, respectively, below the price offered to a stranger. These same owner-operators reported that in order to sell their land to unfriendly neighbors, they would require a minimum-sell price premium of 18.4 percent above the price offered to a stranger. Because of premiums and discounts that depend on relationships, farmland sellers reported that less than 2 percent of their sales were to unfriendly neighbors while up to 70 percent of land sales were to friendly neighbors and family.<sup>28</sup>

More generally, the advantage of exchanging commodities embedded with socio-emotional and spiritual goods among family members has resulted in a predominance of family businesses. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 90 percent of American businesses are family owned or controlled. Ranging in size from two-person partnerships to Fortune 500 firms, these businesses account for half of the nation's employment and half of the gross national product. Family businesses may have some advantages over other business entities in their focus on the long term, their commitment to quality (which is often associated with the family name), and their care and concern for employees.<sup>29</sup> Family businesses are also willing to tolerate a lower return for much longer periods.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we evidence our relationship with God and others by accepting relational goods in our exchanges of goods and services with those in need. We feed the hungry, visit the sick and afflicted, pay tithes and

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28. M. E. Siles, L. Robison, B. Johnson, G. Lynne, and D. Beveridge, "Farmland Exchanges: Selection of Trading Partners, Terms of Trade, and Social Capital," *2000 Journal of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers* (2000): 72–82.

29. Aileron, "The Facts of Family Business," *Forbes*, July 31, 2013, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/aileron/2013/07/31/the-facts-of-family-business/#5299e76b9884>.

30. Javier Gimena, Timothy B. Folta, Arnold C. Cooper, and Carolyn Y. Woo, "Survival of the Fittest? Entrepreneurial Human Capital and the Persistence of Underperforming Firms," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 42 (1997): 750–83.

fast offerings, and help each other move—all in exchange for relational goods. In none of these cases do we ask for commodities in exchange for our efforts. However, those who serve without considering commodity rewards often speak of other rewards, such as feeling the love of God and feelings of love for those they serve.

**Failed Attempts to Exchange Relational Goods and Money.** The general guideline for doing business in the world without becoming worldly is not to buy or sell relational goods for money. Relational goods (socio-emotional, spiritual and attachment-value goods, and sacred symbols) should be exchanged only for other relational goods (although attachment-value goods may include commodities). The Savior's instruction to "give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you" (Matt. 7:6) can perhaps be applied to exchanging spiritual goods for commodities. Nephi condemned certain efforts to exchange sacred symbols for commodities, labeling the efforts as priestcrafts. "[The Lord] commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion" (2 Ne. 26:29). Consider several reasons why efforts to exchange relational goods for money may be unsuccessful.

The traditional economic view dictates that we can buy or sell anything in the world for enough money. However, to sell a relational good for money requires that we detach the relationship that created the relational good for the seller and transfer it to the buyer—which in most cases is not possible. The Beatles declared this truth in their hit song "Can't Buy Me Love": money can't buy me love, nor most other relational goods.<sup>31</sup> To try to buy or sell relational goods for money is to commit a fraud. It is only possible to purchase a relational good if the buyer's relationship to the good exists independent of the seller—which permits retailers to do brisk business selling relational goods for money.

The scriptures record a failed attempt to buy the power to bestow the Holy Ghost, a relational good, for money. Recently baptized Simon had not yet distinguished between commodities and relational goods. The scriptures record, "And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

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31. Beatles, "Can't Buy Me Love," *A Hard Day's Night* (London: EMI Studios; Paris: Pathé Marconi Studios, George Martin, 1964).

Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money” (Acts 8:18–21).

Donating commodities without charitable feelings (socio-emotional goods) does not qualify as an exchange of relational goods. Moroni taught the importance of giving a gift for the right reason and because of a proper relationship. “For behold, if a man being evil giveth a gift, he doeth it grudgingly; wherefore it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift; wherefore he is counted evil before God” (Moro. 7:8).

### Why We Should Not Sell Relational Goods for Money

**Commodification.** Marx introduced the concept of commodification, the conversion of a relational good into a commodity. He wrote: “The worker becomes a commodity that is all the cheaper the more commodities he creates. The depreciation of the human world progresses in direct proportion to the increase in the value of the world of things.”<sup>32</sup> An example of converting labor into a commodity, which Marx undoubtedly observed, was the widespread practice of employing children in mines and industrial centers.

Commodities satisfy physical needs. Relational goods satisfy higher needs for validation belonging, and knowing and treating relational goods as commodities that can be bought and sold for money corrupts and commodifies them and destroys their ability to serve the higher purpose for which they were intended.

Jesus became indignant when he saw merchants attempting to make a profit using the sacred confines of the temple and people’s desires to offer sacrifices to God. As a result, he drove them out and condemned their attempts to sell relational goods for money and commodify the temple, saying, “My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves” (Matt. 21:13).

**Selling Relational Goods for Money Destroys One’s Self-Respect and Goodwill.** Another reason for discouraging exchanges of money for relational goods is that such exchanges debase those who promote them. Indeed, the Savior taught that to trade one’s soul for the world of

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32. Karl Marx, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 78; see also Emma Griffin, “Child Labour,” British Library, May 15, 2014, <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/child-labour>.

commodities is an unprofitable exchange: “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). Yet history is full of men and women trading their souls, the ultimate relational good, for far less.

In what has become the standard reference for selling the sacred for money and destroying oneself in the exchange, Judas betrayed the Savior to the Sanhedrin and lost his soul for thirty pieces of silver: “And [he] said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver” (Matt. 26:15). He realized too late that by exchanging his connection to the Savior for money, he had lost his soul (Matt. 27:3–4).

Sir Thomas Moore was a principled advisor to King Henry VIII who refused to validate the king’s marriage to Anne Boleyn. In response, trumped-up charges were brought against him and led to him being beheaded. To succeed in this effort, the prosecution required the perjured testimony of Sir Thomas Moore’s nephew Richard Rich. In exchange for his testimony, Richard Rich was appointed to the position of solicitor general of Wales. In the movie *A Man for All Seasons* (based on the play of the same name by Robert Bolt), Moore responds to Richard, “Why Richard, it profits a man nothing to give his soul for the whole world—but for Wales?”<sup>33</sup>

A well-established marketing practice is to associate a commodity with high-profile and highly regarded persons. **In this effort, advertisers attempt to convert commodities into attachment-value goods capable of commanding a higher price. However, in the process of using social capital to charge a higher price for a commodity, they change the famous person’s relationships with others.** This negative effect of attempting to sell the benefits of one’s relationship to others for money is somewhat mitigated when promoters convince their customers that the commodity will improve their lives.

**Exchanging Commodities for Relational Goods.** Requiring those selling commodities to accept relational goods (and sometimes imitations of relational goods) may drive out legitimate businesses that buy and sell commodities. The Great Basin economy in the mid to late 1800s depended mostly on the exchange of relational goods combined with commodities. Relationships of caring that made exchanges of relational goods possible also allowed the Church to distribute resources more

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33. Fred Zimmerman, dir., Robert Bolt, screenplay, *A Man for All Seasons* (United Kingdom: Fred Zimmerman, 1966).

equally, to include new converts in the economy, and to hold people accountable for their stewardship of goods. However, the Saints were not long isolated from the larger economic world. The discovery of gold in California and wagon trains carrying manufactured goods passing through Salt Lake led the Saints to exchange their gold for commodities brought to Salt Lake.<sup>34</sup>

Brigham Young lamented that the Gentiles siphoned off gold belonging to the Saints. Meanwhile, Latter-day Saint consumers still expected Latter-day Saint merchants to accept relational goods for their commodities. Brigham Young complained,

If I had 100,000 dollars' worth of goods in that store [pointing to a non-Latter-day Saint establishment], owned by myself, or held by a "Mormon" company, in six months the goods would be gone, and we should not have 100 dollars to pay the debt. But let an infernal mobocrat come into our midst, though he brands Joseph Smith with the epithet of "false prophet," and all the "Mormons" a damned set of thieves, and would see all Israel in Tophet, you would give him the last picayune you could raise. . . . Suppose you owe that store across the road there 1500 dollars, would you try to pay it? Yes, you would lie awake at nights to think how to pay those merchants that do not belong to the kingdom of God; you would offer them horses, and wagons, and oxen, to liquidate that debt. . . . You trade with the Almighty worse than you do with the devil.<sup>35</sup>

What concerned Brigham Young was that the Saints were exchanging relational goods for commodities with LDS merchants, placing them at a disadvantage in the commodity markets in which they had to compete with gentile merchants.

Consider the following modern-day example. Lindon had a friend who was a skilled mechanic and engineer. Early on, Lindon's friend ran a small automobile repair business in a small southern Utah town. Because of his skills, many came to his shop; however, those with a friendly relationship with Lindon's friend sometimes expected to pay for their repairs using relational goods. After finding himself unable to earn a living despite having superior skills, Lindon's friend eventually left his car repair business and went to work for a large car company where he no longer engaged personally with customers.

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34. Leonard J. Arrington, *The Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 64.

35. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 84, brackets in original.

**Commodifying Relational Goods by Exchanging Them for Money Produces a Scarcity of Relational Goods.** The commodification of relational goods by attempting to purchase them for money leads to a famine of relational goods. Evidence of the relational good scarcity is the “rent a relationship” business. Tang Man-ting gives an example: “There’s a new kind of agency in Japan that helps clients to look for and rent relationships. Looking for a temporary husband, wife, girlfriend, parent or even guests to attend a fake wedding? These agencies can supply the warm bodies you need.”<sup>36</sup>

Mikael Sandel wrote about efforts to buy and sell relational goods for money. His examples included hiring mercenaries to fight wars, prison cell upgrades for felons, admittance to prestigious universities, visas to enter the United States, wombs of surrogate mothers in India, body parts from poor people in Bangladesh, advertising space on a single mother’s forehead, people waiting in line for you so you can attend congressional hearings, and life insurance policies on persons you think may die. In all these examples, some kind of relational good is commodified. The consequences of these exchanges, Sandel claims, will be increased inequality, corruption of motives, and a coarsening of our human nature—a modern famine of relational goods.<sup>37</sup>

### Laying Up Treasures in Heaven

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Savior warned against accumulating commodities instead of relational goods. He taught: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Matt. 6:19–21). The Savior’s teachings also suggest that relational goods have an advantage over commodities—they cannot be stolen, nor do they wear out over time (unless we neglect them). So how do we lay up heavenly treasures of relational goods? Some suggestions follow.

**Include Relational Goods with Exchanges of Commodities.** By refusing to conduct transactions as though we lived in the world, we

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36. Tang Man-ting, “Relationships for Rent,” ejinsight, November 24, 2017, <http://www.ejinsight.com/20171124-relationships-for-rent/>.

37. Michael J. Sandel, *What Money Can’t Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* (New York: Macmillan, 2012), 3–5.



keep ourselves from becoming part of the world. The Savior provided an important example of including a relational good in a commodity exchange when he engaged a Samaritan woman at her community's well. The transaction may well have been simply a worldly exchange—water for a commodity. Instead, the Lord gave relational goods freely to the woman at the well. He told her what no one else knew. He reflected his caring by pointing her in the direction of his kingdom, and she left the exchange with a profound love and regard for the Savior (see John 4:4–26).

As Peter and John were leaving the temple, a beggar who was lame from birth asked them for money. Peter said, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have I give thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” Then the scriptures record that Peter took the beggar by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and anklebones received strength. Then the beggar stood up and walked and leaped in what must have been a moment of extreme bliss and entered with Peter and John into the temple praising God (Acts 3:1–8).

Despite what appear to be increasing attempts to sell relational goods for money, sometimes our focus on each other shines through. The media blitz surrounding the consequences of Hurricane Harvey in southern Texas focused on the billions of dollars of property lost and destroyed. Then, the media started to take notice of the sacrifices people were making to rescue and restore those suffering from the disaster, as embodied in the now iconic photo of officer Daryl Hudeck carrying a mother and her young child through the flood waters. The revised perspective renewed our hope in the importance of relationships and caring for each other, including total strangers.<sup>38</sup>

**Decommodify Commodities.** “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof” (Ps. 24:1). We acknowledge this fact and strengthen our relationship with God by converting our commodities into relational goods—a process called sanctification or, more generally, decommodification. Consider several examples of how we can convert our commodities into relational goods.

Our homes are physical structures and are designed to serve a mostly physical function. We can decommodify our homes by dedicating them

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38. Adam Geller, “Photo of Mother and Baby’s Rescue Becomes Snapshot of Storm,” *Orange County Register*, August 28, 2017, <https://www.ocregister.com/2017/08/28/photo-of-mother-and-babys-rescue-becomes-snapshot-of-storm/>.

as places to enjoy the influence of the Holy Ghost. We can also decommodify them by exchanging relational goods with each other there and embedding them with socio-emotional goods. This applies not just to our homes. We also dedicate our temples, meetinghouses, and other church buildings—setting them apart for service in Christ’s kingdom. We set apart missionaries for serving the Lord and, in the process, assign them to work in the Lord’s kingdom, making them holy. Hannah dedicated her son to the service of the Lord, declaring, “Therefore also I have lent [dedicated] him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord” (1 Sam. 1:28).

In a gospel context, decommodification can be compared to consecration—an act in which men and women voluntarily dedicate their time, talents, and material wealth for the purpose of establishing and building Zion. Moses commanded, “Consecrate yourselves to day to the Lord” (Ex. 32:29).

**Give Thanks.** At some point, we all receive a commodity embedded with relational goods. However, if we fail to return relational goods (not commodities) in exchange—then we have exploited another person—receiving a commodity embedded with relational goods but offering no relational good in exchange. One way we can return relational goods for what we receive is to give thanks. Sometimes that is the least we can do; at other times, it is the most we can do without commodifying the gift.

Many have written about the importance of gratitude. On one occasion, Jesus healed ten lepers. Only one returned to express his gratitude. To the one grateful leper, the Savior remarked, “Go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole” (Luke 17:19). Failure to exchange the relational good of gratitude for one’s gift leaves the exchange of relational goods one-sided and almost a theft.

Expressing gratitude to God for our commodities decommodifies them by associating them with God. The meals we consume are commodities and serve a worldly function of preserving us physically. We decommodify them by giving God thanks for the food we consume. We also make them holy when we acknowledge that we have them by God’s grace. Indeed, so important is giving God thanks for what he has so generously provided that failing to do so is listed as one of our signal sins: “And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments” (D&C 59:21).

**Bridle Our Motives.** One important way to avoid becoming worldly is to recognize that relationships are more important than things. In

applying this truism, we realize that there is a limit to the number of commodities required to meet one's physical needs. Beyond that, we pursue the collection of commodities because we falsely believe that we can satisfy our socio-emotional and spiritual needs for validation, belonging, and knowing with more commodities.

Paul taught that we need to bridle our desire for money and what money can buy. "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:9–10).

An early biblical account demonstrates how motives can convert commodities into relational goods. Abel, motivated by his desire to strengthen his relationship with God, obeyed the command to offer sacrifices. In this exchange, Abel's motive conferred relational value on his sacrifice, changing it from a commodity into a relational or sacred good. Cain, on the other hand, also obeyed the command to offer a sacrifice to God but did so *without* the intent of strengthening his relationship to God. Because of his impure motive, God refused his sacrifice.

Joseph Smith at first considered obtaining the gold plates for material gain. Through subsequent tutoring, his motive for obtaining them changed; he desired to use them to teach others about God. With respect to a change in our hearts, Hugh Nibley wrote that if we wish to approach Zion, our economic efforts should be guided by our desires to use our resources "to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted" (Jacob 2:19). He complained that the Saints had forgotten that the lunch was free—that it was a gift from God and should be shared on the basis of need.<sup>39</sup>

**Change the Context and Framing of Our Choices.** We may value goods either for their commodity use or for their attachment value, or perhaps for some mix of the two. The social science literature suggests that how we value goods (either as commodities or as relational goods) will depend on our own emotional state of mind and the context in which we value the goods. A relational good may be viewed as such

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39. Hugh Nibley, "Work We Must, but the Lunch Is Free," in *Approaching Zion*, ed. Don E. Norton, The Collected Works of Hugh Nibley vol. 9 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1989), 202–51.

when some incident focuses our attention on the social capital that created it. For example, proposed government intervention in the use of children in farm labor led to an outpouring of emotional responses, signaling a fear that the policy could undermine important connections shared by families.<sup>40</sup>

According to Just and Hanks,<sup>41</sup> if a context is seen as either threatening or promoting a good's attachment value, the context could strengthen or weaken one's preference for the good. In the case of child farm labor, the threat arguably created a stronger attachment value. Individuals preparing their taxes may consider the exercise purely transactional and consider only the potential for costly penalties for failing to report some income or erroneously claiming some deductions. Alternatively, if prior to preparing their taxes, individuals are asked to sign an honor code statement, attesting to their tax returns' accuracy and honesty, now their self-image is on the line.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, the evidence suggests that such an honor statement helps encourage more honest reporting than when simply considering the potential for punishment.

The frame or context has some impact on whether we look for commodities embedded with socio-emotional or spiritual goods or not. When we fail to activate a celestial frame (one that considers our relation to God and family), the choices that we perceive as making us better off will be more selfish and material. We may feel burdened or antagonized by what would otherwise be virtuous acts. Thus, Laman and Lemuel murmured when returning to Jerusalem for the plates—even after being visited by an angel to encourage them in the attempt. Alternatively, Nephi was eager to fulfill the commandment of the Lord. Indeed, when we engage the celestial frame, there is little burden or sacrifice. Rather, we behave in a way that is commonly described as selfless because we value the socio-emotional goods generated by such actions. In this case, Nephi generated spiritual goods by willingly obeying God's command. The promise of the gospel is that we can obtain

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40. See Rachel Leven, "Obama Administration Scraps Child Labor Restrictions for Farms," *The Hill*, April 27, 2012, <https://thehill.com/business-a-lobbying/224169-obama-administration-scraps-child-labor-rules-for-farms>.

41. David R. Just and Andrew S. Hanks, "The Hidden Cost of Regulation: Emotional Responses to Command and Control," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 97, no. 5 (2015): 1385–99.

42. Nina Mazar, On Amir, and Dan Ariely, "The Dishonesty of Honest People: A Theory of Self-Concept Maintenance," *Journal of Marketing Research* 45, no. 6 (2008): 633–44.

greater happiness when finding ourselves in this celestial frame than when we are in a worldly frame.

How we change our preferences and adopt a celestial frame is a dense subject. Nephi taught his brothers that their father, Lehi, avoided the motives and filthiness of the world by focusing on the tree of life and other things (1 Ne. 15:27). Controlling the frame with which we evaluate our choices is difficult. Regular church attendance, studying the word of God, and regular visits from Church members can be exercises that activate this celestial frame. Moroni taught that to gain the proper motive we must ask for the gift of charity (Moro. 7:48). We read in *The Lectures on Faith*, “A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation.”<sup>43</sup> The Savior’s life was an example: he “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38).

### **Guidelines for Commodity and Money Exchanges**

**Deal Justly.** In many cases, we are required to exchange money for commodities. Hoping to entrap the Savior, the Pharisees posed a hostile question: “Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?” (Matt. 22:17). Jesus responded by asking for a Roman coin, a denarius, embedded with Caesar’s image. “And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar’s. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:20–21). From this exchange we learn that worldly currency is not an acceptable medium of exchange in Christ’s kingdom unless the offering is decommodified—as in the case of paying tithing in the currency of one’s country. But money, the commodity, is acceptable for paying one’s taxes and purchasing commodities in the world.

Since we live and do our business in the world, we may ask, how do we buy and sell commodities for money without becoming part of the world? We must maintain our relationships with our ideal self, our conscience, and God by exchanging commodities for money on just terms. When queried about just commodity exchanges, John the Baptist responded to the publicans, “Exact no more than that which

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43. *The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective*, ed. Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University), 91–94, lecture 6, paragraph 7, <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/lectures-faith-historical-perspective/lectures-faith-1990-edited-version/lecture-6>.

is appointed you.” And to the soldiers he taught, “Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages” (Luke 3:12–14).

But what does a just exchange entail? The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith to “trust in that Spirit which leadeth to do good—yea, to do justly, to walk humbly, to judge righteously” (D&C 11:12; see also Micah 6:8). Among other things, “to do justly” means keeping promises and complying with the terms of our exchange agreements. James, the brother of Jesus, taught, “Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth” (James 5:4).

Dealing justly also requires that we represent the terms of the exchange honestly and transparently. Moses taught, “Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning” (Lev. 19:13).

These lessons about dealing justly teach us that just because we could charge more than the accepted commodity exchange rate through guile, force, or other advantages we have over others in the commodity exchange market, we should not do so. Otherwise, we depreciate our goodwill with our ideal self, others, and God. Such motivations led an honest businessperson to honor a handshake agreement even after the circumstances had changed dramatically at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars.<sup>44</sup>

**Avoid Relational Bads.** Completeness requires that we acknowledge negative social capital and relational bads. Relational goods are produced in caring relationships. Relational bads are produced in relationships of antipathy, mistrust, and fear. When persons view others with antipathy, mistrust, and fear, they often desire to exclude them, to depreciate their worth, and in some cases to inflict physical harm upon them—because they received relational bads in the exchange. Shared antipathy, mistrust, and fear of others often leads people to unite in efforts to harm those they hate, producing relational bads. The perverse behavior produced by negative social capital is a willingness to harm oneself if by doing so, one can inflict greater harm on those one hates.

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44. Tad Walch, “Honesty Still the Best Policy,” *Deseret News*, December 31, 2005, <https://www.deseretnews.com/article/635172960/Honesty-still-the-best-policy.html>.

Laman, Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael hated Nephi and were jealous of his being favored by the Lord to be a leader over them. Their antipathy, mistrust, and fear led them on occasion to produce relational bads, including attempts to take Nephi's life and the lives of his followers. The consequences of antipathetic relationships are people living "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" lives.<sup>45</sup>

Fortunately, love is stronger than hate. At a critical point in one battle, the Lamanites, inspired by their hatred for the Nephites, fought like dragons, and the Nephites were about to give way. Then Moroni inspired the Nephites to fight for a greater cause. He "inspired their hearts with . . . the thoughts of their lands, their liberty, yea, their freedom from bondage" and the safety of "their wives and children" (Alma 43:48, 45). "And they began to stand against the Lamanites with power; and in that selfsame hour that they cried unto the Lord for their freedom, the Lamanites began to flee before them" (Alma 43:50). Such is the power of love and relational goods versus hate and relational bads.

## Summary

We began by declaring our intent to review principles for doing business in the world without becoming worldly. To that end, we distinguished between commodities exchanged in the world and relational goods exchanged among a Zion people. We pointed out that what people love the most determines the types and quantities of goods they exchange and with whom. One important outcome is that by exchanging commodities embedded with socio-emotional goods, it is possible to exchange commodities with the poor and needy on preferential terms. In other words, when there is mutual caring, the wealthy share commodities with the poor and are willing to receive relational goods in return; the poor offer only what they have.

Finally, we pointed out that there are principles that can guide our efforts. The first principle warns against attempting to buy or sell relational goods for money. Attempts to exchange money for relational goods leads to undesirable outcomes, including the commodification of relational goods and the ruining of relationships. While we cannot avoid pure commodity exchanges altogether (such as when paying for gas at

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45. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan: Or the Matter, Forme, and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civill* (London: The Green Dragon in St. Paul's Churchyard, 1651), 78, <https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/hobbes/Leviathan.pdf>.



a pump), we should avoid doing so when possible. If our lives consist of mostly commodity exchanges conducted in the world, we will conform to worldly attitudes and actions. Other principles for how to live in without becoming part of the world include converting one's commodities into relational goods, giving thanks, managing one's motives, changing one's frame or perspective to a celestial one, and dealing justly when conducting commodity exchanges.

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# Six Afterlives

*Scott Hales*

These poems belong to a series called “Famous White Men in Mormon Afterlives.” They are thought experiments about eternal life and progression. I wrote them (and several others) in May 2018 after reading Mary V. Dearborn’s *Ernest Hemingway: A Biography* (New York: Knopf, 2017). Reading about Hemingway’s life reminded me of a presentation I attended several years ago on the many times proxy ordinances had been performed for Hemingway and his four wives in Latter-day Saint temples. Latter-day Saints perform these ordinances because we believe that life continues after death, and that the experience of life after death is virtually the same as what we experience in mortality—except that it is “coupled with eternal glory” (D&C 130:2). Hemingway’s life, then, did not end by suicide in 1961. It continues to this day in the spirit world. Hemingway still inhabits space and adapts to his new surroundings, much the same way we do when we move houses or change jobs.

With eternal life in mind, I began imagining what life might be like for Hemingway and other famous people. How would they adapt to spirit prison or paradise? What would they do differently? I was particularly interested in the “dead white men” who have long been overrepresented as key players in our historical narratives. What would existence be like for them without the privilege they enjoyed in mortality? How would they respond to a world where everyone was truly equal in the eyes of God? Would they find redemption, or would they cling to their old ways?

## Hemingway in Paradise

At first he was  
sincere. He gave  
up drinking, watched

his language,  
attended elders  
quorum with Scott

and Archie. Maybe  
he liked that fishing  
was better in Paradise

than in Prison, and the  
big game hunting was more  
exciting than expected—

even if knowing  
the lions and rhinoceroses  
were immortal

took some of the  
fun out of it. And  
the same was true

for the bullfights,  
although St. Peter  
promised they would

improve once someone  
finished the temple work  
of the great Belmonte.

But then a few  
weeks passed, and  
he saw that Paradise

was no Havana  
in the summer. It  
wasn't even Key

West. It was too  
clean, too well-lighted,  
too much like Oak Park.

And the hills were  
more like gray hippos  
than white elephants.

Sure, he was  
perpetually thirty,  
but he wanted to be

eighteen and wounded,  
laid up in an Italian  
villa with a nurse

and a bottle of  
vermouth, instead  
of where he was,

forever sealed to  
four women who  
didn't really like him,

and each afternoon  
was filled not with death,  
but life eternal.

Yes, what he really  
wanted were the lakes  
of Michigan, the green

hills of Africa, the  
rivers of Spain. But  
mostly what he wanted

was a place where  
nothing was as truly true  
as his one true sentence.

## Self-Help

Progress, not stasis,  
was the object and design  
of existence in heaven.

When Dale learned this,  
he had dreams of building  
another empire,

bigger and nobler  
than the one he could  
not take with him

when he died.  
Everyone he saw  
needed help, and

if the same  
sociality existed here  
as it did there, then

the hosts of the  
dead, both great and  
small, would still

need his expertise  
in winning friends  
and influencing

people. He started  
a public speaking tour.  
He wrote two new books,

*How to Stop Worrying  
and Start Living*  
*Eternally* and *The Quick*

*and Easy Way to  
Effective Exaltation*. But  
the market for self-

help was unexpectedly  
poor in Paradise.  
Jesus had beat

him to the punch,  
and, frankly, had a  
better program.

Dale was devastated.  
Surrounded by boxes  
of unsold books, he

criticized, condemned,  
complained. He did  
not act enthusiastic.

How could he? In  
two weeks' time, he  
was back to

selling motor-  
trucks for a living,  
keeping company with

cockroaches and  
neckties in a cheaply-  
furnished flat. He

was lonely, disappointed,  
bitter, and rebellious.  
He couldn't smile.

## A Narrative of A. Gordon Pym

Edgar Allan Poe did not  
die that day in Baltimore.  
The drunk, disheveled man  
they fished out of the gutter

was his less impressive  
double. The real Poe had lit  
out for the West on a stagecoach  
two weeks earlier, finding

his way first to Kanesville,  
then to Salt Lake City. There  
he changed his name to Arthur  
Gordon Pym, accepted baptism,

married three wives, fathered  
twenty-six children, and never  
wrote another word of fiction  
or poetry for the rest of his

long life. He died in full  
fellowship with the church, a  
lighthouse keeper on the Great  
Salt Lake, a father of sorts

to the whales that called  
the lake their home. In Paradise,  
he maintained his low profile,  
avoiding creditors and every bad

writer he had reviewed with  
wit as sharp as an Ourang-  
Outang's razor. He served quietly  
as a ward membership clerk, a

guardian angel to alcoholics  
and drug addicts, and a muse

to various teenagers with literary aspirations. He found, in short,

his El Dorado. It was there—  
across the lunar mountains, down  
the shadowy valley. He had  
ridden boldly, and it was there.

## Jonathan Edwards, Champion

Disappointed that hell was not as real as he'd imagined, Jonathan Edwards cheered himself up at the rec center Ping-Pong table. He bought his own paddles and a carton of white plastic balls. He studied *A Congregationalist's Guide to Table Tennis* and, more furtively, *A Complete Idiot's Guide to Ping-Pong*. When his mind grasped the basic theory of the game, he recruited an opponent from the foosball table and sent his first ball flying.

He was not, to his surprise, a naturally gifted player. His early efforts seemed uninspired—embarrassing even. Hand-eye coordination was not a skill he had learned at Yale as a pimply eighteenth-century teen. He flinched when the ball came at him, afraid it would smite him in the face. Sometimes he swatted and missed or connected too hard with the ball, hurling it across the room like a damned soul into a pit of fire and brimstone. Ping-Pong was a game of skill; it had a learning curve. No grace, irresistible or otherwise, had a role in selecting who won

and who lost. It was the player with the paddle, not God, who determined where the ball would land. Winning was a matter of will, not unconditional election. Yes, one became a champion because he persevered—but he persevered because he willed himself to do it.

It took him six months, and some soul searching, but Jonathan Edwards became the Ping-Pong champion he longed to be. At the rec center, they called him “The Spider.” He gave into his depraved nature, and easily won every game he played. He cast away his Puritan garb and started wearing designer sunglasses, high-end workout clothes, and gold chains. If a garment screamed reformed theology, he sent it to Goodwill or Deseret Industries. He became a new man. Rather than look to the sky or the dust beneath his feet, he cast his eyes across the net, unafraid of the moment.

## **A Man among the Gentiles**

The admiral did not understand why his ships still sailed the icy fires of hell. In 1492, God had

wrought upon him to sail the ocean blue. If he had stayed home, others seeking liberty would’ve never

found their new world. White and delightful Europe needed a release valve. He gave it to



them and spread Christianity in his  
wake. So why was he still tormented,  
racked with the pains of a damned

soul, when all he had done was  
follow the Spirit? What he had done,  
he had done quickly and in God's

name. If that was a crime, clap  
him in irons; he had been in prison  
before. Time would vindicate

his method. For what were rape,  
slavery, conquest, and genocide when  
one had a role in God's immutable

plan, when life in this round world was  
cheaper than accountability? No one  
he knew would have done anything

different. Yes, God and His Spirit  
had wrought upon him—and him alone.  
He would stay the course, see his

voyage to the end, come Hell or  
Hell's high waters. His ships were fleet,  
and they could weather the storm.

## **Breakfast**

Every Friday morning, Harry  
Houdini and Sir Arthur Conan  
Doyle meet for breakfast at  
a café downtown. In life, they  
used to puzzle for hours over  
the question of life after death.  
Harry's skepticism had kept  
the conversations lively; Doyle's

long-suffering had kept them friends. So it was in the Spirit World: neither man could help returning to the topic, even though the Big Questions had all been answered. It was now the finer points, the hows and whys of eternal existence, that brought them together like sunshine to a mountain peak or frost to a window pane. Keeping in character, Harry was a how-man, Doyle a why. One pondered walls, boundaries, padlocks on pearly gates. The other sought the elementary: the clue, the solution, the lost in a found world. Since coffee and certain teas were unavailable, they settled for Postum and juice. Doyle liked ham and eggs and an English muffin. Harry usually ordered pancakes and fruit cocktail. On Fridays when it rained, they sat indoors, at a table by the window. If neither friend had much to say, they would eat contented, each enjoying the moment, as puddles formed on the chairs outside.

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# Who Is Leaving the Church?

## Demographic Predictors of Ex-Latter-day Saint Status in the Pew Religious Landscape Survey

*Stephen Cranney*

Who is leaving the Church? The blogosphere and informal ward council discussions have no shortage of speculation on this point, but there is surprisingly very little representative research to help shed light on this issue in a clear, systematic way. Because members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints make up a small fraction of the total population, most random surveys that ask about religion and former religion pick up only a handful of people with a Latter-day Saint background or affiliation in any wave. (For example, the 2016 General Social Survey reported only twenty-three members.) Numbers like this do not make Latter-day Saint research from standard surveys completely futile (especially if multiple years are combined), but they certainly dull the precision needed for advanced analysis and severely limit the range of questions that can be investigated.

However, in 2014 the Pew organization conducted their Religious Landscape Study, a survey that asked the right questions about current faith and childhood faith and had a large enough sample size (35,071 adults) to provide the necessary critical mass of Church members (641 respondents) and ex-members (221 respondents) to be able to investigate who they are beyond basic commonsensical characteristics, like a tendency for members to live in Utah. To investigate the question of who leaves the Church, I draw on two groups: respondents who were both raised as Latter-day Saints and continue to self-identify as such (446 respondents), and people who were raised as Latter-day Saints but no longer identify with the Church (221). These groups are pooled together to form a categorical subset of individuals in the Pew Survey

who have a Latter-day Saint background. By comparing the group of people in the latter group to the people in the former group (hereafter referred to as “lifelong Latter-day Saints”), this analysis tests for which characteristics are associated with people having left the Church, although this analysis does not cover people who may have converted after childhood and then left.

## **METHODS**

The Pew Religious Landscape Survey (PRLS) was a large, random telephone-based survey conducted in the summer and fall of 2014. Interviews covered both Spanish and English speakers but did not cover institutionalized individuals or speakers of other languages who were not fluent enough in Spanish or English to participate in the survey. In all, the survey covered approximately 97 percent of the total population. This study focuses on the basic sociodemographics of the ex-Latter-day Saint population, although the PRLS contains much more information on different religious variables, such as beliefs about God and the Bible.

Table 1 presents the basic summary statistics along with comparison-of-means tests for ex-Latter-day Saints and lifelong Latter-day Saints in the United States. These tables are weighted using the provided weights, so the numbers do not add up to the raw numbers in the survey. (Survey weights are used to assign different values to each respondent so that taken together the sample reflects the characteristics of the general U.S. population. For example, if the survey had a higher proportion of white, college-educated people than the U.S. population, then the answers of people who fit into this category might be “worth” less when it comes to calculating averages.) Table 2 presents a binary logistic analysis of predictors for leaving the Church. The variable coding schema is presented in the footnotes of the tables. It is worth noting, especially in cases where the groups being considered are small, that the lack of significant difference does not necessarily mean the two groups are equal, since there may be a difference that the survey is not large enough to pick up.

## **RESULTS**

### **How Many Are Leaving?**

How many people are leaving the Church? According to these weighted estimates, 191 people with a Latter-day Saint background left, compared to 379 who did not, meaning that about one-third of those with

a Latter-day Saint background have left the Church.<sup>1</sup> Another relevant statistic is how this number compares to those who are joining the Church, since one number being higher than the other suggests a net shrinking or growing of the Church (not taking into account the “natural growth” from childbirths) over the long run. Here, about 172 members of the Church are converts (versus the 379 who were born in the Church), representing about 31 percent of the Church, which is not significantly different statistically from the number of people leaving. In other words, as of 2014 the Church appears to be treading water in terms of replacing those who leave with converts, meaning that any real growth comes from the natural growth of members of the Church having children. However, since these numbers represent the departure and conversion of members not only now but also in the past, it can be legitimately asked whether there is a net outflow from the Church in the more recent years that is obscured. For example, if in 2007 there was a net surplus of converts, but in 2014 there was a net surplus of ex-Latter-day Saints, then the Church may be hemorrhaging members and bringing the overall numbers in 2014 into stasis, when previously it would have been in positive territory.

Thankfully, we can investigate this claim, since the first wave of the PRLS was fielded in 2007, and performing the same calculations yields the same results—statistically equivalent outflows to inflows. The data may not be large enough to explore more refined variations, and the sample size may, as noted above, obscure smaller inflows and outflows that are not detectable with this data, but given the largest publicly available dataset of self-identified Latter-day Saints, the most warranted conclusion is that the Church is in a state of stasis in terms of religious switching. As noted previously, however, this does not take into account the potential natural growth of children being born versus members dying, or the potential growth from population momentum, which could cause the Church to grow in the medium term due to its age structure, even in the absence of above-replacement fertility or conversions in the Church.

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1. Since these numbers measure self-identification and not necessarily formal membership, they may vary from numbers derived from official Church membership records.

Table 1: Weighted Means from the Pew Religious Landscape Survey

	<i>Ex-Latter-day Saint Mean</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>Lifelong Latter-day Saint Mean</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Age	5.01	.27	4.83	.19	.19
Male	.6	.04	.48	.03	.12*
White non-Hispanic	.8	.04	.93	.02	-.12**
Black non-Hispanic	.04	.02	0	0	.03*
Hispanic	.04	.02	.04	.01	0
Other race	.11	.03	.03	.01	.08**
Utah	.26	.04	.34	.03	-.09
Married	.5	.05	.72	.03	-.21***
Cohabiting	.13	.03	.01	.01	.12***
Divorced	.16	.04	.04	.01	.12**
Separated	.01	.01	.02	.01	-.01
Widowed	.02	.01	.02	.01	0
Never married	.18	.03	.19	.03	-.02
Education	4.4	.14	4.95	.1	-.55***
Income	5.2	.19	5.61	.15	-.43*
No. of children	1.78	.13	2.49	.13	-.71***
Politically liberal	3.17	.1	2.28	.05	.9***

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Age: 1 = <25, 2 = 25-29, 3 = 30-34, 4 = 35-39, 5 = 40-44, 6 = 45-49, 7 = 50-54, 8 = 55-59, 9 = 60-64, 10=65-69, 11 = 70-74, 12 = 75-79, 13 = 80-84, 14 = 85-89, 15 = 90+

Education: 1 = Less than high school, 2 = Some high school, 3 = High school graduate, 4 = Some college, 5 = Two-year degree, 6 = Four-year degree, 7 = Some postgraduate school, 8 = Postgraduate or professional degree

Income: 1 = < \$10,000, 2 = \$10-20,000, 3 = \$20-30,000, 4 = \$30-40,000, 5 = \$40-50,000, 6 = \$50-75,000, 7 = \$75-100,000, 8 = \$100-150,000, 9 = \$150,000+

Political orientation: 1 = Very conservative, 2 = Conservative, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Liberal, 5 = Very liberal

**Table 2: Predictors of Having Left the Church (log odds)**

<i>Dependent variable: Ex-Latter-day Saint status</i>					
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Male	.43 (.22)	.25 (.24)	.24 (.24)	.22 (.24)	0.64* (0.26)
Age	-.01 (.03)	.06 (.04)	.07 (.04)	.13** (.05)	0.11* (0.05)
Utah	-.41 (.25)	-.52* (.26)	-.44 (.26)	-.39 (.26)	-.64* (.29)
Cohabiting		3.17*** (.67)	2.85*** (.68)	2.44*** (.68)	2.95*** (.82)
Divorced		1.81*** (.38)	1.58*** (.42)	1.31** (.42)	1.53*** (.43)
Separated		.50 (.96)	.04 (1.09)	.32 (1.24)	.16 (.99)
Widowed		-.53 (.62)	-.76 (.74)	-.67 (.72)	-.37 (.84)
Never been married		.42 (.35)	.27 (.36)	-.42 (.40)	.21 (.40)
Black non-Hispanic		3.28** (1.17)	3.30** (1.23)	4.21* (1.71)	2.65* (1.29)
Hispanic		.28 (.63)	.19 (.67)	.13 (.70)	-.19 (.74)
Other race		1.73*** (.50)	1.69*** (.49)	1.59** (.49)	1.60* (.67)
Education			-.17* (.07)	-.16* (.07)	-.20** (.08)
Income			-.01 (.06)	.0002 (.06)	.05 (.06)
No. of children				-.35*** (.09)	
Politically liberal					1.02*** (.16)
Constant	-.74** (.26)	-1.51*** (.35)	-.65 (.60)	-.10 (.61)	-3.93*** (.77)
Observations	637	628	577	573	562
Log Likelihood	-391.66	-327.83	-302.84	-292.09	-239.28
Akaike Inf. Crit.	791.31	679.66	633.69	614.19	508.57

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

Log odds are reported

Age: same as table 1

Education: same as table 1

Income: same as table 1

Political orientation: same as table 1



## Where Do They Go?

Of those in the survey who left the Church, 34 weighted cases (about 18 percent) switched to evangelical Protestant groups. These groups are generally (but not exclusively) characterized by having a more conservative bent and are focused on salvation through grace and propagating the Christian message. Another 15 (8 percent) switched to “mainline Protestant” groups. These groups are characterized by more liberal leanings, with many ordaining women priests and performing same-sex marriages. Another 4 switched to other Latter-day Saint restorationist movement branches, 4 to Buddhism, 10 to generic Christianity, and a handful to the other categories. However, by far the largest group (58 percent) chose to become “nones” and have no religious affiliation.

## Social/Political Issues

While this Pew Survey did not ask directly about why people leave, the characteristics of ex-Latter-day Saints can shed some light on this question. In particular, some speculate that a significant portion of Latter-day Saints leave the Church over the Church’s generally conservative bent toward social, gender, or political issues.

Ex-Latter-day Saints do appear to be more liberal than those who stay (see tables 1 and 2). However, the political switch may be less of a switch from “conservative” to “liberal” than from “conservative” to “moderate.” Contrary to stereotypes about liberal ex-Latter-day Saints, many ex-Latter-day Saints (27 percent) still identify as politically conservative, with 39 percent identifying as political moderates, and only a minority (35 percent) identifying as politically liberal.

Finally, it is telling that those who leave do not tend to switch to liberal denominations but rather into irreligiosity (a group that tends to be more liberal), although when they do switch into another religion, they are about twice as likely to move into an evangelical Protestant group as they are to move into a liberal Protestant denomination (the difference between the evangelical Protestant group and the liberal Protestant group is statistically significant at  $p = .016$ ). The turn to irreligiosity does not suggest that otherwise religious people are leaving for denominations that better comport with their social liberalism, but rather that something is causing them to leave religion altogether in both its liberal and more conservative variations.

## Gender

Related to the issue of leaving over social issues is the question of gender. For a religion with an all-male priesthood that treats the notion of gender seriously, it is worth investigating whether women are more likely to leave than men. In this sample, men are overrepresented among those who have left; these results comport with prior findings in the large American Religious Identification Survey that men tend to disproportionately leave the Church.<sup>2</sup> This difference may be a Latter-day Saint-specific manifestation of the fact that in the United States men tend to be less religious than women.<sup>3</sup>

## Race and Hispanic Status

The fact that the Church in the United States is predominantly white raises the question of whether racial minorities are more likely to leave. As revealed in the summary statistics, black and “other race” individuals tend to be more likely to leave the Church. Hispanic status produced an insignificant effect. Furthermore, the racial minority effect remains in the regression analysis, suggesting that, for example, their lower likelihood of staying is not due to them being less likely to live in Utah. Furthermore, the effects here are substantively large. The log odds that are reported in table 2 are difficult to substantively interpret, but given table 2, model 2’s parameters and using predicted probabilities, a white non-Hispanic male who is married and living outside of Utah has a 28 percent chance of having left the Church, whereas his counterpart who is black but is otherwise similar has a 91 percent chance of having left the Church. However, these effects are derived from very small sample sizes, with only 0.5 (due to weighting) black members who have stayed versus the 6.7 who left, so the effect sizes are tenuous. The “other race” category is perhaps a little more reasonable at 8 who have stayed and 20 who have left, giving a predicted probability from model 2 above at 69 percent.

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2. Rick Phillips and Ryan T. Cragun, *Mormons in the United States 1990–2008: Socio-demographic Trends and Regional Differences* (Hartford, Conn.: Trinity College, 2008), <http://commons.trincoll.edu/aris/files/2011/12/Mormons2008.pdf>.

3. Marta Trzebiatowska and Steve Bruce, *Why Are Women More Religious Than Men?* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

## Age and Utah Residence

Ex-Latter-day Saints do not appear to be any younger or older than lifelong Latter-day Saints, either in the summary statistics (table 1) or in the regression analysis (table 2—except when controlling for liberalism and number of children, and in those cases directionality is difficult to discern). Ex-Latter-day Saints also appear to be less likely to reside in Utah in the summary statistics (34 percent versus 26 percent, but this barely misses the cutoff for significance at  $p = .065$ ), and the Utah effect is sporadically significant in the regression analysis, suggesting that, whether because they are more likely to leave when growing up outside of Utah or because they are more likely to move outside of Utah after they leave (or a combination of both), ex-Latter-day Saints are disproportionately found outside of Utah compared to Latter-day Saints who did not leave.

## Socioeconomic Status

In the summary statistics, ex-Latter-day Saints tend to be less educated, with lower income. While distinct, these findings conceptually support prior research that has shown that, unlike most religions, for Latter-day Saints education is positively associated with activity.<sup>4</sup> However, when education is controlled for, income becomes insignificant, suggesting that those who stay in the Church are wealthier because they are more educated.

## Marital Status and Children

Unsurprisingly, ex-Latter-day Saint couples are more likely to be cohabiting and have fewer children. Divorce is one of the strongest and most robust predictors of having left the Church. Again, the log odds that are reported in table 2 are difficult to substantively interpret, but given table 2 and model 2's parameters and using predicted probabilities, the divorced person with a Latter-day Saint background has a 70 percent chance of having left the Church, while a married person with a Latter-day Saint background has a 28 percent chance of having left.

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4. Stan L. Albrecht and Tim B. Heaton, "Secularization, Higher Education, and Religiosity," *Review of Religious Research* 26, no. 1 (1984): 43–58; Ray M. Merrill, Joseph L. Lyon, and William J. Jensen, "Lack of a Secularizing Influence of Education on Religious Activity and Parity among Mormons," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 42, no. 1 (2003): 113–24.

## DISCUSSION

I have found a number of basic differences between those who have left the Church and those who have stayed: those who have left are more likely to be divorced, less educated, less wealthy, more liberal (or moderate, as the case may be); to have fewer children; to be cohabiting; and to be racial minorities.

Because there is no information on *when* people left the Church, it is difficult to speculate about why ex-Latter-day Saints tend to be divorced more than those who remain in the Church. It is theoretically plausible that the trauma of undergoing a divorce led to a loss of faith, activity, and ultimately identification with the Church; it is also possible that a loss of faith led to intermarital strife with a member spouse; finally, it is possible that Latter-day Saint marriages tend to have lower divorce rates overall. Some incidental support exists for this last point in the fact that the Latter-day Saint sample here has a significantly lower chance of being in the divorced category than the general non-Latter-day Saint PRLS sample, whereas the ex-Latter-day Saint sample does not show a statistically significant difference with the general sample. This suggests that ex-members may simply lose whatever Latter-day Saint-specific protections against divorce that may exist.

Similarly, there are a number of theoretically plausible stories for why ex-Latter-day Saints tend to be less educated and have lower incomes. It could be that there is a Latter-day Saint emphasis on education and occupational success that leads to higher incomes and more education, or it could be that people are more likely to stay in the Church if the lifestyle is working out for them socioeconomically.

Finally, the racial effects found here lend themselves to any number of interpretations, but perhaps the most reasonable is that being a racial minority in a predominantly white Church may cause its own stresses that make continued activity and identification with the Church less likely.

While on their face the political findings support the familiar narrative of liberal latter-day Saints leaving over social issues, the fact that only a minority of ex-Latter-day Saints identify as liberals and that hardly any of them switch to liberal Protestant denominations nuances this perspective. While social issues are undoubtedly salient for some people's exodus from the Church, it is likely that this narrative receives a disproportionate amount of attention in informal and online discourse on this subject, and the size of the liberal Latter-day Saint exodus over social issues should not be exaggerated.

This brief empirical treatment has outlined the general contours of who, sociodemographically speaking, is leaving the Church. Hopefully future surveys will continue to provide large-*N* data that include questions on both current and former religion.

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# Better and Worse

*Hollie J. Wise*

**I**s it just me, Miss Wise, or are your eyes getting really big?” Walker says as he looks all the way up at me.

It’s mid-September of my second year of teaching, and all around us the other kindergartners buzz about the room. Nice Miss Wise is trying to contain Crazy Miss Wise as I reprimand Walker for the umpteenth time. Apparently, my eyes give me away.

I lean down, closing the height gap between Walker and me, and try to finish the lecture so that we can both move on. “Walker, listen to what I’m saying! The pencil cannot be used that way!”

He’s still staring at my eyes, probably thinking about what it would look like if they exploded.

When Walker stepped off the bus the first day of school, the tag pinned to his polo shirt bore my name in crisp, black, permanent marker. His brave walk reminded me that someone who loved him put him on the bus that morning and sent him to me. In that moment, he became mine.

Now, imagining myself as the looming, bug-eyed giant that he must see, in this moment, I understand that I am his too.

I give up. “You can go back to centers. Leave the pencil,” I call after him.

It was Shannon, one of my sweet angels my first year (the year before Walker), who had said I’m the “perfect tall” for a kindergarten teacher. At almost six feet, I’m easy to spot on the playground, but I sense more than height in Shannon’s estimation. I recognize that I am theirs, and they are mine. For better and for worse.



“You smell good, Miss Wise,” says Michael, a boy who likes the way trash smells and who aspires to be a garbage man. Sometimes when he’s sitting on the rug, he reaches out and tenderly touches my ankle to feel the texture of my sock. The next day he’s so mad he wants to blow up the school, he says. Another day, he just hits his head against the table. Everything Michael does cries out to me, so I cry out too—to the guidance counselor, the behavior specialist, and the school psychologist. But still I feel like his mother and I are his only advocates in the whole world—and we don’t know what to do.

Sometimes, after a day with Michael, all I want is to go home and shower, to turn my face into the hot water and let it wash over me. But after, when I am lying in the dark, I meet that weight again, for it comes from a responsibility too heavy to have been washed away. It’s during this long year with Michael that my stomach begins to hurt.



The yellowish light of the teachers’ bathroom isn’t ever very flattering, but today I look especially worried and sick. Oatmeal with radioactive tracer was my breakfast, followed by a two-hour scan. Doctor 2, the specialist, has already ruled out celiac, Crohn’s, and inflammatory bowel disease, and he’s sent me for more tests.

Back at my school to teach the second half of the day, I’m stalling in the bathroom. I’m still shaking off the unpleasant feeling of the cold, nuclear medicine wing where I spent the morning, trying to forget the ickiness of being handed breakfast by a stranger wearing exam gloves. In a few minutes, I’ll have to muster bright classroom energy, but for now I pause, trapped in the dark spiral of unknowns. All of the tests and appointments should be leading to something—a resolution or at least a name for what I am experiencing. But despite what I want, this is only a beginning.



After a few years of teaching, I have learned the importance of beginnings. Powerful forces, for better or for worse, are set in motion at the start of something. In the first week of school, I teach many lessons that are critical to our year-long success, including “Paper Towels Belong in the Trash, Not in the Toilet” and “A Fire Drill Is Just Practice.” My



favorite first-week lesson is “How to Ask a Friend to Be Your Partner” because it fills me with joy that a world exists where success is just this clear-cut and simple. Here’s how the lesson unfolds:

“Boys and girls,” I say in a voice that suggests this is something very important and special, “today you are going to learn how to ask someone to be your partner.”

I select Jayden as my helper. As he makes his way to the front, nineteen little pairs of eyes watch him.

“This is how you ask someone to be your partner,” I say. “First I turn to Jayden, and I look at him.” With cartoonish exaggeration I act this out; my audience is captivated. “Jayden, will you be my partner?” I slowly ask. Before Jayden can speak, I whisper to him his line.

He says very seriously, “Yes.”

“Okay,” I smile and gesture that this mission is accomplished. “We will sit down on the floor facing each other. Now, who would like to give it a try?”

One by one I let each student choose a partner. Even the last to go, who has watched the scenario unfold at least ten times, needs my personal coaching. It’s painfully slow, yet for the first time all day, everyone is riveted. It’s reality TV for five-year-olds.

This kind of constant directing can lead to a bit of a god complex, because in the universe of my classroom I am the highest power. Here, knowing the end of the school year from the beginning, I create and accomplish my work. Daily, I judge right from wrong and administer both justice (time-outs) and mercy (warnings).

I am theirs and they are mine in this universe I have made. Yet I feel *I* am the one being created here. The power of the way the children see me, the dynamic of this stewardship, forms me out of the basic elements of myself.



“Okay, Miss Wise,” Viviana acquiesces. She has a distinctive way of saying my name that conveys both annoyance and fondness. Her tone simultaneously recognizes that I am the higher power of this universe and rebels against that knowledge. Today her classmates have tattled on her. I’ve just seen the evidence, two squished monarch caterpillars in her hand, and I’ve banished her to time-out. I had been very clear with all of the children before recess when I said, “You may visit the butterfly garden, but look with your eyes only.”

Ten minutes later the caterpillars are dead.

After watching this scene repeat for the next three days, I realize that no consequence will be strong enough to overcome Viviana's compulsion. So my special education colleague writes a story for her. Every day before recess, inevitably after a few rounds of resistance, Viviana reads this custom story before going out to play: "I swing on the swings at recess. I go down the slide at recess. I DO NOT GO IN THE BUTTERFLY GARDEN. I slide down the fire pole. I have fun with my friends. I DO NOT GO IN THE BUTTERFLY GARDEN."

Surprisingly the story works, although by this time our caterpillar population is irreparably diminished.

The butterfly garden browns and dies as the year goes on, and Viviana's story is forgotten. My medical story, meanwhile, advances to Doctor 4, but by June this doctor's treatments are making me worse. I'm running on fumes to the summer break ahead when Viviana's story resurfaces in my end-of-the-year file sorting. I'm alone in the room, so for kicks I read it aloud.

Although Viviana always read the story in monotone, I read it now the way I imagine her brain must have translated its message. With an exaggerated ponies-and-rainbows sweetness in my voice, I read until I get to the page with the big red X and bold print. Here I switch to my best impending-doom voice and read, "I DO NOT GO IN THE BUTTERFLY GARDEN."

I smile and put the story in my "save" pile.

By the middle of summer, I wish I had a story like Viviana's for my health. My body is failing me, and I am failing my body. The distress signals it sends are a code I can't break. Doctor 4 runs out of ideas, and I'm on my own again. I could use a guide with clear-cut dos and don'ts.

I look for guidance from the higher power in my life: God. And though I feel assurance that I'm on the right path, the way ahead isn't as clearly spelled out as Viviana's story. There is no big red X or impending-doom warning, so I just keep going forward.



Thin acupuncture needles, carefully placed on my legs and feet, reach up like antennae into the expectant air of this new place. With each doctor or practitioner I visit, I yearn anew to be free from my symptoms, and though I have been failed repeatedly, hope comes automatically. As I lie quietly in the dim natural light, I imagine myself as seen from above—a body in repose, still except for the movement of breath. The scene is

peaceful and neutral. Then, all at once, a great love for my body flows over me. I am filled by this kindness coming from me, but directed to me. I don't feel failure or frustration—just tender concern and love for the physical part of my being. This momentary clarity is enough, for now.



It's August again. Despite all of the tests and treatments, I'm getting sicker. But because I don't know what else to do, I start another school year.

A few weeks later I go to see Doctor 6, and by February the scopes and pill cams have gone where no one has gone before. This doctor seems to know things that no one has known before, and I'm finally gaining weight again.

Because I'm out for so many appointments and tests, my class this year quickly becomes used to substitutes. I quickly become accustomed to having a break from these students, who are as far from an angel class as a group can get. This is the year, in fact, that I coin a name for what lies on the dark side of the kindergarten spectrum: Gingerbread Head Biters.

The name emerges during our study of the classic tale "The Gingerbread Man." To make a picture graph in math, the children rip a paper gingerbread man to show where they took the first bite of their own real cookie—from the arm, leg, body, or head. Then they tape their paper cookies in the appropriate columns on a class poster.

Usually, most of the cookies end up in the arm or leg column, but this year, as the graph comes together, I see unprecedented results: the head-biter column is off the chart.

I don't know exactly what these results say about them, but I'm not surprised. Behavior charts and intervention plans are taped all over my desk this year. I like each one of the students individually, but as a group their combined needs and strong personalities are overwhelming.

All the Gingerbread Head Biters have excellent immune systems; hence, they are never absent. James, who bounds in each day with volatile emotions, has the best immune system of all and is only absent one day the whole year—the day he is adopted by his foster family.

It's not their fault, but because I'm struggling to survive, I resent that my Gingerbread Head Biters need every ounce of energy I have. And then Regina arrives.

"Who is going to help us?" I plead with the principal and assistant principal as I sit in the office. This is too much. Regina has been plopped in my classroom with no support because she can't qualify yet

for special ed services. I'm told there is a process that must be followed, and it takes months.

Regina has no language. Kissing and roughly hugging her classmates are her only ways to tell them how much she likes them. She wails because she's mad or maybe because she's confused; I don't know the difference.

I am given crumbs when I ask for help. My assistant and I struggle to meet Regina's tremendous needs as well as the needs of the rest of our students. The hope that had been growing in my body and spirit (as a result of Doctor 6's treatments) starts to look like an illusion. As I begin to sink instead of swim, I see the thin line between air and water.

Finally, Regina qualifies for the special ed services she needs. But it's too late because I'm broken and defeated by the realization that I have been pushed to a limit I didn't know existed—to a place where I can't bring myself to claim Regina as my own.

The school year carries on, and after the last day, I pack up for the summer cleaning. My ritual as I leave the room in its worn but tidy state is to take a last look before I close the door. In that moment, I can release the stewardship of that year's class.

This June, I am particularly grateful that although the joy was missing, I completed my job. I made it through—not with the grace or goodness I would have liked—but to the children nothing was amiss: they were safe, they learned, and they belonged with me. But as I look at that room, letting go of this difficult year, I'm not sure I can come back.

As summer break begins, I'm back in Doctor 6's office. He's trying to appear empathetic as he tells me he has exhausted his options. After a year of his treatments, although I feel better than my worst, I've plateaued far below healthy. This is as good as it gets for you, he is telling me. He doesn't understand what it's like to teach Gingerbread Head Biters. Look how far you've come, he's explaining. But I remember what health felt like, and I desperately want it back.



I do come back to my classroom. There are joyful moments with my students, but I'm wary now. Unlike in my early years of teaching, when each challenge stretched but did not break me, now I clearly see my limit and that the fail-safes don't exist, and I am afraid.

Traumatized as a child by the ending to the original version of the movie *Pete's Dragon*—by the finality of the dragon's goodbye—at the close of each school year, I choose to leave our class ending unfinished. I ask my

soon-to-be first graders to visit and wave to me in the hall next year. I don't tell them that it won't be the same and that we won't belong to each other the way we do now. Instead, I leave open the possibility that if we need each other, we'll still be close by—the way *Pete's Dragon* should have ended.

I realize during the summer break that my health is declining again and that I need to take a leave of absence from teaching. I'll be back in a year or two, I tell myself, leaving open the possibility that I'll be Miss Wise again.

After clearing out the classroom for my replacement, I take one last look into the quiet, bare space that isn't mine anymore. Closing the outer metal door and instinctively listening for the sure click, a part of me, with both longing and gratitude, understands this is a final goodbye.



Years have passed, and I have not returned. The teacher stuff I carted home in boxes that last day has been sorted and pared down three times now, and still it takes up half a room. Occasionally, I take out my emotions too and try to sort and pare them down—try to understand what can stay and what can go. When I examine them one by one, I see the part each played in my decision to leave. Fear stole my confidence. Hope insisted that wellness was just ahead. But love was there too, underneath the others. Love for my own body, my oldest stewardship, suggested the choice to step away from the classroom.

I am still trying to break the code of my symptoms. I still dream of freedom from illness. Doctors have failed me, treatments have failed me, but I trust my body's constant loyalty to help fill the measure of my creation. Despite its imperfections, a body gives perfectly—breath after breath, beat after beat, cell by cell. I haven't discarded the final box of emotions yet, nor do I think I should. Even as I question whether I made the right choice, love focuses this truth in my view: I am mine—for better and worse. And love records that I was theirs, the children's, too.

It's Brian, who on his very last day of kindergarten summed it up best. His thank-you note read, "Miss Wise: Every school day, I had a good day. I will miss you tomorrow."

The gift of kindergarten is that tomorrow always begins anew. Even if you have to move your behavior clip to red because you flooded the bathroom, tomorrow your clip will be back on green. Even if your lunch bag leaks in your cubby or you don't get picked for Line Leader, tomorrow is a clean slate.

This is how I want to remember it: a new kindergarten day. The morning light comes in from the solarium. Their fresh, little faces look up at me from our blue rug. As I begin the morning, the familiarity of our routine affirms our belonging.

“Good morning, boys and girls.”

“Good morning, Miss Wise.”

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This essay by Hollie J. Wise won third place in the 2018 Richard H. Cracroft Personal Essay Contest sponsored by BYU Studies.

## The Demands of Poetry: A Review of Collections Published in 2018 by Latter-day Saint Authors

*Susan Elizabeth Howe and Casualene Meyer*

During the nineteenth century, poets had the celebrity status of today's most famous singers. Most of today's educated readers (including educated Latter-day Saint readers), however, can't name five poets who are highly regarded in our generation. But readers may not be completely to blame for this shift. Early in the twentieth century, poets such as T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, poets later grouped under the term *Modernist*, took poetry, which had been one of the most popular genres of literature, and made it so difficult—so full of allusions, voices, and fragments of thought not necessarily connected to each other—that poetry became a subject to be studied by university professors and students, not a popular form of literature.

Contemporary poetry's reputation for difficulty, if not outright incomprehensibility, is in some ways deserved. For the past century at least, poets have argued about how much work readers should be asked to do to comprehend a poem. Modernists felt that poetry should be difficult to reflect the breakdown in institutions that had provided the Western worldview before World War I. The writers who call themselves “L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E” poets feel that some of the racist or sexist assumptions inherent in language make readers complicit in perpetuating injustice, and so—as they do with the word *language* in their own name—they seek to disrupt the linear comprehension of a poem by distorting syntax, altering punctuation, and fragmenting sentences to require readers to question those assumptions. Poets favoring a more democratic poetry have questioned the writer's authority to control what a poem means and have deliberately composed poems of indeterminate

meaning so that readers are enabled/required to bring their own ideas to the language of a poem as they attempt to create meaning.

But there is an equally large and vocal group of poets who write and support poetry that is more accessible to readers. They argue that the entire function of language is to communicate and that poems, being composed of language, should participate in the work of communication. Their poetry is more welcoming to the reader, making clear the situation of the poem and the voices involved. The newness of their poetry is in their original use of language, the imaginative representations of their subjects, and the wit and wisdom they bring to the poems.

This review essay doesn't mean to promote one type of poetry above another. Rather, it is an attempt to help readers learn to engage with any collection of poetry they may encounter. In reality, there are so many different types of poetry being published today that most readers who try a few books will find some they enjoy. In addition, readers can learn the demands of many types of poetry, preparing themselves to engage with poems they may otherwise have considered too difficult to appreciate.

Last year was an extraordinary year of publishing for Latter-day Saint poets; eight individual collections and an anthology all bear 2018 copyright dates. These books fit into the spectrum of contemporary poetry, some more difficult than others. This review essay uses these books to identify various types of contemporary poetry and help readers understand the demands of each type of poetry on the reader. This review also hopes to foster an interest among Latter-day Saints in poetry written by those who address, among many subjects, topics and experiences shared by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

**James Goldberg, *Phoenix Song*. American Fork, Utah: Beant Kaur Books, 2018.**

This collection is both strong and accessible to the reader. With short lines, open forms, conversational language, and a thoughtful, faithful voice, James Goldberg's poems beautifully render the continuum of human experience, from suffering to joy. In two sections of the book, "That Other Country" and "Looking Back," Goldberg presents his experiences with cancer. He wrestles both emotionally and physically with the illness, examining his situation with restraint and honesty. "What I could use," he says in the poem "When You Ask How You Can Help," "—to be frank— / is a somewhat normal bowel movement." The frankness of these poems is one of their pleasures.



Goldberg never names his illness—a poetic choice that gives the poems the power of the unsaid. “The Parable of the Fist” suggests the ravages of his disease by showing the excruciating pain of the treatments: “I mention / how I gargle every two hours, / as instructed, with the chalky / protein rinse that makes me / gag,” and after sucking on ice “to close up the capillaries” in his mouth, Goldberg says, “I suck till I shake / with cold so the chemicals will / tear up my mouth just a little bit / less.” The hospital chaplain, with whom Goldberg speaks to distract himself from his pain, uses a fist and a relaxed hand to explain the craving for control versus the openness of acceptance: “*But if you / open yourself up to accept / the trouble and the pain, / . . . you are also / open to receive / and recognize / grace*” (italics in original). The voice in these poems seems to be Goldberg’s own, not an invented persona, and his ideas are enlightening to the reader precisely because they are sincere and authentic.

An acknowledgment of suffering is found also in “The Questions I Beg My Bible to Answer: June 2018,” a poem that uses the date as an indirect reference to refugee families separated at the U.S.-Mexico border by the U.S. government. The poem likens these people to the Hebrew slaves oppressed by the Egyptians in the story of the Exodus. The poem begins with the question “Why are the Egyptians / *afraid of the Hebrews?*” (italics in original), which becomes a refrain at the beginning of each of the poem’s three sections. While seeming to focus on the ancient Egyptian civilization, the comparison to a faltering America is strongly suggested in the description “an aging / civilization, haunted / by mirages of its own / bygone youth,” and by the final question: “what makes them give / the order to tear children / from their mothers’ arms?” This question should become the reader’s questions as well; this poem is both art and an invitation to ethical action.

Other poems take up the suffering involved in bearing with imperfect humans and forgiving their faults, an example being “In the Choir,” where singing in the choir is a metaphoric representation of engaging with those we find annoying or obnoxious: “Complementary voices who frequently / (secretly) wish they could go / for each other’s throats.” In the course of a rehearsal, the choir members have to accept the imperfections of others for the sake of the choir, “forgiving a sharp note, overlooking / a measure that runs flat. Trusting / that someday we’ll find / a heavenly harmony.”

This poem also demonstrates that Goldberg’s collection is not just about suffering. It is a thoughtful engagement with many aspects of being, as demonstrated by sections titled “Qualify for the Work,” “Sketches

from My Ward,” and “Paths of Virtue.” The final section, “Lullaby,” presents a believable representation of joy in “Love Song for Nicole and James”: “I pray, though I know that before I reach amen, / I’ll fall asleep. I lift up my thoughts / and thank God for this love. This love, / pressed to diamond beneath the weight / of long days and short years.” *Phoenix Song’s* demands on the reader do not grow out of poetic difficulty but of the personal reflection they invite in the reader in response to clear and thoughtful expression.

**Deja Earley. *To the Mormon Newlyweds Who Thought the Belly-Button Was Somehow Involved*. Salt Lake City: Signature, 2018.**

Like Goldberg’s poems, Deja Earley’s are welcoming rather than forbidding to the reader. Conversational language, open forms, and clearly established situations invite readers to enter the poems. Earley often uses the title to clue the reader in to the poem’s situation: “I Watch a Couple on the Train,” “In the Hall While They Take Chest X-Rays,” and “I Teach Six-Year-Olds about Jesus.” The poems don’t annoy the reader by withholding necessary information: if a poem addresses a “you” or speaks of a “he,” it quickly becomes clear who that you or he is. Rather than their ambiguity or confusion, it is the poems’ precision that engages the reader, the immediate entry into the complex emotional situations they explore.

These poems, which also seem to be in the voice of the poet rather than an invented persona, present the gender development of a girl into an inexperienced teen and young adult, and then into a married woman. They offer the pain, humor, innocence, ignorance, obsessions, romances, mistakes, negotiations, and eventual fulfillment of a Latter-day Saint woman who has to learn what is and is not prohibited and, conversely, what is allowed or even required. An awareness of the way the poet creates multiple meanings with her endings enhances the reader’s enjoyment of these complex and intriguing poems, as does attention to the way the poems are sequenced.

“Artichoke” is one of the many poems that is so successful in using the ending to expand the meaning of the poem. It does a great deal of work in its brief ten lines. The speaker says as the poem opens, “Humming, I nestle artichokes, / preparing them to simmer. / I fill water to their hips, sprinkle salt, / and nearly forget to turn on the burner.” These lines suggest that more than just vegetables are going to “simmer.” The next three lines confirm that suspicion: “At dinner I teach him to bare / his teeth, scrape the fleshy edge. / He tries one leaf.” Apparently, a boyfriend has come to dinner, and the speaker wants to teach him both how

to eat artichokes and something else about baring his teeth and scraping “the fleshy edge.” He doesn’t seem to be interested, as he eats only a single leaf. The poem ends: “But I don’t give up. I take a knife, / split the hair from the choke, / present him with a forkful of heart.” That “forkful of heart” does extraordinary work in the poem, not just in its literal sense as the best part of the artichoke but also as an offering of the speaker’s heart—her desire and affection for this man.

Even the sequence of poems itself enhances the reading of the collection. In “Whatever Would Follow Hello,” the speaker is “In London, alone at a ballet.” She notices that the man sitting next to her seems to be checking her out, and part of her wants to respond, to have him invite her “for intermission wine,” to flirt with him and discover what might develop. But her beliefs about chastity keep her from responding to him. She darts off at intermission; her romantic encounter with this man never gets off the ground. But the next poem, titled “Seducing Stonehenge,” offers a humorous, ironic response to that experience; she may not be willing to seduce a man, but she knows how to seduce an ancient monument.

Significant poems are arranged throughout the collection in a way that, all together, create the story of the speaker eventually finding a beloved and marrying. For example, the poem “Not Yet” is about the speaker having lunch with a man during a rainstorm. He goes to get the car, which is “covered in white blossoms” (suggesting a wedding, perhaps?), and she runs toward the car too early, before he has had a chance to make a U-turn and come back for her. “*I didn’t think you would get closer,*” the speaker says, another last line that means much more than its response to the literal situation (italics in original). This man, apparently, plans to come back for the speaker, to carry her off, as it were. The poem poignantly expresses that she doesn’t understand the love and concern he feels for her, which makes the next poem, in which the speaker is a married woman, that much more of a fulfillment for the speaker and a revelation for the reader. This portrait of a young woman’s coming of age is a coherent collection that is satisfying and engaging.

**Karen Kelsay. *Of Omens That Flitter*. Boston: Big Table Publishing, 2018.**

Kelsay is a formalist poet—that is, the majority of poems in this collection employ rhyme and meter, formal elements that have characterized poetry for centuries. Her poems in this collection are sketches or vignettes, often describing a natural setting in detail, like the poetry of the Romantics. Also in keeping with the Romantics, her themes include

change, decay, aging, and impermanence. The collection's title poem begins, "A flock of starlings smudge the autumn sky. / The birds swoop high and low, just like the trills / of flutes, and shift their plumage as they fly— / elusive patterns form above the hills." These lines show the power of rhyme and meter to enable a reader to grasp the beauty of a scene from the natural world. Many of Kelsay's other poems begin in a natural setting; for example, "Beside the bank where black swans often lie / in twos, beneath wild fruit trees near the stream." In fact, over half of the collection's seventy poems describe the natural world. Other subjects include sketches of specific individuals (a homeless woman "On Hill Street," a "Superchild" who copes with a dysfunctional mother, the family cat, and "Atomic Tiki Man"). Other poems feature memories of the poet's aging parents and quirky personal reflections on her husband, how to dress when she is old, and her preference for California over Alaska.

Rhyme and meter are a significant aspect of this collection. Used successfully, they can deliver the meaning of a poem forcefully, but they come with some disadvantages for a contemporary poet. In former times, it was permissible to alter word order to achieve rhyme, as in Robert Frost's "Whose woods these are I think I know, / His house is in the village, though." In the natural, conversational language of today, these lines would be expressed, "I think I know whose woods these are, but his house is in the village," a decidedly less memorable and less poetic sentence. It is much more difficult to create rhyme when lines must be composed in conversational language, without resorting to inverted syntax. It is similarly difficult to employ a metrical pattern without adding empty phrases and expressions that contribute little to the poem other than filling out the rhythms of unstressed and stressed syllables in a line. Thus, Kelsay's choice to use these formal elements makes her task more challenging; like a gymnast, her achievement in each poem is determined by both technical difficulty and execution.

One of the poems in which Kelsay succeeds admirably is the sonnet "Home Decor." Note the natural language of the opening lines, which rhyme without distorting the language: "I remember sunning on the sand— / my dad in wet-gear rising from the sea, / an air tank on his shoulders, like Godzilla, / throwing off his mask and calling me." The father has speared a bright turquoise parrotfish, which dulls as it dies. A taxidermist "restore[s] it to its brilliant, deep-blue self," and then the family hangs it above a sliding door. The poem concludes: "Along a full-length teakwood shelf, / we loaded gemmy doodads from the store. / That handsome fish was hatched for our decor." One of the techniques of many poems, and especially sonnets, is using the ending to transform or

invert the expectations the poem has created, an especially memorable and effective technique if the transformation is delivered in rhyme, as it is in this poem. The fish changes from a living creature of nature to a decorative household display, and the final line more or less implicates the family in that act.

The pleasures of this collection, then, are to engage with the forms in which the poems are written, to appreciate how successfully they employ rhyme and meter, and to enjoy the pictures they create of places and people.

**Robert A. Rees. *Waiting for Morning*. Provo, Utah: Zarahemla Books, 2018.**

In her Nobel Prize lecture, American author Toni Morrison observed that “language can never live up to life once and for all. Nor should it. Language can never ‘pin down’ slavery, genocide, war. Nor should it yearn for the arrogance to be able to do so. Its force, its felicity is in its reach toward the ineffable.”<sup>1</sup> Robert A. Rees’s collection *Waiting for Morning* contains poems that reach for the ineffable, including subjects that are difficult beyond imagination—war, genocide, sexual abuse, and brutally dysfunctional domestic life, for example.

The word *ineffable* means “that which cannot be expressed”;<sup>2</sup> how does a poet suggest what cannot actually be put into language, and how does a reader connect with the writer’s intentions? The writer can name the subject in the title and then use specific incidents or examples to suggest the work’s greater meaning, as Rees does in his poem “Melancholia.” He begins his examination of melancholia with his grandson’s experience of angst, rage, and fear: “It feels like the whole world / is inside me,” the boy says. Then Rees identifies specific individuals whose melancholia led them to violence, sometimes against themselves—“King Saul, Jeremiah, / Hamlet and Camus, / . . . Woolf and Styron.” He quotes lines from Emily Dickinson that suggest this same feeling: “Dickinson / oppressed by winter light, / felt a funeral in her brain.” He also speaks of how such suffering afflicts even God “. . . when / sequestered hates / and serial annihilations / lean everything backward to chaos / and no flood or fire / can extinguish / the darkness.” The effect

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1. Toni Morrison, “Nobel Lecture,” December 7, 1993, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1993/morrison/lecture/>.

2. Merriam-Webster, s.v. “ineffable,” accessed February 1, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ineffable>.

of all these expressions of melancholia is to help the reader infer the vastness and complexity of this condition.

Another way to suggest the ineffable is to use specific people or incidents as symbols of larger concerns. Consider Rees's description of African conflict in "Famine and Scarcity": "On the evening news I see / bone piles, the vultures of war, / and beneath a tangled bush in Africa / a woman holding her ghost child— / a collapsed puppet." That a woman's beloved son or daughter is called a "ghost child" or "collapsed puppet" suggests the ending of humanity, which is exactly what happens in war or famine. Though the poem seems to focus on specific individuals, it ends with a broader sense of insufficient action and abandonment—and an implicit invitation to readers to consider their own awareness of and responses to distant sufferings: "At night I say my clichés / for the wrecked and wretched of the world / who speak holy words / to the sky's vast darkness."

A third way of writing the ineffable is to use paradox to move the subject beyond rational thought. In "Ona," Rees gives the tragic biography of the sexually abused girl who will become the speaker's mother, although she drinks poison to try to kill herself and her child before he is born. In "Cold Sweet," the son presents his only memory of his mother, their making ice cream together from a bowl of snow: "I don't know if she kissed me or / touched my cheek, / but I remember / the smell of vanilla, / the taste of cold." Those last two lines suggest a paradox—both the son's yearning for his mother (the sweetness of vanilla) and her failure to return that love (the cold of the snow). These particulars stand in for the immense loss the child suffered as well as the possibilities of transformation that enabled him to thrive and progress in his life.

Rees takes on many difficult subjects in this collection of poems: the Spanish conquest of the Americas, the internment of Japanese-American citizens in the 1940s, the war in the Pacific, the Holocaust, and the painful family history of Ona, so damaged by her father's abuse that when she learns her husband has been severely wounded in the Pacific during World War II, she leaves her three children and abandons the family.

Not all the poems in the book deal with such heavy subjects; in fact most do not, including portraits of the natural world, found poems,<sup>3</sup> poetic postcards from a visit to China, poems of married love, haiku,

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3. A found poem is an expression lifted verbatim from another text and arranged in lines to become independent and make possible a heightened or alternate understanding of the original text.

and a few epigrammatic poems such as “Freud,” who, the poem tells us, “Took the lid / off the id. / When he was gone / we put it back on.” Whatever the subject matter, these are wise and benevolent poems, touching both the public and the private concerns of the human heart.

**Lance Larsen. *What the Body Knows*. Tampa: University of Tampa Press, 2018.**

What the reader will immediately notice about the poems of this collection is that they don’t have lines. They are all prose poems: poems whose language proceeds from one margin to the other and forms paragraphs or blocks of text. The collection also contains three prose poems in a question-and-answer format. These compositions are called poems rather than essays or short-short stories because they employ, along with the discursive nature of prose, the intensity, imagery, and heightened language of poetry. In addition, many prose poems have an element of strangeness to them, which the reader must anticipate and adjust to.

Despite their strangeness, the poems are not difficult to enter. Like Earley’s titles, Larsen’s titles often establish the situations of the poems, as in, for example, “How to Do Things with Rats,” “Youth Detention Center at Slate Canyon,” and “Why I Washed My Hands in the Fay Wray Fountain.” But what comes after the title is often a great surprise. A Larsen prose poem may be usefully compared to a roller-coaster ride—one cannot anticipate the twists and turns, slow rises, precipitous descents, and upside-down circles before one returns safely to the on-and-off ramp. The pleasure is in the ride.

The poems offer large doses of humor. Some of Larsen’s titles hint at the laughter to come in reading them: “Mother Teresa This, Mother Teresa That,” which phrase is Larsen’s teenaged son’s original way to “cuss”; “All Puffy and White, Goldish, Harpy, and Angelonic,” another teenager’s description of heaven in a sacrament meeting talk; “To the Stranger Who Asked Me to Nominate Him for the Nobel Prize”; and “In Dreams of Old Girlfriends.”

Larsen’s imagination is limitless, and therefore the range of his poems always extends beyond what is expected. “Work Experience,” for instance, starts out, “Well, let’s see, in my life as a lizard I lost my tail twice; as a penny I never came up heads; as a foxglove I spilled my pollen helter-skelter thanks to bees that buffeted and ants that climbed.” There are ten other professional identities this poem’s speaker has assumed, each impossible to guess without reading the poem. “To the Sixties” begins, “Mostly I was losing baby teeth in you, selling Kool-aid, and



praying to Bigfoot. In you: Kent State and banana seats. In you: My Lai and gum wrapper chains, two Kennedys dead and four Monkees singing." This nostalgic list causes readers to wonder what else Larsen will identify and what new turns he will take in painting a picture of this decade. Only reading the poem will provide the answers.

List poems, like the two just mentioned, are scattered throughout the collection. Another large set of poems is based on incidents: driving on a highway covered for several miles with beetles, watching a daughter who wants to touch Macbeth when she is a groundling at London's Globe Theatre, helping a girl who cuts off her pinkie finger in shop class, observing a child draw her own picture in the Rembrandt room of the Louvre. The invention and imagination Larsen brings to these poems are equally engaging. As humorous and creative as these poems are, they also show extraordinary love and compassion for their subjects, providing a depth of concern that enhances the poems' pleasure.

In approaching these prose poems, it helps to look for syntactical patterns in the composition. For example, the poem "Nocturne" is an evening song, as the title suggests. It begins, "To snails and their peregrinations in slime, to hungry deer and my pansies chewed down to their nothings, to worm tailings under the pine." The pattern this poem employs is that of a toast or dedication to various things that Larsen notices or thinks about as he prepares for bed. Another poem, "Beasts of Burden," says, "Men like me say, *Fine I'll carry you, but just this once.* Men like me adjust their shoulders to the new heft and mass of the cosmos and stride up the trail. Men like me do not do French braids or paint fingernails mauve" (italics in original). Here, the reader will note the repeated phrase "men like me" followed by a statement of what they do or do not do. When reading prose poems, which typically don't have stanzas, line breaks, or a meter to help guide the reading, identifying syntactical patterns can anchor the reader during the passage.

With the collection's wide range and creativity, a willingness to be surprised is essential to fully appreciate and enjoy these poems. The poem "Sad Jar of Atoms" creates a mystery with its title. The poem explains that the phrase, which originated with the English Romantic poet Lord Byron, is a term of endearment Larsen and his wife use for each other. After the poem shows the couple acting in ways that justify the term "sad jar of atoms" for each of them, it then attaches the phrase to all sorts of other things—a praying mantis, a horse, life, sea turtles, Benjamin Franklin, God, and so forth. A poem itself is "a jar made of sizzle and cordite." That phrase is an apt description of all the poems in



Lance Larsen's collection. Literally every poem explodes, expanding the reader's perceptions of the possibilities of our lives.

**Heather Harris Bergevin. *Lawless Women*. Salt Lake City: By Common Consent Press, 2018.**

The title *Lawless Women* suggests that this collection is feminist in nature, which might raise concerns for some readers. But the collection offers an interpretation of feminism that challenges stereotypes and assumptions about what that term means. To Heather Harris Bergevin, feminism includes tender and involved mothering. One poem, for example, presents her anxiety about cutting her daughter's long hair. Fortunately, Bergevin succeeds in the task and says, "you grin in / the mirror, instantly older, instantly taller, / beautiful (but you were / always beautiful.)" Other touching poems take up her son's fierceness and independence, her youngest's memory of Heavenly Father telling him that he was coming to Earth, and the complexities of a single day for a mom with three kids who all have different schedules.

Bergevin's feminism also includes political wisdom—one poem is about alternatives to the hate-filled protests at the funerals of fallen gay servicemen, the exploitation of young girls in polygamous cultures, and the inflamed xenophobia that sees poor, fleeing refugees as enemies. In response to these events, she concludes that when we meet our Eternal Parents and the Savior, we will be "blinded / by the dazzling of / the Love, by the perfect / logic, reason, doctrine, / Truth, finally pure / unadulterated, untranslated / by culture, by prejudice." The test she sees that separates the wheat from the tares is that of learning to love—the first and essential doctrine.

There are other poems that are more traditionally feminist. In "Colossians," a woman speaker seems to be addressing a controlling spouse: "you ask me to find my voice / and say my heart, / but carefully in only the right / tone / and not in classes, / or online, / or in the home / or community, / so do (but don't), unless / it's what we say to say to say." Several poems like this demonstrate the contradictory messages women receive about what they should say and do. Countering these messages, Bergevin demonstrates throughout the collection how capable she is of speaking for herself.

Another group of poems in the collection are feminist revisionist poems that retell the stories of many female characters from their point of view rather than from the point of the view of male authors who, down the centuries, labeled the women as lawless or criminal or evil.

In the collection's introduction, Bergevin says that she loved mythology and fairy tales from the time she was a child but wondered why, for example, stepmothers were always portrayed as crones or witches. Once she realized that it was because men told the stories, she began to reimagine these women's accounts and to write poems retelling them.

The "lawless women" poems are inventive and intelligent and entirely plausible alternative stories for the heroines. For example, in "Stepmother," the queen is Snow White's real mother and stepmother only to the king's children by an earlier wife; the queen hides her daughter away from court because the king begins to show less interest in his wife and more interest in this young and lovely stepdaughter ("come, girl, let's / have a song, come sit / here on my lap"); the mother disguises herself as an old, bent woman when she visits her daughter so the king won't be able to trace her; and it is the king who poisons the apple to kill Snow White when he learns that he has been deceived by his wife. Our retelling is far inferior to the artistry and intelligence of the poem, which, for example, describes the dwarves as "the labor faction / deeply forested" and then as "hardened, mine-worked men, / artisans in metallurgy, / jewelers to Europa" and "Adept hunters, trappers, / mountaineers, who just happen / to be tall as my elbow."

For those familiar with the Snow White story, "Stepmother" is a relatively easy poem to engage with, as are the poems "Shadowed" (about Wendy in the Peter Pan story) and "First" (about Eve). But many female figures inhabiting these poems are more obscure, and the poems assume, as they should, that readers will know these stories that have been handed down in fairy tales, the Bible, and classical mythology. These figures include Vashti; Gothe (from the Grimm fairy tale, not the Disney movie); Clytemnestra and Cassandra, in their relation to Agamemnon; "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"; Medea; Juno, whom Bergevin associates with Melania Trump; and the woman with an issue of blood who touched Christ's robe.

It is an unwritten rule of contemporary poetry that if a reader doesn't understand an allusion, it is his or her responsibility to seek out that information. This is one way in which readers are asked to participate in creating the meaning of the poem. That willingness to do research on the characters is the most important factor in how much readers will enjoy this collection. Other poems in the collection also make historical or literary references, such as the poem "Jacques-Bernard Brunius Describes Palais Ideal to the Dadaists." References are also made to

Colossians, “Bartleby the Scrivener” from the story by Herman Melville, and Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 29.” Fortunately, we live in the world of Google and Bing and Siri and Alexa, and most of the stories are easy to find. The effort required to engage fully with these poems is entirely worth it; they are smart, intelligent poems that lead readers to reassess their understanding of contemporary culture and old stories about women.

**Javen Tanner. *The God Mask*. American Fork, Utah: Kelsay Books, 2018.**

*The God Mask* makes considerable demands—both philosophical and existential—on readers and requires them to spend a longer time with the poems to arrive at an understanding of both their artistry and intentions. But there is a significant payoff for that increased attention; the poems make a deep and reasoned critique of what it means to live in a fallen world. They are informed by a serious application of Latter-day Saint doctrine about the Fall, and although the journey through them is dark, they arrive—for that very reason—at an enlightening resolution.

The situation of a poem is sometimes not clarified, but there are enough clues to help the reader figure out what is happening. For example, the poem “In the River” apparently takes place in “*Otaua, New Zealand*,” which is the epigraph (italics in original). The poem opens in the river: “Hold your breath. Imagine sin / smoldering on your skin, and dissipating / like ink in the slow current. Come up for air.” This is a poem of direct address, but the swimmer who is told to hold his/her breath is unnamed and never identified more clearly. The poem continues: “Feel the weight and suction of wet linen. / It’s cold, but sometimes we are reborn / in winter.” At that point, the reader realizes that this is about a winter baptism in a New Zealand river and that the person being addressed is the person being baptized. The poem concludes by telling this newly baptized Church member, “You have been taught to analyze what I mean / when I say salvation is a trace of blood // in the mouth, a lung full of air, / a darkness with a crown of thorns. / But you already know.” The crown of thorns is a metonymy we already associate with the Savior’s sacrifice, but what does Tanner intend by calling salvation “a trace of blood in the mouth” and “a lung full of air”? The reader is left to think about that question; the poem doesn’t explain. Perhaps the first phrase is meant to recall the sacrament and the second the breath of accepting the covenant of baptism, but other considerations are equally possible.

The poems grapple with the brutality of the fallen world. The poem "Fish" is a remembrance of the speaker as a nine-year-old making his six-year-old brother gut a fish they had caught. The brother wanted to kick the fish back into the water, but the speaker says instead, "I took mercy and crushed / its head with my heel." The speaker remembers his younger brother's fear, and also the flies, "their relentlessness, / diving at the entrails, / coating the crooked mouth / as if to keep it from saying, / *You, too, will suffer*" (italics in original). The speaker also acknowledges his own anger and guilt, asking his brother if he remembers "how the more we cleaned, / the filthier we became?" The pathos of innocence trying on the violence of the world is graphic; the vulnerability of both brothers is palpably rendered. Other poems take on the shootings at a college in Umpqua, Oregon; the burial of a miscarried fetus; and the meaninglessness of existence that a scientific view of the universe suggests. That last concern is expressed in "The Observable Universe," which speaks of "death and nothingness, out of which we / find not meaning, but perspective." The poem ambiguously concludes, "What we will not say—what we must never say to each other— / is this: There are some things that mean everything / to stargazers like you and me, who are nothing."

Some poems feature surreal elements that the reader has to grapple with to create meaning. In the prose poem "Central Park," the speaker asks his family, "If you could have anyone dig your grave, who would it be?" This question is apparently a game, according to the speaker's son. Right away we are on shaky ground since this is not a question we often consider, much less in the form of a game. Then come the answers. According to the son, "a good gravedigger must have a vacant look." The wife agrees and adds, "and he must answer yes to all philosophical questions," and the daughter adds, "most of all, he must interrupt the instructions of weeping mothers to say, 'Lady, I do this for a living.'" As the family returns to Columbus Circle, they see a goat hit by a taxi and "instead of blood, red delicious apples scattered everywhere." To enjoy this poem, the reader has to ask about the game, the answers, the goat in uptown Manhattan, and, above all, those red delicious apples—all surreal elements. The purpose of surrealism is to release the mind from rational thought and thereby arrive at what is hidden within the unconscious. This poem, then, may be an attempt to get at the reader's unacknowledged feelings about death, which will be revealed in his or her interpretation of each element of the poem.

Only about a third of the poems in the collection are this difficult; most are much more accessible. The poems usually contain clues to orient the reader, including scriptural references, the names of Greek deities and Shakespearean characters, references from Latter-day Saint history like the Sweetwater River and the First Vision—all these allusions are transformed in some way from their original stories or identities. As with Bergevin's poems, research is sometimes required to make the connections and fully enjoy the work. Tanner's poems are exquisite and undeniably poetic, but for the most part they don't convey a sense of even temporary happiness. Readers who go through the poems only once may be left asking, "God, where art thou?" But those who stay with the poems longer will gain a sense of their serious exploration of the fallen world and will feel gratitude for the deeply satisfying reconciliations at the end.

**Lara Candland. *The Lapidary's Nosegay*. Ft. Collins, Colo.: The Center for Literary Publishing, 2018.**

This is a collection unlike any other. Candland has created a whole new way of writing poetry, and poetry that is truly new is often so strange to readers that they initially reject it, though they often return to discover its merits. *The Lapidary's Nosegay* is a postmodern book, and its poems intellectually engage with language rather than attempt to represent personal experience. The label "postmodern" also means that the poems violate expectations about poetry; Candland's poems feature footnotes, allusions and quotations from other texts, and a variety of formatting elements that add meaning to the poetry, including wide spacing throughout the page and punctuation marks used as decoration and to suggest how to read the lines. This collection of poetry is for readers who appreciate an intellectual challenge, like to solve puzzles, and are willing to put in enough time to see how the poems sing and how lively they are.

The work is an homage to Emily Dickinson. Candland imagines that she and Dickinson are sitting together and talking, using mostly Dickinson's nineteenth-century language, questioning and commenting on many aspects of life. The more readers know about Dickinson, the more they will be able to take from the work. Take the title, for example. A nosegay is a tightly arranged bouquet of flowers, like a bridal bouquet, often a celebratory gift. A lapidary is someone who cuts, polishes, and engraves stones, including gems. Given the ambiguity of the phrase,

a “lapidary’s nosegay” may be a nosegay given to a lapidary in honor of something, or it may be a nosegay created by a lapidary. Because Emily Dickinson uses gems so often in her poems (chrysolite, ruby, amethyst, emerald, topaz, pearl, diamond, beryl, and so forth), the nosegay may be imagined to be an arrangement of gems to look like a bouquet of flowers, and perhaps the gems are Dickinson’s own words.

Another key to understanding Candland’s collection is that Dickinson, when she was about fifteen, created an herbarium, a book in which she placed plants and flowers she herself had dried; the book was a beautiful creation, each page an artistic masterpiece. *The Lapidary’s Nosegay* is like that herbarium—an artistic arrangement of the gems and flowers of language, including the liberal use of the actual gems and flowers named in Dickinson’s poems. The poems are arranged as an abecedarium, with sections for each letter of the alphabet. The first poem of each section is from *The New England Primer*, an illustrated textbook first published in 1690 to teach children to read. Several of its two-line poems preach a Calvinist doctrine: “In Adam’s fall / We sinned all”; “As runs the glass, / Man’s life doth pass”; “Peter denies / His Lord, and cries.” Following the verse from the primer are one to four new poems that intermingle Dickinson’s and Candland’s voices.

Candland’s unconventional use of punctuation is one way the poems disrupt readers and slow them down. “NOTES ON THE WRITING OF *The Lapidary’s Nosegay*,” which is a poem as well as an introduction to the collection, begins, “I’m sitting with the (((P(o)etess))) in the (((chrysolite))) (((sun))).” It is impossible not to notice those parentheses. The poem continues, “I’m writing down her words ((( ))) / (((She))) patient / teaches me the alphabet of high desert my deseret.” The sets of four parentheses mean, according to a key at the beginning, “unsaid, unanswered, ineffable, prayer, the Holy Spirit, ghost visitations, clouds, air, Emily Dickinson is in the room, fill in the blank.” Thus the wide-spaced set of four parentheses introduces the ineffable in the poem. The key also has instructions for reading several different configurations of parentheses—two, three, four, six, and “(((o!))),” which means “surprise, awe, yawn, praise, supplication, pleasure, pearl”—as well as strings of colons, “:.....:,” which stand for “stars, pearls, daisy chain, diadem, constellations, eggs, insects, microbes.” Because these conventions are used throughout the collection, it is a good idea to copy the key and keep it next to the open page as one proceeds through the poems.

In approaching the poems, readers can appreciate the breathtaking sensory language they employ: “(((Moth-star dropt))) int(o) the

(o)rchard / and last night— / (((o!))) / the wind has already been ((murmuring)),” and “the stand of treble-throated ((sparr(ow)s)) threads / the (((amethyst))) needle thr(ough) / one season’s (((eye))) & int(o) the next.”<sup>4</sup> The poems often comment on Dickinson herself and indirectly allude to her poems, so the more one knows about Dickinson, the better. The poem “September’s escutcheon” shows Dickinson at work: “(((god’s gh(o)st stitcher—Daisy—s(ew)s s(o) prettily))) / winter’s surplice—& spring’s kirtle—” Daisy is a nickname Dickinson was called throughout her life.

While engaging with these poems, Latter-day Saint readers will also particularly enjoy the introduction of concepts from Latter-day Saint doctrines. “Eyes,” for example, introduces a “comely infant / . . . / just beyond the veil— / . . . / between worlds.”

For the purposes of library classification, *The Lapidary’s Nosegay* is labeled “experimental poetry,” and that which is experimental is unfamiliar and untried. But the investment of effort required to enter these unfamiliar poems will expand one’s ability to appreciate poetry as well as one’s knowledge about Emily Dickinson and her world.

**Tyler Chadwick, Dayna Patterson, and Martin Pulido, editors.**  
***Dove Song: Heavenly Mother in Mormon Poetry.* El Cerrito, Calif.: Peculiar Pages, 2018.**

Unlike all the other books discussed in this review, *Dove Song* is an anthology, not a collection by an individual author. It is highly significant because it brings together for the first time poems that enlighten readers about the character of Mother in Heaven, including poems from 1844 to the present day. The anthology contains a foreword by the editors—Chadwick, Patterson, and Pulido—as well as a critical introduction by Susan Elizabeth Howe. Additionally, the collection features graphic artworks, artists’ notes, endnotes situating the historical poems, brief biographies of the pioneer-era poets, and contributor notes, which all work together to create an academic as well as aesthetic experience for the reader.

Although the stiffness of their forms can become a bit wearying, the pioneer-era poems in the first section of the anthology are important in demonstrating that the doctrine of a Mother in Heaven was taught by

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4. Because of space limitations, we are unable to replicate here the original spacing of these lines.

Joseph Smith not only to Eliza R. Snow but also to Apostles and other priesthood holders. Eliza R. Snow's "O, My Father" is included under its original title of "Invocation, or the Eternal Father and Mother," as are poems by William W. Phelps, Edward W. Tullidge, Orson F. Whitney, and other Church leaders.

Much more pleasurable to read, the poems in the second and third sections of the book (poems written, respectively, between 1973 and 2003 and between 2005 and 2017) use metaphor and imagination as seer stones, which the authors and readers can use to consider who Mother in Heaven is. By examining their own inspiration, imagination, and experience, and especially by looking for Heavenly Mother in the natural world, the seventy twentieth-century and contemporary poets in these sections depict her gifts, power, and identity.

Many poets comment on Mother in Heaven's absence and their own attempts to find her. Desiree Miller's "Yin" declares: "Black Mother is hidden, / we forget Her every time. / We attempt nothing / because we do not care to know." The poem concludes, however, "The other half of God can be found / and She will act of her own accord, / for God is a bystander / until called upon." We are implicated in her absence; we have not sought her.

Multiple poems in *Dove Song* take the position that Mother in Heaven reveals herself in the beauties of the natural world. This position hearkens to the expression from Alma 30:44 that "all things denote there is a God." Tara Timpson's "Small Gifts," for example, asks Heavenly Mother, "Is your name hidden in the color of vermillion sandstone in this canyon / Is your voice in the trill of Canyon Wren or the call of Gambel Quail / Is your touch the silk of cottontail fur and soft desert breeze / Is your scent the delicious mixture of Sage, Pinyon and Juniper." Timpson uses no punctuation, as if she were breathless in her need to ask these questions. The poem concludes, "Is your heart so big and wide, its chambers so miraculous and well / muscled that it can contain love and compassion big enough to surpass / all the human, animal and plant suffering that weighs on me / Will you sanctify my search for you with these continued small gifts / I will keep all these things in my heart and remember them."

Many of the poets of *Dove Song* tend to see the Mother as loving, everywhere present, beautiful, epic, and, well, godly. Tyler Chadwick imagines her thus: "Goddess stirring something up, folding light / into cosmos the way her mother showed her / an aeon ago"; Marilyn Bushman-Carlton refers to the Mother as "robed in flowing white, / her



face ravishing and wise”; and S. E. Page’s version of the Mother describes herself this way: “I AM that which is star, and the shadow of it / I AM the moon walking in brightness / I AM the burning rays of the rising sun.” The repeated “I AM” employs the name of YAHWEH or Jehovah in the Old Testament.

But another vision of Heavenly Mother shows her not as a perfect female being but as a harried mother, like many of the poets themselves. In Elisa Eastwood Pulido’s “The Heavenly Mother Takes a Break,” Heavenly Mother needs to get away now and again: “Sometimes it is all too much, / and even a mother of gods / may grieve under pressure.” At such times she can be found “at the drive-through window of a fast-food joint / at the edge of the galaxy, [where] she orders a Diet Coke.” Similarly, Rebekah Orton imagines an overwhelmed Mother in “It’s Possible I’m Projecting”: “She can’t even hide Her Glory in Kolob’s bathroom / long enough to eat a beatific cookie in peace / without little fingers searching underneath the door / as shrill voices whimper ‘choc-lat?’” Orton concludes the poem, though, with a vision more in keeping with the composed cosmic Mother: “Please let that just be me. / I’d rather think She’s serene, azure. / Twice a day She cleans her paintbrush, / and every night She fills the sky with stars: / lights to calm us.” Both visions—the expected and unexpected divine Mother—offer spiritual and aesthetic insight into both Mother in Heaven and the poets themselves.

*Dove Song* is a good choice for readers who want the pleasure of a tasting or a poetic buffet; with so many poems to sample, readers are likely to find some that give them pleasure and insight. This anthology demands that readers come as they are and read according to what they seek. *Dove Song* has the feel of an apocryphal book of scripture; through the power of the Holy Spirit and their own inner lights, readers can benefit from and accept what feels true for them among all the poets’ visions of the Mother.

## Conclusion

The traditional purpose of poetry has always been to offer readers pleasure and enlightenment. The pleasure of poetry is not necessarily happiness; it is the joy or sensations that come from witnessing the poetic mind inquiring into a subject and making use of imagination, metaphor, and language in all its possibilities, including the aural aspects of rhythm and sound. A poem enlightens when it offers new or deeper knowledge and opportunities for empathy. A well-written poem can seize the imagination and stay in the heart like no other literary

expression. Despite the bad reputation of poetry today, enlightenment and pleasure are still its purposes. The collections and anthology of this review demonstrate that poetry is still the fine art it always has been and deserves the attention of educated readers, including readers of *BYU Studies Quarterly*.

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Susan Elizabeth Howe's second poetry collection, *Salt* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books), was published in 2013; her third is in the works. Her poems have recently appeared in *Poetry*, *Pleiades*, *Atlanta Review*, *Western Humanities Review*, and other journals. She retired from the Brigham Young University English Department in 2015, after working there for twenty-seven years. A reviewer and contributing editor of *Tar River Poetry* and newly appointed associate editor of *BYU Studies*, she lives with her husband, Cless Young, in Ephraim, Utah.

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*Sister Saints: Mormon Women since the End of Polygamy*  
By Colleen McDannell

New York: Oxford University Press, 2018

*Reviewed by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich*

Because of its freshness and clarity, I predict that Colleen McDannell's *Sister Saints*, a history of modern Latter-day Saint women, will become a standard in religious studies courses and perhaps in book clubs among Latter-day Saints as well. It is unquestionably a "crossover" book. General readers will appreciate its lively stories and well-balanced arguments, and students at any level will profit from its detailed end-notes and chapter-by-chapter bibliographic essays. The book is fair-minded but never wimpy. It will provoke discussion in and out of the academy.

In one of the last pages, McDannell observes, "There never has been a singular 'Mormon woman.' Despite this reality, Americans continue to elevate a minority of Latter-day Saints into a fantastical majority" (201). She is commenting here on the current popularity of so-called "mommy blogs." But her observation is just as relevant to the longer history she narrates. Public portrayals of Latter-day Saint women, whether hostile or admiring, have often leaned toward the fantastical. McDannell's book complicates those images and stereotypes.

*Sister Saints* begins with an account of an 1884 meeting between Latter-day Saint editor Emmeline B. Wells and a British reformer named Emily Faithful. As journalists and advocates for women's rights, the two women had a great deal in common. Yet after leaving Utah, Faithful promulgated already well-worn anti-Mormon slurs that would soon be used to validate disenfranchisement of Utah women and confiscation of Church property. Wells wondered how someone who "lectured about the hypocrisy, extravagance, and shams of the modern world could pander so much to society's taste for the sensational" (3). McDannell wants to know what it was about the religious system of the Church that allowed women like Wells "to withstand the ridicule of a whole

nation" (4). She wants to understand what roles they played in forming that system and how women's participation in building Zion changed "as Utah became more fully integrated into the nation's social, economic, and political order" (35).

The chapters that follow describe a kind of dance between engagement with a changing gender order in the larger society and fidelity to prophetic leadership. In the early twentieth century, General Relief Society President Amy Brown Lyman embraced progressive reform with enthusiasm, encouraging sisters to learn social-work skills and participate in efforts to improve public health, efforts that were undercut in Utah as elsewhere in the nation by fears of socialism and the realities of economic depression (37, 52).

After World War II, a new Relief Society president, Belle Spafford, embraced the nation's and the Church's emphasis on women's domestic responsibilities. The 1947 centennial celebration reinforced a commitment to Church and family history. McDannell observes that "uplifting stories of ancestors countered the increasingly bureaucratic orientation of Mormonism. As mothers stitched Victorian clothing for their children to make Pioneer Day celebrations more realistic, they physically joined the modern world to the past" (73). McDannell believes that for stay-at-home mothers, Church callings "became both an extension of the home and a respite from its demands" (73).

The first half of the book is in some respects a creative synthesis of scholarship already familiar to specialists in Latter-day Saint women's history. The second half showcases more of McDannell's own primary research. To balance official pronouncements from the 1950s and 1960s, she mined the papers of Ramona Wilcox Cannon, a woman who from 1947 to 1974 wrote a "Dear Abby" type column in the *Deseret News* under the name "Mary Marker." And to complicate existing accounts of the Church's battle against the ERA, McDannell uses letters that ordinary women wrote to Latter-day Saint dissident Sonia Johnson, documents archived in Johnson's papers at the University of Utah. Not surprisingly, some letter writers saw Johnson as an instrument of Satan, yet McDannell found no echo in their letters of the ideas promulgated in *Fascinating Womanhood*, the wildly popular book self-published in 1966 by Latter-day Saint author Helen Andelin. "Hyperfemininity may have made sense to evangelical Protestant women who found power in submission," writes McDannell, "but it had less staying power in Mormon culture" (117–18).

McDannell believes that by the 1970s, “social changes in the country as well as geographical and educational differences among Latter-day Saints had produced a variety of ways to be active and faithful. And the push for unity under male leadership failed to curb this growing diversity” (107). As feminist and protofeminist ideas infiltrated the general culture, even showing up in Church-sponsored publications, the potential for pushback increased. Sermons excoriating feminists and intellectuals, tightening ecclesiastical control over programs at Brigham Young University, and efforts by local leaders to discipline members who questioned authority created panic and disaffection.

“By the early nineties,” McDannell argues, “committed Latter-day Saint women had begun to seriously wonder what the church could offer them. Historians and feminist thinkers told a tale of loss: during the nineteenth century women performed powerful roles in the church, but over the twentieth century those roles were diminished. Mormon women were not taking advantage of expanding professional possibilities at the same rate as their non-Mormon counterparts” (131). In some accounts of Latter-day Saint women, the story ends there. But *Sister Saints* moves forward with a serious examination of two countervailing movements—the revitalization of Church missions and the widespread embrace of digital communication.

The expansion of missionary work, propelled in part by the opening of the priesthood to all worthy males, moved the demographic balance of the Church away from the Intermountain West. Much of missionary success, McDannell argues, came from a shift in the mode of proselyting that emphasized religious experience over religious dogma (139). This shift is reflected in the 2004 manual *Preach My Gospel*, which, whether intentionally or not, played to female strengths, preparing the way perhaps for later expanded participation by women. In the early 2000s, the Church once again became a church of converts. McDannell’s work reinforces this conclusion. “Unlike the heritage Mormon, who remembers the past, the church of converts is a church of the present,” she writes (152).

With the spread of the internet, the dance between diversity and authority has intensified. McDannell sees a sharp contrast between the methods used by the official Church and those employed by its members to respond to this expansion of communication and membership. The institutional Church has responded to the daunting task of holding its expanding global membership together by cultivating “a small set

of core principles” expressed over and over again (174). In contrast, lay members have used the same technology “to expand the number of voices heard” (175). These techniques are not necessarily incompatible. At its core, the Church has long validated both prophetic authority and individual inspiration. (McDannell may surprise some readers by arguing that the much-discussed 1995 document “The Family: A Proclamation to the World” has been effective precisely because it asserts general principles, while leaving the details to “the couple and the Lord,” to use language taken from the Church handbook statement on contraception [167]. That doesn’t mean she ignores the many unresolved contradictions in this document.)

Though it seems clear that the Church will allow a great deal of personal interpretation, especially in areas where cultural practice rather than doctrine are at issue, in recent years, it has not hesitated to silence overt challenges to its authority. The inspiration of local lay leadership can become the mode of enforcement, as in the case of Kate Kelly, who was excommunicated for refusing to back down when she and her followers attracted press attention by attempting to enter a general priesthood meeting to which only men were invited (185–89).

The epilogue to *Sister Saints* is filled with thoughtful observations about possible futures for Latter-day Saint women. It makes clear, however, that the direction of change will depend not only on pronouncements from Salt Lake City but on the actions, individual and collective, of real Latter-day Saint women. Young women, for example, who learn new leadership skills by serving missions may or may not “lean in” at the ward and general Church level. “The problem of the future,” she argues, “might be less a feminist one of expanding official roles for women and more a pragmatic one of women choosing not to put their energy into church life” (197). Real women, in all their diversity, are crucial to the survival of the Church. They are the ones who will determine “whether the next generation remains committed to their faith—and precisely what shape that faith will take” (202).

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Laurel Thatcher Ulrich recently retired from Harvard University. She received the Pulitzer Prize and the Bancroft Prize for her book *A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785–1812* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990). Her latest book is *A House Full of Females: Plural Marriage and Women’s Rights in Early Mormonism, 1835–1870* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017).

*Contemporary Mormon Pageantry: Seeking after the Dead*  
By Megan Sanborn Jones

Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018

*Reviewed by Melissa Leilani Larson*

I believe strongly in the communal nature of the theater. Live performance allows for an exchange between performer and audience member that is immediate and electric on both sides of the conduit. Audience members, swept away by a powerful scene, shift in their seats and hold their breaths; on stage, the actors feel that pleasant anxiety and feed off of it, using it as fuel to go further and deeper with their characters. Theater can be an intense conversation between actor and audience, with the playscript providing a plan for that conversation.

In her new book, *Contemporary Mormon Pageantry: Seeking after the Dead*, Brigham Young University theater professor Megan Sanborn Jones suggests that Latter-day Saint history pageants add another layer to that theatrical conversation. Latter-day Saint pageantry, Jones asserts, invokes an interaction between actor, spectator—and the dead.

Pageants are, of course, not unique to the Latter-day Saint tradition. The pageant has been a useful tool in Christian religious education since the Middle Ages. It relies on epic staging, music, and special effects to portray scenes of religious and historical significance, usually on outdoor stages and in an unabashedly presentational style. The renowned Oberammergau Passion Play, for example, was first performed in the 1600s and is still staged in Germany every ten years, though it has become more of a tourist attraction than a religious experience. Pageants still happen all over the world but have dwindled in popularity and spirituality—except, according to Jones, among the Latter-day Saints.

Jones's thorough study is an efficacious blend of historical research, interviews with recent and current pageant participants, and the author's own firsthand experience as a director and spectator. In clear, straightforward prose, Jones outlines the basic tenets of Latter-day Saint theology and how that theology is faithfully represented in four annual

Church-produced pageants: the Hill Cumorah Pageant in New York; the Mormon Miracle Pageant in Utah; the Nauvoo Pageant in Illinois; and the Mesa Easter Pageant in Arizona. Over a period of five years, Jones followed each pageant through the processes of rehearsal, production, and performance, taking a keen look at the “pageant culture” created by cast and crew along the way.

Jones maintains that a number of fascinating aspects set Latter-day Saint pageants apart from other theatrical events. First and foremost, pageants are intended to kindle a spiritual experience in everyone involved, from performer to technician to spectator. Though, as mentioned earlier, theater is a conversation between performers and the spectators, it is typically constructed to evoke an experience specifically for the audience. Jones notes that Latter-day Saint pageants provide a unique theatrical covenant: they are built to provide spiritual experiences for both actor and audience. One director told Jones, “We hope the cast has primarily a spiritual experience. . . . [I] hope we can provide them with an experience where they can feel something and then share that feeling with the audience” (79–80).

Actors who portray iconic figures like Jesus or Joseph Smith are naturally intimidated by the cultural expectations surrounding those characters. Jones observes that the actors choose to focus on emulating those men rather than imitating them; an actor doesn’t try to *be* Jesus Christ; rather, he tries to be *like* him. This actor might base his onstage and offstage behavior on that of the Savior, believing “[his] performance will naturally be Christ-like” (147). Jones continues, “The accuracy is not one of historical specificity but of emotional veracity” (148).

Lesser-known characters also provide ample opportunities for spiritual enlightenment. Applying her considerable background in theater theory, Jones examined the vocal and physical choices made by performers across all four pageants. Within Latter-day Saint pageants, performers are not acting; Jones perceives that they are instead sharing—sharing their personal testimonies about the Savior and his gospel on stage. Jones suggests that bearing testimony is a performance of sorts, and one of the most effective seen on the pageant stage: “participants worry less about realistically portraying characters from the past and focus more on acting in a style that will most realistically portray their present testimonies” (152).

Spirituality, as it centers on God and Jesus Christ, is easily the most important aspect of the modern Latter-day Saint pageant. But Jones reveals another layer of spirituality: literal and figurative interactions



with the dead. First, there is the onstage characterization of spirits: “In every Mormon pageant, characters who were once dead come back to the stage as figures from the afterlife. Even more powerfully, pageants imagine living characters as they will be in the future, after they have died and moved into their next life” (206). Second, Jones suggests that presenting the stories of deceased people invites the spirits of those Saints to join their theatrical counterparts on stage: “ghosts are characters in the narrative and perform alongside the participants who take on their personas” (207). Jones includes several participant experiences wherein the veil between the mortal and immortal worlds was remarkably thin, affecting performers and spectators alike.

Pageants, Jones contends, are an opportunity for Latter-day Saints to work toward exaltation, both for themselves and for those who have gone before. That spiritual impact is heightened by the physical location of each production; all four major pageants are staged in close proximity to a temple, wherein ordinances are performed on behalf of Latter-day Saints’ deceased ancestors. In the case of the Mormon Miracle Pageant, performed in Manti, Utah, the temple itself becomes an intrinsic piece of the set. At a climactic moment, the actor portraying Moroni appears precariously atop the Manti temple (Jones points out that the Manti temple is one of only a handful of temples lacking a permanent Moroni figure, and that absence enables the live spectacle to take place). At another moment in the same pageant, a husband and wife are reunited after death: “The couple climbs up white granite stairs toward the brightly lit temple, which is remade as the celestial kingdom” (103). Even when temples are not made part of the pageantry, their physical nearness “imbues pageant stages with a sanctity similar to temple worship” (102).

Pageants run the gamut of human emotion, employing complex theatrics, music, and choreography to the utmost in hopes of evoking a strong, spiritual response. Sometimes somber, sometimes joyful, sometimes violent, each pageant serves as a working intersection between the past and present—between the living and the dead. At this intersection, Jones affirms, Latter-day Saints can catch a glimpse of the eternal possibilities of the future and “imagine exaltation” (5).

*Contemporary Mormon Pageantry* is an invaluable addition to the study of Latter-day Saint arts. It is essential, engaging reading for Latter-day Saint theater artists; at the same time, it is easily accessible to scholars across other fields and faiths. In 2018, Church leaders announced the decision to reassess the production of pageants. If Church-produced

pageants do come to an end in the near future, Megan Sanborn Jones has effectively constructed a time capsule that preserves several key slices of the pageant experience.

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Melissa Leilani Larson is an award-winning playwright and screenwriter whose work has been seen on four continents. Her plays include *Martyrs' Crossing*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Little Happy Secrets*, *Pilot Program*, *The Edible Complex*, *Sweetheart Come*, and *Mountain Law*. Her films include *Jane and Emma* and *Freetown*. Two of her plays are published in *Third Wheel*, available from BCC Press. Mel is the 2018 recipient of the Smith-Pettit Foundation award for Outstanding Contribution to Mormon Letters, as well as a three-time winner of the Association for Mormon Letters drama award. She was also a 2016 O'Neill National Playwrights Conference semifinalist. She holds an MFA from the Iowa Playwrights Workshop.

*Danish but Not Lutheran: The Impact of Mormonism on  
Danish Cultural Identity, 1850–1920*

By Julie K. Allen

Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2017

*Reviewed by Jason A. Kerr*

In keeping with the title *Danish but Not Lutheran*, I will begin by saying what Julie K. Allen's book is not. It is not a history of the Latter-day Saint mission to Scandinavia; see Andrew Jenson's 1927 *History of the Scandinavian Mission* for that. Nor is it a history of the mass emigration of Latter-day Saint Danes to Utah; see William Mulder's 1957 *Homeward to Zion* for that.<sup>1</sup> Rather, as the subtitle advertises, it is a history that studies "The Impact of Mormonism on Danish Cultural Identity"—that is, this book uses The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to understand Denmark, not the other way around.

The context, then, in which the book's historical work unfolds is not the familiar story of the Restoration from its beginnings in New York to the Saints' eventual settlement in the Great Basin, augmented by missionary journeys around the world. Instead, the book's context is the religious milieu surrounding Denmark's 1849 constitution, which transitioned the government from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional one and also, for the first time since the Reformation, decoupled the Lutheran national church from the state and allowed Danes de facto religious freedom. Allen, a professor of comparative literature at Brigham Young University, uses Latter-day Saints in Denmark to explore the time before the constitution, when to be Danish was also to be Lutheran, and the complex dissociation of those identities in the constitution's aftermath.

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1. Andrew Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1927); William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia* (1957; repr., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985).

As Allen shows, the architects of Danish religious freedom were powerful members of the religious establishment: Ditlev Gothard Monrad, a Lutheran bishop and statesman, was a driving force behind the drafting of the constitution. The pastor and influential thinker Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig developed a powerful cultural vision of a capacious secular church in which there was room for all Danes. The Lutheran pastor (and eventual bishop) Peter Christian Kierkegaard gave the new church its name: *Folkekirken*, or “the People’s Church.” Collectively, they thought that freedom of religion could lead to greater religious conviction among the Danish people while also freeing pastors from government duties like collecting taxes. Additionally, the constitution ended the call for forced baptism occasioned by the Baptist Crisis of 1842.

The Baptist Crisis is a key part of the background for both the religious freedom provided by the constitution and the arrival of Latter-day Saint missionaries. Beginning in 1839, Baptists formed congregations independent of the national church. An 1842 law granted them protected status but nevertheless required that their children be baptized into the Lutheran church. When they refused, Bishop J. P. Mynster called on Lutheran ministers to baptize Baptist children by force—a call that all three men mentioned above refused to enact. Religious freedom followed, as did the growth of Baptist congregations, which proved a ready source of converts for Latter-day Saint missionaries, who first arrived in 1850.

Allen catalogs a variety of Danish cultural responses to the Latter-day Saint missionaries and their success: She studies a painting—Christen Dalsgaard’s 1856 *Two Mormons Visiting a Country Carpenter*, which depicts, in realist style, missionaries at work in a craftsman’s home. She studies the two Kierkegaard brothers, Peter Christian and Søren Aabye—one a Lutheran pastor and the other a figure critical of the Lutheran establishment as inimical to Christian life. Allen studies depictions of Latter-day Saints in popular culture, from street ballads to silent film. Finally, she studies the complex cultural identities of Danish converts themselves. Her aim is to show that Danish attitudes toward Latter-day Saints provide an index to the development of Danish secularization over the course of seventy years, as the constitution moved from novelty to settled reality.

A brief consideration of three of these cultural responses will serve to outline Allen’s case. Peter Christian Kierkegaard was a pastor in western

Zealand when Latter-day Saint missionaries arrived in his parishes of Pedersborg and Kindertofte in 1854 and began to hold meetings. Kierkegaard arranged to attend one of these meetings to counter the missionaries' arguments. A highly educated man, he found the missionaries' knowledge both of scripture and of Christian history wanting. He then developed his rejoinder into a public lecture, which he delivered at schoolhouses in both towns before publishing it, first in a newspaper and then as a book entitled *Om og Mod Mormonismen* (*About and Against Mormonism*). Beyond Kierkegaard, Allen documents other sources that expressed cultural concern about the new religion, including ones that cast polygamy and emigration as the "white slave trade" (135–36).

Allen reads Kierkegaard's polemic against the Latter-day Saint church alongside his younger brother Søren's attacks on the Danish church, which opened up the possibility of being Christian and Danish, but not Lutheran. This indirect dialogue between the brothers captures the cultural tensions following the creation of the constitution, centered on an inherent debate of just how much tradition is required to maintain cultural continuity. As Allen's argument proceeds, the balance shifts, with constitutional secularism replacing Lutheranism as the tradition grounding continuity. Attitudes toward Latter-day Saints track this shift, as Allen shows by referencing early Danish cinema in particular. One film stands out in this regard: Lau Lauritzen's 1917 *Min Svigerinde fra Amerika* (*My Sister-in-Law from America*), which uses polygamy as a joke to rescue a husband from the discovery of his adultery. Here, critiquing the Latter-day Saints is beside the point; polygamy has become little more than a familiar cultural trope—a far cry from the seriousness of Peter Kierkegaard's earlier earnest theological rebuttal of Latter-day Saint teachings. By this time, religious freedom (and the mass emigration of Latter-day Saints) had diminished the sense that the Saints posed a religious or cultural threat, signaling a shift in Danish culture away from Lutheranism.

Allen's most fascinating archival find is an unpublished manuscript from the 1850s by Baroness Kirstine Marie Elisabeth Stampe simply titled *Mormonismen* (*Mormonism*). Stampe had a close relationship with both Grundtvig and the Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (copies of his *Christus* grace many Latter-day Saint temple visitors' centers). Stampe came into contact with Latter-day Saints through a friend who converted to the faith, and her manuscript documents her resulting study of this new religion. Unlike Peter Kierkegaard, Stampe made a sympathetic effort to understand Latter-day Saint practices and beliefs before laying

out her points of disagreement. This document affords a rare window into how such beliefs appeared to someone who made a serious study of them but decided not to convert.

Allen's final case study involves three Danish emigrants with varying relations to their homeland. I will focus on Hans Jørgensen and Wilhelmine Bolvig, emigrants who met and married in Utah and who corresponded during Hans's two missions to Denmark. Living in the heavily Danish enclave of Pleasant Grove, Utah, Wilhelmine never learned much English, and the couple wrote to each other in Danish. Allen shows, however, that they thought of themselves more as Latter-day Saints than as either Danes or Americans, even though their cultural ties to Denmark remained strong. Their case shows how the complexities of cultural identity trouble the easy narratives we might assume.

Allen's book is compellingly argued and well sourced, drawing on fascinating archival materials that illuminate her topic. Switching the focus from Latter-day Saints to Danish culture is a salutary corrective to the American-centric perspective that often colors scholarly treatments of the broader Latter-day Saint movement and (it must be said) the mindset of missionaries, who may be more concerned with the message they bear than the cultures in which they are called to live during their periods of service. *Danish but Not Lutheran* will appeal to people interested in questions of religious liberty and secularity (although it could have engaged more with recent theoretical work on the subject), but it will also appeal to the many Latter-day Saints who, like me, descend from Danish emigrants and find their hearts turning back to the place from which their fathers and mothers came.

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*Faithful and Fearless: Major Howard Egan,  
Early Mormonism and the Pioneering of the American West*  
By William G. Hartley

Holladay, Utah: Howard Egan Foundation;  
Provo, Utah: Charles Redd Center for Western Studies, 2017

*Reviewed by Brett D. Dowdle*

As he did with his earlier biographies—*My Best for the Kingdom: History and Autobiography of John Lowe Butler, a Mormon Frontiersman* and *Stand by My Servant Joseph: The Story of the Joseph Knight Family and the Restoration*—the late William G. Hartley reminds us of the value and importance of studying the lives of ordinary Latter-day Saints without ecclesiastical position in *Faithful and Fearless: Major Howard Egan, Early Mormonism and the Pioneering of the American West*. Similar to the stories of both Butler and the Knight family, Hartley shows that, when examined closely, Egan's life was far from ordinary.

Born an Irish Catholic and later joining the Latter-day Saint faith, Egan eventually witnessed and recorded many of the most important events of early Church history and the history of the American West, leaving a record that detailed and bridged these two contiguous but different worlds. As a Latter-day Saint from 1842 until the time of his death, Egan participated in the events of Nauvoo, Illinois; the pioneer trek west; and the Latter-day Saint settlement of Utah. In many ways, the Irishman's life is also a portrait of the American westward experience: he participated in pioneering, gold mining, farming and ranching, frontier violence, and even vigilante justice. To explain both the history of the Latter-day Saints and the American West, Hartley draws upon a rich array of source materials, including Egan's illustrative diaries.

Among Hartley's important contributions to the field of Latter-day Saint biography is his example of combining both genealogical and historical research to illuminate the lives of individuals like Howard Egan. Nowhere is this more evident than in the early chapters of this biography. Despite Egan's mostly undocumented early years, Hartley draws upon both genealogical sources and the broader historical context to provide insights into the subject's life. The biography thus helps readers

understand what life might have been like for Egan as a Catholic immigrant in the Americas, as an orphan in his teens, and as a sailor on merchant vessels in the Atlantic. Although at times this means the narrative leaves Egan or speculates on his activities, it prevents the narrative from beginning with Egan's conversion in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1842, when he was nearly twenty-seven years old.

Drawing upon Egan's own words throughout the book, Hartley demonstrates Egan's importance as a diarist and chronicler of the American West. Egan's diaries of the westward migration and the California Gold Rush make him an important source for understanding two of the most important events in nineteenth-century America. Unfortunately, the historical record has preserved little of the voices of those closest to Egan, meaning the narrative often lacks the voices of his wives. (Egan participated in the Latter-day Saint practice of plural marriage and had four wives.) However, Hartley attempts to compensate for this by inviting readers to consider what the feelings and opinions of the women in Egan's life—Tamson, Catherine, Nancy, and Mary Ann—might have been during key moments of their lives.

In this book, Hartley deftly deals with controversial topics such as polygamy, violence, and divorce. Although the source materials are limited, Hartley insightfully details some of the challenges that business ventures, missions, and plural marriages created for Egan's family life. But no event in Egan's biography is more challenging or significant than his murder of James Monroe and his subsequent trial. Monroe had fathered a child with Egan's first wife, Tamson, during one of Egan's prolonged absences on Church business. Hartley deftly handles Monroe's murder and Egan's subsequent trial and acquittal in two chapters, which give depth to and perspective on each of the individuals involved. Hartley neither exonerates nor entirely condemns any of those involved in the affair, demonstrating that each came from a difficult position. At the same time he does not shy away from the fact that the murder created lasting guilt and irreversible consequences for Egan's life—including all three of his plural wives divorcing him.

Perhaps more important than his analysis of the consequences for the individuals involved, Hartley uses the event to provide keen insights into the social and political milieu of early territorial Utah. The murder trial, for example, demonstrated the significant disconnect between Utah and the federal government in the early 1850s. While federal officials pressed for a conviction, Church officials defended Egan's actions, arguing he was acting in defense of his family's honor and virtue. Ultimately,



Egan was acquitted on a technicality. Although Egan's trial was largely anomalous, Hartley uses it to further our understanding of the fact that Utah was a territory torn between two sovereignties. Further, Hartley uses the episode to highlight the larger story of violence and vigilantism in the early American West.

Beyond its exploration and insights into the life of Howard Egan, *Faithful and Fearless* is a model of what can be done with the Latter-day Saint genealogical impulse. The vast collection of diaries, autobiographies, and correspondence from early Latter-day Saints provides rich opportunities to highlight the lives of those who are largely forgotten, demonstrating that their lives were far from insignificant. Furthermore, Hartley shows the value of dealing with the tragedies and problems of their lives rather than highlighting merely the best in them and ignoring the worst. This willingness illuminates the world in which they lived and helps us avoid the tendency to paint caricatures rather than accurate portraits. At the same time, Hartley refuses to allow a single portion of Egan's narrative to color the entirety of his life. The result is an impressive and substantive biography that reveals the depth and nuance of an ordinary Latter-day Saint.

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*We'll Sing and We'll Shout: The Life and Times of W. W. Phelps*  
By Bruce A. Van Orden

Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University;  
Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2018

*Reviewed by Donald Q. Cannon*

Latter-day Saints who know of William W. Phelps tend to associate him with the hymns that he wrote. In fact, the words in the title of Bruce A. Van Orden's biography, "We'll Sing and We'll Shout," are taken from one of his most famous hymns, "The Spirit of God." As influential as his hymns have been to Latter-day Saints then and now, Phelps contributed much more than that in his efforts to build the Church. Van Orden's book is a detailed biography of this interesting and influential writer and Church leader. The book provides insight into both his ecclesiastical contributions and his personality. Phelps was eccentric and peculiar in some regard, sometimes dressing and behaving in strange ways and stating his religious views somewhat fanatically. Through a wide array of primary and secondary sources, Van Orden illuminates these little-known aspects of Phelps's life and provides a more complete image of him, both as an individual and as a contributor to the Latter-day Saint movement.

The scope of the book runs from Phelps's colonial American ancestry to his death in 1872. After a brief account of his life before he joined the Church, the majority of the book deals with his life after. Van Orden advances the following argument: William W. Phelps made major contributions to building the kingdom of God, and he deserves to be recognized as much more than a writer of hymns. He was one of the most influential leaders in the early Church. He was close to the Prophet Joseph Smith and worked with him in every aspect of his ministry.

Van Orden's biographical sketch begins by outlining Phelps's conversion, which was facilitated by Thomas B. Marsh and Brigham Young. Phelps and his wife, Sally Waterman, read the Book of Mormon and believed that it was the word of God. Phelps was also acquainted with Martin Harris, a fellow Anti-Mason from nearby Palmyra.

Van Orden writes extensively about Phelps and his family, giving the reader a glimpse into his personal life. Phelps married Sally Waterman in Smyrna, New York, on April 28, 1815. They had ten children; three died in infancy, and most did not remain faithful members of the Church, a possible result of Phelps's authoritarian approach to raising a family (171).

His experience in publishing provided valuable skills as both a writer and an editor that became useful to the early Church. In a special blessing given by Joseph Smith, Phelps was told he would create "writing to lift up an ensign to the nations" (164). Smith also received a revelation that told him he would assist in selecting, writing, and printing books to be used in the schools of the Church (D&C 55:4). Phelps certainly fulfilled the promise given in that revelation. In fact, his skills as a writer, poet, editor, and publisher are evident throughout his entire Church experience. Van Orden explains that significant role, providing a few examples. In Kirtland, for instance, Phelps wrote several hymns for the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. Best known of these hymns is "The Spirit of God," which is still sung at temple dedications today.

In Jackson County, Missouri, Phelps published the Church newspaper *The Evening and the Morning Star*, the first newspaper in western Missouri. Later, in Nauvoo, Illinois, Phelps served as either the editor or a writer for several newspapers, including *The Wasp*, *Nauvoo Neighbor*, and *Times and Seasons*. After migrating west to Salt Lake City, Phelps published several almanacs, each entitled *Deseret Almanac*, following a long-established custom in early America.

Many of Phelps's writings reflected unique Latter-day Saint viewpoints. His poem and later hymn "The Red Man," for example, highlighted the Church's interest in the American Indians, who Latter-day Saints considered to be descendants of the Lamanites in the Book of Mormon.

This biography of Phelps introduces new information and provides insights into the man and his contribution to early Church history. For example, in addition to his work as a writer, editor, and publisher, a major contribution of Phelps was his work as a ghostwriter. According to Van Orden, Phelps wrote some of the articles that were attributed to Joseph Smith. For example, the well-known editorial attributed to Smith called "Try the Spirits" was probably written by Phelps. The following excerpt from the editorial exemplifies Phelps's lyrical skill as a writer: "A man must have the discerning of spirits, before he can drag into daylight this hellish influence and unfold it unto the world in all its soul destroying, diabolical, and horrid colors: *for nothing is a greater injury*

*to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit, when they think they have the spirit of God"* (407, italics in original).

This biography also sheds light on a common practice in the early days of the Church—excommunication. This practice was used much more frequently in the early Church than it is today, and Phelps was excommunicated three times in his life. During the Church's first years, excommunication often lasted for just a short period of time, and many, including Phelps, were eventually restored to full fellowship without rebaptism.

This study of William W. Phelps fills a large void in Latter-day Saint biography. Historian Ron Esplin asked Van Orden to go back and finish his work on Phelps, which he had started earlier in his career. No complete biography of Phelps had ever been written, and one was sorely needed. A result of Van Orden's years of study, this biography adds a great deal to our understanding of almost every event in the first few years of Church history.

The extensive use of both primary and secondary sources throughout the biography is most impressive, and the research supports the thesis of the author. This biography is well written, with careful analysis and sound conclusions. The finished product provides a complete and accurate picture of the man and his times. For the book's main audience of Church members who are interested in Church history and especially historical biography, it provides excellent information about an understudied early Church leader. Those interested in Latter-day Saint biography will want to add this book to their library.

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# *Converting the Saints: A Study of Religious Rivalry in America*

By Charles Randall Paul

Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2018

*Reviewed by Ronald E. Bartholomew*

Charles Randall Paul, the founder and president of the Foundation of Religious Diplomacy, has established himself in the academy as an expert in religion and philosophy on engaging differences. Paul's book *Converting the Saints* looks at religious conflict by analyzing encounters between early-twentieth-century Protestants and Latter-day Saints. During this time, Protestants served several missions to Utah in an attempt to convert Latter-day Saints back to mainstream Christianity. Paul looks at the conflicts that inevitably arose between the two religious traditions and through his analysis proposes a new theory of conflict engagement that turns destructive conflict into constructive, peaceful engagement. In a well-written introduction, he clearly outlines this purpose: to propose a new conflict engagement theory "that reflects the basic human desire for comparative supremacy . . . based on disharmony, disagreement, and unresolvable, continual contestation over that which we value most: our unique values, passions, and purposes" (xx). He calls this proposed theory "collaborative contestationalism" (xxi).

## **Collaborative Contestationalism**

It is evident from the beginning that the scope of this book is universal—though the book features a focused case study, Paul intends to effect change on a global stage, where conflict resolution is often first misunderstood and second mishandled. What is more, he opines that contemporary conflict resolution theory is based on a false premise: "both secular and religious thinkers have incorrectly presumed that resolution of religious conflict is both desired by the parties and a key to achieve social stability" (xv). He further points out that "billions of people, religious rivals, [have] no legitimate place for engaging [in]

contests”; “world-changing terrorist strategies proliferate in the absence of an honorable venue”; and “without a legitimate and honorable place for religious and ideological persuasive contestation, frustrated advocates for change will find other means to contest seemingly unresolvable matters—including turning to inter-tribal or international wars or disruptive violence against civilian order” (xvii).

Pointedly, Paul argues that at least one purpose of this book is to change the world from a place of chaos, where adherents to opposing religious claims often “resolve” their contests by asserting supremacy in a way that results in violence or, at minimum, civil disorder, to an environment where, if carefully and expertly handled, those same adherents would be able to maintain disagreement and continuous contestation without resorting to violence or civil disobedience. Although this does not mirror the utopian concept of Zion (in which all share a unified belief) sought by members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Paul’s proposal could potentially save lives and possibly maintain civil order in what still remains, at least theologically, a “fallen world.”

Therefore, he proposes a venue for rivals to “contest without coercion” (xv), where “certain ethical methods of inter- and intra-religious contestation” are “employed with skill, patience, and true care for the well-being of the rival” parties (xix). To facilitate this, we must “disenthrall ourselves from the desire to end conflict: rather, it is beneficial to cultivate the desire to sustain continual persuasive contestations. . . . Particular forms of persuasive religious contestations can be healthy for both religions and societies. . . . We thus need a conflict engagement theory based on disharmony, disagreement, and unresolvable, continual contestation” (xix–xx). In other words, Paul’s proposal for engaging in conflict allows people to maintain their disparate religious beliefs and disagree with one another in ways that are peaceful and constructive. Paul asserts that this is the only theoretical model that will bring peace to “a pluralizing world [which] depends on normalizing engaged contestation and collaboration between trustworthy religious or ideological rivals” (xix–xx).

Per Paul’s theoretical proposal, ideally in the United States, such contestations would “check each other by critical scrutiny and public antagonism” (14). In reality, however, these contestations have led to the Supreme Court, over time, developing a set of precedents “to help determine when the government is justified in using force to curtail religious practices that threaten national unity by challenging broadly held cultural norms and mores.” As a result, “what has emerged today

is the general feeling that for the government to act for or against religion, the justification must rest on some compelling state interest that supersedes any particular religious interest” (14–15). And in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Antebellum Southerners, Latter-day Saints, and Native Americans found themselves on the wrong side of this religious equation.

### **Three American Wars of Religion**

Citing as examples the Civil War and the U.S. government’s “wars” against Latter-day Saints and Native Americans, Paul argues that at times various groups have been perceived to be either anti-Christian or counterfeit Christian, incorporating teachings or practices that threaten broadly accepted cultural mores. When the federal government perceived that these groups were growing in influence like an uncontrolled cancer, it waged a war of violence against the groups to protect itself and force them into conformity. These wars were “justified as a defense of Christian righteousness that was under attack or being diluted” by these minority religious groups, which, incidentally, had all “sought [to] escape from the expanding American Empire” to no avail (22). In the end, Paul asserts, all three wars, with their several battles, “were each fought because neither side could convert [the other],” thus placing a “national unity of belief” out of reach (20).

### **Protestant Missions to Utah in Historical Context**

After carefully examining American Protestantism from 1890 to 1930, including Protestant missionary efforts, Paul situates Protestant missions to the Latter-day Saints in Utah in the context of eroding Protestant religious, social, and cultural hegemony. As Protestantism failed to create a unified denomination, its early-twentieth-century crusade against Latter-day Saints occurred on the brink of impending schisms: “In a last grasp for solidarity, if not hegemony—Protestants . . . answered the exclusive question, ‘Who, really, is Christian?’ with the unifying answer: ‘Well, certainly not the Mormons’” (57).

As Protestants encroached on Utah, attempting to convert the Latter-day Saints back to Christianity, conflicts between the two groups inevitably arose. Paul posits: “I believe the primary reason behind the early-twentieth-century Protestant-Mormon conflicts was both groups’ desires for religious supremacy and hegemony; and their belief that they were called to lead the nation—and even the world” (75). Within

that framework, Protestant missionary efforts in Utah “were, in large part, a defensive containment plan to protect the Christian flocks in the east from Mormon sheep stealing” (61), while Latter-day Saints sought to establish their “triumphal theodemocracy in America and the rest of the world” (75). According to Paul, “Protestants believed they were the foreordained stewards” of the “blessed continent and ached to assert their moral authority,” while the Latter-day Saints, in contrast, “made a direct theological and missionary attack on them that was galling and embarrassing when successful” (79) to Protestants who were thoroughly convinced Mormonism was a sham based on false premises.

In chapter five, which forms a sort of interlude between his unique theoretical framework and the actual history he attempts to analyze, Paul provides what he claims to be a contrast comparison between the opposing faith communities’ narratives, doctrines, symbols and rites, and styles of religiosity, asserting that his analysis will “provide a keener understanding of why their socio-political-religious contestation has endured almost two centuries” (81). He then devotes the next forty pages (81–120) to what amounts to, in my opinion, a subjective summary of the purported orthodoxy and orthopraxy (that is, beliefs and practices) of these two faith traditions.

In my estimation, the book up to this point is a significant contribution to the corpus of literature regarding contestation theory as it applies to United States and Latter-day Saint religious history, but here it suddenly takes an unnecessary nosedive. First, according to his own admission, there is no centralized, authoritative, or even generally accepted Protestant orthodoxy or orthopraxy. Second, his subjective perceptions are a distraction to the intelligent reader who is familiar with both the diversity of Protestant beliefs and practices as well as the evolving orthodoxy and orthopraxy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.<sup>1</sup> In short, what was orthopraxy and orthodoxy at the

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1. For an excellent historical survey of the nature of changing orthodoxy and orthopraxy, see chapter 2, “Mormonism and Theology,” in Terryl L. Givens, *Wrestling the Angel: The Foundations of Mormon Thought: Cosmos, God, Humanity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). He notes, for instance, that “the church’s steadfast reliance on the principle of ‘continuing revelation’ [has] resulted in a tradition of church teachings that is highly fluid and generally hard to pin down” (7); “thousands of conference sermons are rife with mutually incompatible views, and teachings are constantly evolving” (17); and “Mormonism, like Catholicism and some varieties of Protestantism,



turn of the twentieth century in either faith tradition has grown, evolved, and changed since that time, and, unfortunately, he seems to provide his contemporary understanding of only the current positions loosely held by both faith traditions. Hence, although helpful, his analysis falls short of the assertion that it would “provide a keener understanding” of a two-century-old contestation.

Perhaps the most brilliant aspect of this text is his comparative historical analysis of three Protestant missionaries who served their religious traditions faithfully from the last few years of the nineteenth century through the first five decades of the twentieth century. Although their terms of service varied in length, they served concurrently for nine years. His historical treatment of each of these men’s service is of the highest quality: thorough, engaging, and based on primary source documents. The extensive notes and bibliography alone are worth the purchase price of the book. What is more, his comparative analysis of their differing methods and successes is not only based on missiolog-ical reflections but also psychological, sociological, and theological factors as well. As a missiologist, I found his insights thought-provoking. Not only is this text a welcome addition to the corpus of the literature pertaining to conflict resolution theory, but it is also an important contribution to mission studies in general and to the growing body of Latter-day Saint mission studies in particular.

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claims that doctrine not only can but must evolve as a living tradition and that its spiritually inspired stewards respond to changing needs, capacities, and conditions” (20).

*Administrative Records: Council of Fifty, Minutes,  
March 1844–January 1846*

Edited by Matthew J. Grow, Ronald K. Esplin, Mark  
Ashurst-McGee, Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, and Jeffrey D. Mahas

The Joseph Smith Papers. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2016

*Reviewed by James B. Allen*

Everything You Could Ever Want to Know about the Council of Fifty in Nauvoo” would be a well-suited subtitle for this highly anticipated volume. As the editors note, Joseph Smith and his closest associates saw the Council of Fifty “as the beginning of the literal kingdom of God on earth” (xxiii). It functioned secretly in Nauvoo from March 1844 to January 1846 and then later for three short periods in Utah. Historians have long been aware of this council, also called the “Kingdom of God,” and some have pieced together from various journals and other reliable sources considerable information about the council’s activities.<sup>1</sup> However, until this publication the details of the council’s discussions and the variety of issues it dealt with were known only sketchily. In this publication, we learn, more fully than ever before, what leading members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were saying and doing about certain political issues, the Saints’ persecution, the future of the Church, the kingdom of God, Church doctrine, exploring and settling in the West, and much more.

This volume is the first and as yet only published volume of the Administrative Records series of the Joseph Smith Papers. The editors begin with an explanation of what this complex series is all about. It includes “records of the organizations in which Joseph Smith was involved as an administrator, records that were housed in his office, and records of meetings and initiatives in which he played a large part, such as church conferences and his 1844 presidential campaign. Among the

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1. See, for example, Klaus J. Hansen, *Quest for Empire: The Political Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty in Mormon History* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1967); and D. Michael Quinn, “The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945,” *BYU Studies* 20, no. 2 (1980): 163–97.

records are books of certificates and licenses that he signed or that were signed by others on his behalf and kept under his direction” (xv). Not everything in the series will be published in print editions, but all the records are or will be available on the Joseph Smith Papers website, and relevant excerpts have been and will be incorporated into other published volumes.<sup>2</sup>

Because the Council of the Fifty is largely unknown among most Latter-day Saints, some readers may be surprised at some things they discover in the minutes, such as some aspects of the council’s plan for settlement in the West or Joseph Smith’s interpretation of the kingdom that Daniel prophesied would roll forth and fill the earth (see Dan. 2). These events took place in different times, when many challenges and perceptions were quite unlike those of today. Regardless, these minutes tell a story of dedicated, hardworking men debating important issues and finding solutions to difficult challenges during a most trying time in Church history.

### **History of the Council of Fifty and Its Minutes**

The impetus for organizing this special council came on March 10, 1844, when Joseph Smith received two letters from George Miller and Lyman Wight, Church leaders in Wisconsin, that proposed sending missionaries to Texas (an independent republic at the time) to select a place there for the Saints to gather. Church leaders had already been considering the possibility of moving from Nauvoo, Illinois, to some place outside the borders of the United States, and that evening Joseph called together all the available Apostles as well as a few other Church members for a candid discussion. Setting a precedent for the frankness that would characterize discussions in all subsequent meetings of this council, he urged those in attendance to speak their minds and “to say what was in their hearts, whether good or bad. He did not want to be forever surrounded by a set of ‘dough heads’ and if they did not rise up and shake themselves and exercise themselves in discussing these important matters he should consider them nothing better than ‘dough heads’” (39). The next day the group met again and agreed

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2. For the full collection in the Administrative Records series, see “Administrative Records,” Joseph Smith Papers, accessed February 11, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/the-papers/administrative-records>. The Documents series, for instance, includes several excerpts from Joseph Smith’s letterbooks and minute books, which are featured in the Administrative Records series in their entirety.

“to look some place where we can go and establish a Theocracy either in Texas or Oregon or somewhere in California” (40). They then proceeded to organize the council, agreeing to keep their deliberations secret, even from their wives.

Twenty-three men attended the initial organizational meeting, but by the end of the Saints’ time in Nauvoo, the council had admitted fifty-four members. The “standing chairman” was Joseph Smith. William Clayton was designated as clerk, and, except for a few days, he recorded the minutes of the council meetings. On March 14 the council discussed what name it should be known as and, according to the minutes, “the Lord was pleased to give the following Revelation; ‘Verily thus saith the Lord, this is the name by which you shall be called, The Kingdom of God and his Laws, with the keys and power thereof, and judgement in the hands of his servants’” (48). When Clayton began his permanent record book, he titled it “Record of the Council of Fifty or Kingdom of God” (20).

Clayton’s minutes, transcribed in their entirety in this volume, have an interesting history. He initially kept minutes on loose sheets of paper. Secrecy was so important that early in the morning on June 23, 1844, Joseph Smith, knowing that he might soon be imprisoned and killed and that the minutes could fall into wrong hands, told Clayton to burn them, put them in safe hands, or bury them. Clayton put them in a box and buried them in his garden. Joseph was murdered four days later. On July 3, Clayton dug up the minutes and began copying them into a small bound book; the minutes eventually took up three such books (10–11). In April 1847 he gave the books to Brigham Young, who ten years later gave them to Church historians Wilford Woodruff and George A. Smith. In 1858, when the U.S. Army arrived in Utah during the “Utah War,” the council minutes, as well as some temple records, were again buried for a short period to protect them, this time on Wilford Woodruff’s property.

In 1862 the minutes were returned to Brigham Young, who later turned them over to George Q. Cannon, who had become the council’s recorder. In 1880, Cannon was in Washington, D.C., so when John Taylor, who had succeeded Brigham Young as leader of the Church, wanted to see the minutes in preparation for reconvening the council, Cannon mailed him the key to the trunk containing them and Taylor, Franklin D. Richards, and Joseph F. Smith soon spent time together reading the first two hundred pages. Portions of the record were read to the reconvened council. In 1882, George F. Gibbs took custody of the records, but by the mid-1880s they were in the custody of the First Presidency. The minutes

were accessed a few times later by certain Church leaders, but apparently no one else was permitted to see them. Then in 2010, the Nauvoo-era Council of Fifty minutes were transferred to the Church History Library to prepare for publishing as part of the Joseph Smith Papers Project.

### **Contents of the Volume**

The minutes of the Council of Fifty, featured in this fascinating 734-page volume, were recorded in three small books and cover twenty-one meetings before the death of Joseph Smith and forty-two meetings between then and January 1846. In addition, four appendices in the Joseph Smith Papers volume provide the minutes of three council meetings not recorded in Clayton's books, as well as a roll, compiled by Clayton, of attendance at all the meetings from April 1845 to December 1846.

Those who peruse the volume will be deeply impressed with, and grateful for, the outstanding editorial work that went into it. An introduction provides a fine short history of the council. Another introductory article explains the editorial method. An extensive source note then describes the appearance and makeup of the original manuscripts in detail and provides their provenance. The minutes are divided into four chronological parts, and each part begins with a valuable introduction that provides the historical setting as well as a brief comment on what was covered in the meetings of that period. The transcription of the minutes for each meeting is preceded by a historical introduction and brief summary of the meeting itself.

Some of the most important editorial work in the volume is found in the copious and lengthy footnotes, where the editors go far beyond what might be expected as they provide considerable illuminating and important information. The footnotes offer significant historical background, identify people, and explain events. A case in point concerns Joseph Smith's famous "last charge," in which he "laid the responsibility of leading the church on the Twelve" (66 n. 164). This charge was given in a meeting of the Council of Fifty held on March 26, 1844. However, the minutes themselves do not specifically mention the charge or its contents. They say only that "Prest J. Smith continued his instructions on heavenly things and many other important subjects" (66), but the editors do a marvelous job of piecing the story together from other sources (see 62 n. 149; 66 n. 164; and 378–79 nn. 592–96).

The transcriptions and annotation found in the main body of this outstanding volume are supplemented by 135 pages of reference material: a chronology of the period, a geographical directory that describes

most of the places mentioned in the minutes, maps that show nearly every locale and geographic feature appearing in the minutes, a pedigree chart for Joseph Smith, a section of biographical sketches for nearly everyone mentioned in the minutes, photos of many members of the council, a chart listing the members of the council and their dates of tenure, and an organizational chart identifying the members of the various committees established by the council. All this, together with an essay on the sources used in the volume and an extensive list of works cited, certainly supports my initial observation that here is everything you could ever want to know about the Council of Fifty in Nauvoo. Finally, a well-crafted index helps make the large volume highly accessible.

### **Nature of the Council**

Shortly after the council was formed, members discussed whether a constitution for the “kingdom” should be prepared. A committee was appointed to draft one, the matter was briefly discussed at times, but it came to an end on April 25, 1844, when Joseph Smith declared that the matter should be left alone and announced: “Verily thus saith the Lord, yea are my constitution, and I am your God, and ye are my spokesmen. From henceforth do as I shall command you” (137). From then on the council thought of itself as a “living constitution”; as Brigham Young explained to new members on March 1, 1845, “We are the living body to enact laws for the government of this kingdom, we are a living constitution” (254).

The minutes show that members of the council were anything but “dough heads.” They spoke their minds, as Joseph Smith had instructed them to do. Discussions were often lengthy and vigorous, disagreement was frequent but not antagonistic, votes were taken by voice, and a vote had to be unanimous before any resolution could pass. The reader will likely frequently sense the members’ deep feelings of gratitude to be learning from their prophet, their excitement at what they were doing, and their confidence in the future as they saw themselves as part of a great movement that would one day dominate the earth. This enthusiasm is apparent not only in the minutes but also in the journal of the council’s scribe, William Clayton. He reminisced on January 1, 1845, “In this council was also devised the plan of establishing an immigration to Texas and plans laid for the exaltation of a standard and ensign of truths for the nations of the earth. In this council was the plan devised to restore the Ancients [that is, American Indians] to the knowledge of the truth and the restoration of union and peace amongst ourselves.

. . . In this council was the principles of eternal truth rolled forth to the hearers without reserve and the hearts of the servants of God made to rejoice exceedingly.”<sup>3</sup>

Discussions in the council ranged far and wide. They included topics such as Joseph Smith’s presidential campaign; the nature of the council and its relationship to the Church; the U.S. Constitution; the need to evacuate Nauvoo; how to keep law and order and how to conduct other business in Nauvoo after the Nauvoo charter was rescinded; how to respond to legal threats against leaders of the Church; the need to finish the temple and the Nauvoo House; Sidney Rigdon’s expulsion from the council and his activities after the death of Joseph Smith; finding a suitable refuge for the Saints in the West; an analysis of various sources of information about the West; the need to leave the United States and establish an independent kingdom; the possibility of temporarily settling among certain tribes of American Indians; the noble heritage of the Indians and the expectation that they, or many of them, would soon accept the gospel; security measures for Nauvoo, especially in connection with threats of violence around the time of the trial of those accused of killing the prophet; the increasing pressure to evacuate Nauvoo; and planning and participating in the exodus. What follows are brief notes on some of the most important issues taken up by the council.

### **Establishing a Theocracy**

Members of the council saw themselves as establishing a literal kingdom of God, a theocracy that would govern on righteous principles, with God at the helm, and that would continue with Christ after his Second Coming. They believed the kingdom that Daniel prophesied would roll forth and fill the earth was not the Church but, rather, a political theocracy that would establish the kind of peace and justice that not even the U.S. Constitution (which they revered but thought imperfect) could achieve. They believed the center of that theocracy would eventually be located somewhere other than Nauvoo. At the same time, they did not believe that their theocracy would or should deny anyone’s religious or civil rights or that the leaders would be autocratic. Rather, as summarized by the volume’s editors, council members “sought to erect a new standard of liberty in order to establish the freedoms America

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3. As quoted in James B. Allen, *Trials of Discipleship: The Story of William Clayton, a Mormon* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 147–48 n. 45.

had failed to safeguard” (xxviii). Further, they “emphasized that leaders in the kingdom of God would govern by fostering free discussion, by respecting the people, and by serving as a conduit for revelation and God’s law” (xxxviii). After all, a prophet was at the kingdom’s head.

During the Nauvoo period, three men who were not Church members were admitted to the council, demonstrating, Joseph Smith suggested, that the kingdom had no religious bias. Their admittance showed “that in the organization of this kingdom men are not consulted as to their religious opinions or notions in any shape or form whatever and that we act upon the broad and liberal principal that all men have equal rights, and ought to be respected, and that every man has a privilege in this organization of choosing for himself voluntarily his God, and what he pleases for his religion, inasmuch as there is no danger but that every man will embrace the greatest light” (97).

The complete confidence the council had in Joseph Smith is suggested by the fact that on April 11, 1844, they voted to “receive from this time henceforth and forever, Joseph Smith, as our Prophet, Priest & King, and uphold him in that capacity in which God has anointed him” (95–96). As the editors explain, “This action dramatically demonstrates the council members’ views of theodemocracy, under which the ecclesiastical leader of the Church (prophet and priest) would be chosen by them as a political leader (king)” (xxxviii). Council members did not believe that this action would have immediate political consequences. It only symbolized their belief that they were planning for the Millennium. After Joseph Smith’s death, Brigham Young took his place as standing chair of the council, and new members were required to sustain him as “successor of Joseph Smith henceforth and forever” and also as “successor of Prest. Joseph Smith and prophet, priest, and king to this kingdom forever after” (256).

There is a persistent myth that Joseph Smith was actually ordained or anointed a king in a meeting of the Council of Fifty. However, the editors effectively refute this by explaining that on February 4, 1885, John Taylor met with members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve in a special meeting where he was anointed and ordained “a King over the House of Israel.” Then he recounted that he had helped anoint and ordain Joseph Smith and later Brigham Young to that same office, and that many others were present at the time. “This indicates,” write the editors, “that such an anointing, if accurately remembered, did not occur in the Council of Fifty” (96 n. 259). It was a religious anointing, done outside of the council, not a political one.



Though rumors of a theocracy antagonized the enemies of the Church who feared it as a political danger, it is clear from the minutes that members of the council had no intention of threatening existing governments. However, establishing the kingdom of God was very much tied to the Saints' plan to find a refuge somewhere in the West. As Sidney Rigdon explained in a meeting on April 11, 1844, "The design was to form a Theocracy according to the will of Heaven, planted without any intention to interfere with any government of the world. We wish to have nothing to do with them. . . . The object is to live so far above their laws that they cannot interfere with us, unless by violence. We will hunt a spot somewhere on the earth where no other government has jurisdiction and cannot interfere with us and there plant our standard" (88).

One interesting question on which there had been conflicting opinions was whether there was a difference between the Church and the kingdom. On April 18, 1844, Joseph Smith put an end to the matter by declaring that there was a distinction between the church of God and the kingdom of God:

The laws of the kingdom are not designed to effect our salvation hereafter. It is an entire, distinct and separate government. The church is a spiritual matter and a spiritual kingdom; but the kingdom which Daniel saw was not a spiritual kingdom, but was designed to be got up for the safety and salvation of the saints by protecting them in their religious rights and worship. . . . The literal kingdom of God, and the church of God are two distinct things. The gifts of prophets, evangelists &c [that is, the Church] never were designed to govern men in civil matters. (128)

## Secrecy

From the beginning, the council's deliberations were shrouded in secrecy. During the organizational meeting on March 11, 1843, Lucien Woodworth said he had long wanted such a group, organized "after the order of God, every member of it to be bound to eternal secrecy as to what passed here, not to have the privilege of telling anything which might be talked of to any person even to our wives, and the man who broke the rule 'should lose his cursed head'" (42, underlining in original).<sup>4</sup> He proposed this as a resolution, which passed and became

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4. A footnote appears at this point and is an example of the volume's fine editorial work. Footnote 75 on page 42 offers a few possible reasons for the language suggesting decapitation as a penalty: Nearly everyone in the council

a permanent law of the council. No specific reason for secrecy is spelled out in the minutes, but the council discussed issues relating to establishing a theocracy, making Joseph Smith a “king,” and transferring the Saints to an area outside the United States; if antagonists had got wind of these discussions, considerable misunderstanding and persecution could have resulted. The concern for secrecy was reemphasized on May 10, 1845, when Brigham Young complained that “there are some vessels in the council which are leaky, some of the members have told their wives what is passing here, and he felt to caution the brethren against it. If there are any here who cannot keep matters to themselves let them keep out of the council” (456). The secrecy surrounding the Council of Fifty persisted throughout the decades, which is perhaps why most Church members today know little about the council.

### Joseph Smith’s Presidential Campaign

The minutes also provide insight into the Council of Fifty’s involvement in Joseph Smith’s campaign for the presidency of the United States, which began before the council was organized but was eventually taken over by the council. From the minutes, one gains the impression that some members had high hopes, even expectations, that despite the overwhelming odds, Joseph would succeed. Others were willing to campaign but did not believe he would win or even wanted to. On April 18, 1844, for example, during a lengthy debate on the nature of the kingdom of God, one member asked how a man could be elected president when he was already a king: “He is perfectly willing to go and electioneer, to blind the eyes of the people, but he wants to see our king upheld in his office here” (125). Another declared outright that “our president dont care to go to Washington” (127). Nevertheless, Joseph acted as if he wanted to win, and on April 25 he called upon the council to appoint delegates in all electoral districts and to hold a national convention in Baltimore. On May 6 it was decided, at Joseph Smith’s request, that Sidney Rigdon should run for vice president (157–59). When it all came to

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belonged to the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge, which included vows of secrecy with associated penalties, including decapitation for breaking an oath. The editors suggest, however, that Woodworth may also have been referring to the traditional English punishment for high treason and notes that the phrase “cursed head” appears in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, referring to traditional punishment for traitors. To support this theory, the editors observe that Sidney Rigdon referred to this oath as a resolution governing “those who might turn traitor.”

an end with the death of Joseph Smith on June 27, most members of the council were on electioneering missions.

Joseph Smith ran for president in part to help his people. He and other members of the council revered the U.S. Constitution, but their experiences of having been driven from their homes, some of them more than once, convinced them that there were weaknesses in it, for it did not seem to protect them in their religious rights. Their pleading for help from the federal government had fallen on deaf ears, for the Constitution prohibited the president of the United States from sending troops into a state, as the Saints had requested, without the specific request of the governor. Significantly, Joseph Smith's campaign tract, *General Smith's Views of the Powers and Policy of the Government of the United States*, called for a constitutional amendment that would give the president power to send an army into a state to suppress mobs. In some respects this foreshadowed the Fourteenth Amendment (1868), which, as stated in section 1, prohibited any state from depriving anyone of "life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." By implication, this finally authorized the national government to intervene to enforce these provisions. On April 11, 1844, Joseph Smith commented on the importance of protecting religious freedom. Echoing his presidential platform, he said that the government should be compelled to use its armies to enforce the principles of liberty. "When a man is thus bound by a constitution he cannot refuse to protect his subjects, he dare not do it. And when a Governor or president will not protect his subjects he ought to be put away from his office" (101).

### **Settlement in the West**

Another series of council discussions had to do with possible settlement in the West and, eventually, spearheading the actual move. The issue was highly political since it was entwined with discussions of what the United States should do about Texas, Oregon, and the Mexican territory that now comprises California and the Intermountain West, all of which Church leaders looked at as possible areas for colonization.

In March 1844, the council created a petition for Congress that included the wording of a proposed ordinance designed to protect citizens of the United States migrating to Texas, Oregon, and "other lands." It proposed authorizing Joseph Smith to raise one hundred thousand volunteers for that purpose and making him an officer in the U.S. Army (something Congress actually had no authority to do) (67–70). Orson

Hyde was appointed to deliver the petition, and Joseph Smith instructed him not to let Congress change the wording. If it could not pass in its “pure original State, let them reject it altogether. He did not care whether Congress would grant it or not, it would serve to goad them with” (60). Writing to the council from Washington on April 25, Hyde commented on problems related to the American annexation of Texas, which, he boldly declared, “God designs to give to his Saints” (181). The petition was presented in May, but Congress never acted on it. Hyde opined in a letter to Joseph Smith that Congress would pass no act in relation to either Texas or Oregon for it “is afraid of England, afraid of Mexico, and afraid the presidential election will be twisted by it.” He sarcastically added something that sounds like what critics of Congress might say today: “The members all appear like unskillful players at chequers afraid to move, for they see not which way to move advantageously” (177).

Exploring the West in order to find a place where the kingdom of God could reside in peace became a key project of the council. At one point the council sent an impassioned letter to all state governors, telling of the Saints’ persecution and asking for their “friendly interposition in our favor.” The letter asked, “Will it be too much to ask you to convene a special session of your State Legislature, and furnish us an asylum where we can enjoy our rights of conscience and religion unmolested?” If not, “will you in a special message to that body, when convened, recommend a remonstrance against such unhallowed acts of oppression and expatriation, as this people have continued to receive from the States of Missouri and Illinois? Or will you favor us by your personal influence, and by your official rank?” (316). They also asked the governors for their views “concerning what is called the Great Western Measure, of colonizing the Latter Day Saints in Oregon, the North western Territory, or some location, remote from the states, where the hand of oppression shall not crush every noble principle, and extinguish every patriotic feeling” (316, underlining in original).

Brigham Young saw the move happening in stages. He told the council on March 18, 1845, that if a company went out that spring, it should find a place not far away where they could stay and be safe for a year or two outside the jurisdiction of the United States. But their final goal was to settle in California because, he said, that was where Joseph Smith had wanted them to go. (At the time, the term “California” often referred to a vast western area that included present-day Utah.) Young saw the advantages of navigation and commerce that the western coast offered but also said, “We want to get between some of those mountains where

we can fortify ourselves, and erect the standard of liberty on one of the highest mountains we can find” (328).

Council members were so interested in California that during that meeting John Taylor composed a song, “Upper California,” and asked Erastus Snow to sing it. The song, later revised and expanded by Taylor, was sung also at several subsequent meetings. As sung in this meeting and recorded by Clayton, it went:

The Upper California Oh thats the land for me  
It lays between the mountains & the great pacific sea,  
The Saints could be supported there & enjoy sweet liberty  
With flocks and herds abounding Oh thats the land for me.

We'll go and lift our Standard, we'll go there and be free  
We'll go to California and have our Jubilee  
A land that blooms with endless spring  
A land of joy and liberty,  
In Upper California Oh thats the land for me. (332)

As they continued to study various sources of information, including the maps and report of John C. Fremont, their ideas became more specific. The editors note that in a letter to Addison Pratt on August 28, Church leaders said that they had decided to locate “in the neighborhood of Lake Tampanagos as that is represented as a most delightful district and [there are] no settlement[s] near there” (464). The name “Lake Tampanagos” was based on the designation the early explorer Zebulon Pike had given both Utah Lake and the Great Salt Lake, which he thought were actually the same lake. On September 9, 1845, Parley P. Pratt spoke to the council about the great benefits of the California coast but also bragged about the interior, describing the area as “desert and plains, except here and there a beautiful stream, filled with fish, and surrounded by a flourishing and pleasant valley” (475). During the same meeting Brigham Young reported that he was thinking of sending a group west the following spring, “somewhere near the Great Salt Lake,” and later they could work their way to the bay of San Francisco (472). Clearly, Brigham Young and the council knew where they were going before they left Nauvoo.

### **American Indians**

The American Indians played a role in the council’s consideration of a westward move, and the council considered working with certain tribes in that effort. Indians were frequently discussed in meetings of

the council. Church members identified them as Lamanites, descendants of Book of Mormon people, taking seriously Book of Mormon promises of an important destiny for them. On March 1, 1845, Lewis Dana, a member of the Oneida tribe, was temporarily admitted to the council. Brigham Young, noting that Dana was the first Lamanite to be admitted, declared that the “object of this organization is to find a place where we can dwell in peace and lift up the standard of liberty. It is for the purpose of uniting the Lamanites, and sowing the seeds of the gospel among them. They will receive it en Masse. . . . The gentiles have rejected the gospel and we will carry it to the branch of the house of Israel in the west” (255).

In April 1845, Dana and three others were sent on a western mission. They were hoping to form alliances with Indian tribes that would allow the Saints to temporarily settle among them. On September 9, Daniel Spencer reported to the council on his mission to the Seneca Indians and told of meeting Dana and learning that “the Cherokees had given permission for any number of our people to settle by them, and offered to lend us any assistance they could either to locate or to go West to explore” (468).

### **Increasing Persecution**

In the late Nauvoo era, challenges and persecutions began to take their toll on the Saints. It is understandable that some members of the council felt deep anger, even vindictiveness, against those whom they perceived to be their enemies. In March 1845, Brigham Young reflected the feelings of Lyman Wight as well as himself when he said that his

feelings are that our time is short among the gentiles, and the judgment of God will soon come on them like whirlwind. He dont care about preaching to the gentiles any longer. Some of the brethren say they can convert many of the gentiles and baptise them, but what are they good for when we get them. They are not bold enough to come out in defence of the truth, nor do any thing, and he feels as Lyman Wight said let the damned scoundrels be killed, let them be swept off from the earth, and then we can go and be baptized for them, easier than we can convert them. (299–300)

Orson Spencer was a bit more moderate. On March 22 he said that “the time has come for us to separate from the gentiles. . . . The gentiles are already boiling over in Iowa and Missouri, but we dont care how much they boil over. If God wants us to take another real drubbing we shall

have it, and we cant help ourselves, but if he wants us to give the gentiles a drubbing he will guide us by the spirit what to do as the circumstances require” (348–49).

As the Nauvoo period of Church history drew to an end, one can sense in the minutes the increasing urgency felt by the council but also, at least at one point, a sense of pleasure that at last the thing they had hoped for from the beginning, the move to a new home for the Saints, was about to happen. On October 4, 1845, the council heard a report of a conversation with anti-Mormons in Carthage as well as a series of resolutions by the citizens of Quincy, Illinois, concerning the removal of the Saints. During the reading of these documents, according to the minutes, “the members of the council indulged themselves with quite a season of rejoicing and pleasure” (494).

In a sense, that might be the feeling historians and other readers will have as they make their way through this remarkable volume: a very long read but, because of the information and insight it provides, a pleasurable one.

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James B. Allen was a teacher and administrator in the seminary and institute programs from 1954 to 1963, then joined the faculty of Brigham Young University. He was Assistant Church Historian, 1972–79; chair of the BYU History Department, 1981–87; and the Lemuel Hardison Redd Jr. Chair in Western American History, 1987–92. He retired in 1992. He has authored, coauthored, or coedited fourteen books or monographs and around ninety articles relating to Western American and Latter-day Saint history. He is married to the former Renée Jones, and together they have five children, twenty-one grandchildren, and twenty-one great-grandchildren. They served a full-time Church Educational System mission at the Boston Institute of Religion, 1999–2000, and served as officiators in the Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple, 2004–13.

*"To Seek the Law of the Lord": Essays in Honor of John W. Welch*, edited by Paul Y. Hoskisson and Daniel C. Peterson (Orem, Utah: The Interpreter Foundation, 2017)

*To Seek the Law of the Lord* is a collection of twenty essays, composing over five hundred pages of Latter-day Saint scholarship. The collection is a tribute to John W. Welch, who established the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies in 1989 and served as editor-in-chief of *BYU Studies* from 1991 to 2018. Welch has published extensively (521), making significant contributions with his studies on, for example, chiasmus in the Book of Mormon and law in the Bible. This collection was organized and edited by Paul Y. Hoskisson and Daniel C. Peterson, who are both associates of Welch. All contributing authors to *To Seek the Law of the Lord* have worked with and been influenced by Welch and his work.

The essays within *To Seek the Law of the Lord* contain a wide variety of topics, including world and Latter-day Saint history; analyses of the Book of Mormon, Bible, and other scripture; and theological and sociotheological discussions. One such essay, "Notes on Mormonism and the Trinity" by Daniel C. Peterson (267), explains the intricate history of trinitarian theology. In "Faith, Hope, and Charity: The 'Three Principal Rounds' of the Ladder of Heavenly Ascent," author Jeffrey M. Bradshaw writes, "The scriptural triad of faith, hope, and charity should be understood as something more than a general set of personal attributes" (59). Bradshaw then takes the reader on a journey through the scriptures and shows the reader that faith, hope, and charity are at the very core of Latter-day Saint doctrine and the path to salvation.

Other essays, reflecting the breadth of Welch's work, include "Transcendence

of the Flesh, Divine and Human" by James E. Faulconer (113), "The Visions of Moses and Joseph Smith's Bible Translation" by Kent P. Jackson (161), "Toqueville on New Prophets and the Tyranny of Public Opinion" by Louis Midgley (171), "Chiastic Structuring of Large Texts: Second Nephi as a Case Study" by Noel B. Reynolds (333), and "Tree of Life, Tree of Healing" by John Tvedtnes (495).

*To Seek the Law of the Lord* will appeal to those who have appreciated Welch's work over the years and wish to see how his scholarship has been applied by other academics. It will also be of value to those seeking higher levels of understanding on the topics found therein. The writing and information presented are quite intricate, so one should not expect light reading from the compilation. With the collection's range of topics, however, it will have something of interest for most readers.

—Alec J. Harding

*Name as Key-Word: Collected Essays on Onomastic Wordplay and the Temple in Mormon Scripture* by Matthew L. Bowen (Orem, Utah: Interpreter Foundation; Salt Lake City: Eborn Books, 2018)

The ancient world's use of names to represent meanings, symbols, prophecies, and memorials is foreign to us today, and Matthew Bowen's book bridges that gap to tell us what we can learn from understanding the use of names in ancient scriptural narratives. The volume's sixteen essays delve into the names of persons and places in the Book of Mormon and Bible. Bowen's thorough and careful research into these names provides helpful background for these scriptural texts: for example, the essay on the place names *Zarahemla* and *Jershon* draws parallels between these names and a naming practice in the Bible seen



in place names like *Salem*, *Bethel*, and *Hormah*. The chapter on Peter and his surname seeks to correct the misunderstanding that Peter is the rock and foundation of the Church; rather, it is Christ himself. Readers interested specifically in temple studies will enjoy the chapter on the Jerusalem temple. In that chapter, Bowen analyzes place names, exploring how theophany and sacrifice converge at this specific place and examining the etiological narratives of Abraham and Isaac to show that “the temple itself was, and is, Christ’s Atonement having its intended effect on humanity” (lvii).

This book will serve readers who love scriptural etymology and those who desire a detailed study of ancient scripture. Matthew Bowen is an assistant professor in Religious Education at Brigham Young University and has contributed to the Book of Mormon Onomasticon (<https://onoma.lib.byu.edu>). His expertise in ancient languages might have resulted in his writing an impenetrable text, but he helps the reader by offering explanations and commentary that clearly outline why these names matter. Earlier versions of most of the essays in this volume can be found on the *Interpreter’s* website, but having them together in print in a nicely formatted book is worth the cost.

—Jennifer Hurlbut

*The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ, Maxwell Institute Study Edition*, edited by Grant Hardy (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2018)

The Maxwell Institute’s study edition of the Book of Mormon is both an update and an expansion of Grant Hardy’s *The Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Edition*, published in 2003 by the University of Illinois Press. Among the many differences between the two volumes, I find

two most significant. First, the base text for the Maxwell Institute edition is the 2013 version of the Book of Mormon, used currently by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. *A Reader’s Edition* used the 1920 version because it was the most recent edition available in the public domain. The Church obviously granted Hardy and the Maxwell Institute permission to use the text of its current official version for this study edition, which gives the volume a silent stamp of approval by the Church that *A Reader’s Edition* did not enjoy. Textually, this is significant only because of a few editorial changes that have occurred since 1920. For the vast majority of verses, however, the text is identical.

The second significant difference is Hardy’s inclusion of footnotes containing many simplified examples of textual variants presented in detail by Royal Skousen in *Analysis of Textual Variants*, volume 4 of his Book of Mormon Critical Text Project. Other footnotes offer a variety of explanations and brief commentary on the text. The footnotes, however, are not excessive, usually numbering fewer than five per page.

As with *A Reader’s Edition*, the Maxwell Institute’s study edition attempts to make the text more accessible by presenting it in paragraphs, with poetry set in verse form. Explanatory headers, running heads, and subheads help guide the reader through the twists and turns of the Book of Mormon narrative. The text itself appears in roman typeface, while study helps are in italics, and boldface type occasionally identifies intertextuality with the Bible or within the Book of Mormon itself.

Art by Brian Kershnik appears at the beginning of each book in this study edition. The contrast between Kershnik’s style and Arnold Friberg’s, which most Latter-day Saints likely associate with the Book of Mormon, is stark but thought-provoking. Kershnik’s choice

of images is more subtle and contemplative, and all images are printed in black and white.

I was surprised to find two minor factual errors in the editor's introduction to the volume. Let me mention one. Hardy explains that the original manuscript instead of the printer's manuscript was used by the typesetter (for text from Helaman 13, verse 17, to the end of Mormon) because "Joseph and Oliver took the printer's manuscript to Canada to procure the copyright there" (xv). But Joseph Smith did not go to Canada with Oliver Cowdery. In the revelation regarding this errand to Canada, Oliver's traveling companions were to be Hiram Page, Josiah Stowell, and Joseph Knight. It is uncertain whether all three accompanied Oliver, but Joseph Smith definitely did not.<sup>1</sup>

This quibble aside, the *Maxwell Institute Study Edition* of the Book of Mormon is a valuable addition to the growing number of resources available to students of this volume of Latter-day Saint scripture.

—Roger Terry

*Kalaupapa: The Mormon Experience in an Exiled Community* by Fred E. Woods (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2017)

As Hansen's Disease (also known as leprosy) spread rapidly throughout Hawaii in the nineteenth century, the Kalaupapa peninsula was selected as an "isolation settlement for confirmed cases" of leprosy and the location of "a receiving

hospital where suspected cases could be treated" (20–21). These individuals were essentially exiled, and one might think that such an isolated community would be a place of loneliness, but *Kalaupapa: The Mormon Experience in an Exiled Community* explores how, instead, the community was built on love and inclusion and began to thrive and became a sacred space. According to author Fred E. Woods, professor of religious education at Brigham Young University, Kalaupapa "is the story of community—community unlike anywhere else in the world—not a space divided by borders and barriers or fences and enclosures, but a place which beckons every race and religion, every color and creed" (xv).

This book stands out from others written about Kalaupapa because it "emphasizes the Mormon experience" (xv). It begins by giving a brief history of Hawaii and the first Christian ministers (including Protestant, Catholic, and Latter-day Saint missionaries) to arrive there. The book then dives into stories of the inhabitants of Kalaupapa and the experiences of Church members there from the nineteenth century through the twenty-first century.

Included in the book's 318 pages are over one hundred images, most of Church members and natives of Kalaupapa, which help bring to life the history Woods tells. Several appendixes supplement the narrative and feature the complete text of several primary documents, including the official acts that isolated those with leprosy, letters sent between Church leaders and the king of Hawaii, and records of the local branch presidency.

According to Woods, "The charity and uncommon service rendered at Kalaupapa is relevant in any age" (xvii). Anyone interested in the power of community and in global Church history will find this a compelling and satisfying read.

—Emily Cook

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1. See Stephen Kent Ehat, "'Securing' the Prophet's Copyright in the Book of Mormon: Historical and Legal Context for the So-called Canadian Copyright Revelation," *BYU Studies* 50, no. 2 (2011): 4–70.