

Advisory Board

Alan L. Wilkins, chair
James P. Bell
Donna Lee Bowen
Douglas M. Chabries
Doris R. Dant
Randall L. Hall

Editor in Chief

John W. Welch

Church History Board

Richard Bennett, chair
19th-century history
Brian Q. Cannon
20th-century history
Kathryn Daynes
19th-century history
Steven C. Harper
documents
Frederick G. Williams
cultural history

Liberal Arts and Sciences Board

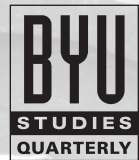
Eric Eliason, chair
English, folklore
Barry R. Bickmore
geochemistry
David C. Dollahite
faith and family life
Susan Howe
English, poetry, drama
Neal Kramer
early British literature, Mormon studies
Steven C. Walker
Christian literature

Reviews Board

Eric Eliason
co-chair
John M. Murphy
co-chair
Angela Hallstrom
literature
Greg Hansen
music
Emily Jensen
new media
Megan Sanborn Jones
theater and media arts
Herman du Toit
art, museums

Specialists

Casualene Meyer
poetry editor
Thomas R. Wells
photography editor



INVOLVING READERS
IN THE LATTER-DAY SAINT
ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE



STUDIES QUARTERLY

Vol. 52 • No. 2 • 2013

ARTICLES

- 4** “Which Is the Wisest Course?”: The Transformation in
Mormon Temple Consciousness, 1870–1898
Richard E. Bennett
- 45** Believing Adoption
Samuel M. Brown
- 67** Game Theory, the Prisoner’s Dilemma, and the Book of
Mormon
Robert F. Schwartz
- 113** My Vocation as a Scholar: An Idea of the University
John R. Rosenberg
- 131** Integrating BYU’s Education in Zion Gallery into Campus Life
Heather M. Seferovich
- 151** Self-Interest, Ethical Egoism, and the Restored Gospel
Darin Crawford Gates

PHOTO ESSAY

- 140** The Symbolism of the Beehive in Latter-day Saint Tradition
Val Brinkerhoff

POETRY WINNERS

- 44** Late States of Being
Dixie Partridge (*first place*)
- 66** A Tribute to High School English
Dan Belnap (*second place*)

REVIEW ESSAY

- 177** The New Mormon Ecumenicism: Thoughts on *Mormonism at the Crossroads of Philosophy and Theology: Essays in Honor of David L. Paulsen*
Reviewed by Stephen H. Webb

BOOK REVIEW

- 186** *Tiki and Temple: The Mormon Mission in New Zealand, 1854–1958*
by Marjorie Newton
Reviewed by A. Keith Thompson

BOOK NOTICES

- 191** *Historical Context of the Doctrine and Covenants and Other Modern Scriptures*, volume 1
Pansy's History: The Autobiography of Margaret E. P. Gordon, 1866–1966



St. George Utah Temple (c. 1876). As temples were completed and temple work was fully underway, the fledgling Church in Utah territory was being compelled by the federal government to abandon polygamy. With mounting pressure, two choices became clear: either abandon the practice of plural marriage or abandon temple work for the dead. Courtesy LDS Church Archives.

“Which Is the Wisest Course?”

The Transformation in Mormon Temple Consciousness, 1870–1898

Richard E. Bennett

The following is a sequel study to Richard E. Bennett’s BYU Studies Quarterly article “Line Upon Line, Precept Upon Precept’: Reflections on the 1877 Commencement of the Performance of Endowments and Sealings for the Dead,” found in issue 44, no. 3. To access that article, please visit byustudies.byu.edu.

In 1890 President Wilford Woodruff faced a serious dilemma.

The question is this: Which is the wisest course for the Latter-day Saints to pursue—to continue to attempt to practice plural marriage, with the laws of the nation against it and the opposition of sixty millions of people and at the cost of the confiscation and loss of all the Temples, and the stopping of all the ordinances therein, both for the living and the dead; and the imprisonment of the First Presidency and Twelve and the heads of families in the Church, and the confiscation of personal property of the people . . . or, after doing and suffering what we have through our adherence to this principle to cease the practice and submit to the law . . . and also leave the Temples in the hands of the Saints, so that they can attend to the ordinances of the Gospel, both for the living and the dead?

. . . Now, the question is, whether it should be stopped in this manner, or in the way the Lord has manifested to us, and leave our Prophets and Apostles and fathers free men, and the temples in the hands of the people, so that the dead may be redeemed. . . . I saw exactly what would

In 2005 I published an article in *BYU Studies Quarterly* with the intent to show that the dedication of the St. George Temple in 1877 was a watershed moment in the history of the development of modern Mormon temple work. Under the direction of Brigham Young, then in his thirtieth year as President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Wilford Woodruff, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve since 1838 and newly appointed president of the St. George Temple, the sacred ordinance of endowment for the dead was first performed.



Much of the inspiration for my former study grew out of my life-long interest in the Mormon Exodus period in Church history and, frankly, from my surprise that although baptisms for the dead had begun in Nauvoo in 1840 and endowments for the living in 1842, the companion ordinance of endowment for the dead was not introduced into the Church for another thirty-five years. The balance of that former study traced the state of temple work from 1844 to 1877, culminating with the 1877 introduction of endowments for the dead.

The purpose of this sequel study, while reviewing some of the main points of the former paper, is to try to measure both quantitatively and qualitatively the impact this expanded paradigm of temple work had upon the temple consciousness of the Church membership between the years 1877 and 1900. I will conclude by showing that President Wilford Woodruff, so long a staunch defender of the practice of plural marriage, cast the question of continuing with the “Principle” in light of two competing priorities: “Which is the wisest course”—to continue plural marriage and subsequently lose three recently completed temples, and along with them lose the exciting, more expanded vision of salvation for the dead; or to cease the practice of a system of marriage increasingly difficult to defend and maintain against mounting legal, social, and political pressure?

come to pass if there was not something done. I have had this spirit upon me for a long time.¹

The underlying causes of President Wilford Woodruff's Manifesto of 1890, which signaled his intent to end the long-standing practice of Mormon plural marriage, have long been a point of debate. The intense military and political pressures placed upon The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, from the Utah War of 1857 down through to the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887 that disincorporated the Church and threatened to seize all Church properties, including temples, constituted a formidable catalyst for change. One cannot deny the reality that Church leaders had long sought statehood and that there were very real legal, political, and economic pressures upon an intensely unpopular religion to surrender its longtime commitment to the practice of "celestial" or plural marriage.²

This paper is set to show, however, that the fundamental reasons for the Manifesto were not so much political as they were religious. As Jan Shipps has argued, "Outside pressure was merely the catalyst, not the primary cause of this important change that moved Mormonism out of the pioneer period into the modern age."³ Mormon historian Tom Alexander has likewise written, "The 1890 Manifesto was at base religious rather than political or economic. The document announced to the world conditions that had already begun to exist within the

1. From an address by President Wilford Woodruff, Cache Stake Conference, Logan, Utah, November 1, 1891, reported in *Deseret Weekly*, March 14, 1891, and published in the Doctrine and Covenants under Official Declaration 1 as "Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto," 292–93.

2. For the finest, most comprehensive study on Wilford Woodruff and the ending of the practice of plural marriage, see Thomas G. Alexander, *Things in Heaven and Earth: The Life and Times of Wilford Woodruff, a Mormon Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993). See also Edward Leo Lyman, "The Political Background of the Woodruff Manifesto," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24, no. 3 (1991): 23–39. For a study of how important temple work and family history work had become to the Latter-day Saints in the twentieth century, see James B. Allen, Jessie L. Embry, and Kahlile B. Mehr, *Hearts Turned to the Fathers: A History of the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1894–1994* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1995).

3. Jan Shipps, "The Principle Revoked: Mormon Reactions to Wilford Woodruff's 1890 Manifesto," in *In the Whirlpool: The Pre-Manifesto Letters of President Wilford Woodruff to the William Atkin Family, 1885–1890*, ed. Reid L. Neilson (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark, 2011), 123.

Latter-day Saint community. In the most profound sense, the revelation was the religious side of a process of change that would continue down to the present time.”⁴

The thesis of this paper is that a much-enhanced sense of temple consciousness developed first among the leadership and then gradually among the rank-and-file Latter-day Saints in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. There developed during this time a new paradigm in temple worship, a dramatically enlarged place for temple attendance and covenant making, undergirded by a reclamation of temple-centered doctrines and revelations in canonized Mormon scripture. As well established as the practice of plural marriage had become to the Saints, and though vigorously defended over the pulpit while hundreds, if not thousands, of “co-habs” served prison time for living the “Principle,” it eventually gave way to a higher priority. As Wilford Woodruff, fourth President of the Church, penned it, by 1890 the “wisest course” or critical option for the Mormon faithful lay between either continuing the older practice of polygamy on the one hand, or choosing to safeguard and nourish their expanded vision of temple work on the other.

Mormon Temple History: A Short Review: 1844–1873

With the forced departure of the Mormons from Missouri in the winter of 1838–39, they once again built another temple, this time in Nauvoo, Illinois. Begun in 1841 and dedicated in May 1846, the Nauvoo Temple showed a dramatic progression in Mormon temple theology and practice, with the introduction of ordinances not seen before. These included three in particular: first, baptisms for the dead, wherein faithful living Latter-day Saints were baptized vicariously or by proxy for deceased loved ones, ancestors, and friends; second, endowments for the living, in which men and women received through covenant and symbolic ritualistic representation the promise of the divine nature and of heaven’s most sanctifying blessings; and third, eternal marriage, by which a man and his wife (or wives) could be “sealed” together now and in the hereafter “for time and for all eternity.”⁵

4. Thomas G. Alexander, “The Odyssey of a Latter-day Prophet: Wilford Woodruff, the Manifesto of 1890,” in Neilson, *In the Whirlpool*, 95–96.

5. Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 233–65. Leonard described the endowment as follows: “It consisted of the ordinances of washing and anointing, followed by instructions and covenants

A complete understanding of the far-reaching significance of these ordinances, and of their full doctrinal import, did not fully take hold upon the faithful in Nauvoo. "Those who went through the Temple at Nauvoo," Brigham Young recalled in 1851, "know but very little about the endowments. There was no time to learn them and what little they did learn they have most of them forgotten it."⁶ He also said, "Everything at Nauvoo went with a rush. We had to build the Temple with the trowel in one hand, the sword in the other."⁷

Fearing a further escalation of violence and bloodshed in the wake of Joseph Smith's martyrdom in 1844, Brigham Young and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles began moving the Church membership westward in February 1846 but not before over five thousand faithful had received their endowment in the not-yet-completed Nauvoo Temple. "The main and only cause for our tarrying" in Nauvoo, admitted Young, "was to give the brethren those blessings in the Temple for which they have labored so diligently and faithfully to build."⁸

Temple work, however, did not cease with the exodus from Illinois. At Winter Quarters, Wilford Woodruff performed baptisms for the dead in the Missouri River,⁹ and soon after the Mormon pioneers arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in July 1847, Brigham Young identified the spot whereon they would erect, once again in their poverty, yet another temple to their God.¹⁰ Once in the valley, Brigham Young was intent on fostering and

setting forth a pattern or figurative model for life. The teachings began with a recital of the creation of the earth. . . . Participants were reminded that in addition to the Savior's redemptive gift they must be obedient to God's commandments to obtain a celestial glory. Within the context of these gospel instructions, the initiates made covenants of personal virtue and benevolence and of commitment to the Church" (258–59).

6. Quoted in Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–84), 4:6, January 19, 1857.

7. Quoted in Woodruff, *Journal*, 3:259, August 15, 1847.

8. Brigham Young to James Emmett, March 26, 1846, Brigham Young Papers, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

9. Alexander Baugh, "The Practice of Baptism for the Dead Outside of Temples," *Religious Studies Center Newsletter* 13 (September 1998): 3–5. See also Richard E. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri: Winter Quarters, 1846–1852* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 184, 188–90.

10. It must be noted that the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, now called the Community of Christ and headquartered in

preserving the spirit of temple work on a transplanted people fighting hard for survival in their new arid mountain homeland. Besides identifying and marking out a forty-acre temple lot and giving instructions on where to build a new temple, he performed at least one endowment for a living person—Addison Pratt—on Ensign Peak in 1849.¹¹ And well before construction began on the Salt Lake Temple in 1853, the Saints had begun to build a two-story sandstone and adobe Council House on the southwest corner of East Temple (Main) and South Temple Streets in Salt Lake. Well before its completion in 1855, the Council House doubled both as a “state house” or seat of territorial government and as a sacred center for sealings and endowments. Temple ordinances were begun in the Council House as early as 1851. By 1854, at least twenty-two hundred endowments for the living had been administered there.¹²

In 1854, foundation work began on what was first called the “Temple pro tem,” or temporary temple, which came to be later known as the Endowment House.¹³ Located on the northwest corner of Temple Square, the Endowment House opened on May 5, 1855. During the thirty-four-year lifespan of the Endowment House, the unofficial count of ordinances performed there was 134,053 baptisms and confirmations for the

Independence, Missouri, very early on distanced itself from the above-described temple ordinances as without divine authentication. However, it has constructed a very large and beautiful temple of its own near the original 1831 temple lot as identified by Joseph Smith in Independence, Missouri. See Craig S. Campbell, *Images of the New Jerusalem: Latter Day Saint Faction Interpretations of Independence, Missouri* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004).

11. History of Brigham Young, 1849, 107, Church History Library. The issue of occasionally and out of necessity performing temple ordinances outside of a temple was well addressed by John Taylor. “Although it is very important that Temples should be built, the Priesthood is not for the Temple, but the Temples are for the priesthood, and while the Saints are doing all in their power to build Temples, the Lord will accept of ordinances performed, under [certain] conditions, in a place, if it is not a regular temple, that has been especially set apart for those purposes.” From comments by John Taylor at a priesthood meeting of the Salt Lake Stake, November 15, 1877, Salt Lake Stake General Minutes, LR 604 11, 124, Church History Library.

12. Richard E. Bennett, “‘Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept’: Reflections on the 1877 Commencement of the Performance of Endowments and Sealings of the Dead,” *BYU Studies* 44, no. 3 (2005): 48–49.

13. Alonzo Raleigh, Journal, August 4, 1854. See Lamar C. Berrett, “Endowment Houses,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 2:456. See also Bennett, “‘Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept,’” 50.

dead, 68,767 marriage sealings of both living and deceased couples, and 54,170 endowments for the living. No endowments for the dead were performed in the Endowment House.¹⁴ As impressive as these figures might appear, they represent over three decades of temple work—which would average less than nineteen hundred endowments per year, or about one-third the number performed in the Nauvoo Temple in the early weeks of 1846. As tens of thousands of new converts emigrated to Utah, many were scattered throughout the Mormon corridor and found little time and opportunity to travel all the way to Salt Lake City to take advantage of the Endowment House. And notwithstanding the ongoing efforts at building the Salt Lake Temple, the period from 1847 to 1877 witnessed a comparative wilderness retreat from temple labors.¹⁵ Economic self-preservation, difficult desert colonization, arduous missionary work, the gathering of tens of thousands of new converts from overseas and the eastern United States and Canada, plus the unique challenges involved in living the principle of plural marriage—all these and more took priority over temple work.¹⁶

There is no better proof of this eclipse than the fact that the so-called “Mormon Reformation” of 1856–57 said nothing about temple covenant renewal. During this time of religious revitalization, repentance, and zealous recommitment, virtually the entire Church membership was rebaptized “for the renewal of your covenants and remission of your sins.”¹⁷ Wrote Wilford Woodruff in October 1856, “We have had excellent preaching lately by the First Presidency and others. President Young has come out boldly and told this people in the name of the Lord, they must repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. Several wards [congregations] have gone forward en masse [and have] been baptized and renewed

14. Bennett, “‘Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept,’” 50–51; see also James D. Tingen, “The Endowment House, 1855–1889,” unpublished paper, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 15.

15. Speaking at the cornerstone laying of the Salt Lake Temple in 1853, President Brigham Young said, “There are but few, *very few* of the Elders of Israel now on earth, who know the *meaning* of the word *endowment*. To know, they must experience; and to experience, a Temple must be built.” Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 2:31, italics in original.

16. For a full discussion of this topic, see Bennett, “‘Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept,’” 38–77.

17. Howard Clair Searle, “The Mormon Reformation of 1856–1857” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 1956), 67. See Church Historian’s Office, Letterpress Copybook, CR 100 38, p. 398.

their covenants before the Lord, and I believe the fire of a universal reformation in this Territory has been lit and will continue to burn, until a permanent foundation for good works has been laid in our midst.”¹⁸ If Paul Peterson is correct in his scholarly summation that “no other reform movement in the history of the Church was characterized by such ardor, such earnestness, [and] such impetuosity,” then the omission of temple covenant reminders is all the more surprising.¹⁹ Covering everything from obeying the Ten Commandments and the law of tithing to adhering to celestial marriage and personal hygiene, a very long catechism of questions asked members nothing about temple covenants or attending the Endowment House. This list of questions was essentially a temple recommend interview without the temple. In today’s Church, temple attendance and worthiness are synonymous with spiritual rejuvenation and personal obedience—not so among the desert Saints of the 1850s.

The Utah War of 1857 proved a mixed blessing for temple work. On the one hand, those asked to defend the interests of the Church, and who had not yet received their endowments, were directed to do so in the Endowment House.²⁰ Conversely, the Salt Lake Temple was razed and the temple lot plowed over in advance of the approaching United States Army. And for quite some time, while most of the Saints had evacuated Salt Lake City in favor of Provo and other points south, all temple work ceased in the Endowment House.²¹ And with the outbreak of America’s Civil War in 1861, Church leaders said much more about a possible return to Jackson County, Missouri, and of the possibility of rearing there a long-anticipated great temple than they did of building the Salt Lake Temple.²²

The ending of the Civil War and, with it, the dream of returning to Jackson County, along with the coming of the transcontinental railroad, jolted Church leadership into a renewal of temple-building commitment.

18. Wilford Woodruff to the Editor of the *Western Standard*, October 4, 1856, Church Historian’s Office, Letterpress Copybook, CR 100 38, p. 398.

19. Paul H. Peterson, “The Mormon Reformation” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1981; Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2002), 80.

20. Church Historian’s Office, *History of the Church*, 1839–circa. 1888, vol. 28:184.

21. It would appear that endowments recommenced in the Endowment House on August 20, 1859. Church Historian’s Office, *History of the Church*, 1839–circa. 1888, vol. 29:640.

22. For a more complete study of this topic, see Richard E. Bennett, “We Know No North, No South, No East, No West: Interpretations of the Civil War, 1861–1865,” *Mormon Historical Studies* 10, no. 1 (2009).

The building of the transcontinental railroad triggered a vigorous Mormon response to what Brigham Young and other Church leaders saw as the inevitable end to their period of “splendid isolation.” While choosing not to foster a siege mentality, the Saints nevertheless prepared for a cautious welcome to the inexorably advancing technology of the Industrial Revolution. They would brace themselves for the coming onslaught of “Gentile” customs, religions, and thought, as well as new economic priorities in mining and industry. As leading Mormon historian Leonard J. Arrington has so well argued, much of modern Mormon thought and practice developed in answer to the approaching iron horse.²³

Before the joining of the Central and Union Pacific rails at Promontory Point in Utah Territory on May 10, 1869, the Saints had already joined themselves together in an all-out, carefully orchestrated effort to accept the best the new technology had to offer, while protecting themselves from its worst effects. The revitalized School of the Prophets, first organized back in Kirtland, Ohio, and reconstituted in December 1867, consisted of approximately five thousand lay priesthood holders who underbid outside contractors and laid virtually every mile of new track in Utah Territory.

The Women’s Relief Society organization, moribund since its formation in Nauvoo in 1842, was also revitalized in 1867. Placed under the general direction of Eliza R. Snow, a plural wife of Joseph Smith, the Relief Society was soon marshaled into a female force at the local ward and stake levels to ensure a strong and united voice for Mormon women, provide an organized charitable service to assist the poor, and preserve Mormon feminine virtues.²⁴ In November 1869, Brigham Young organized the Young Women’s Retrenchment Society, which was designed to “retrench” or cut back excesses in dress, eating, and speech while combating the degrading influences and counterclaims of the outside world. A similar society was organized for the young men in 1875 under Junius F. Wells. Three years later in 1878, following the inspiration of Aurelia Spencer Rogers, the Primary auxiliary was organized for the benefit of little children throughout the Church. Even the establishment of the Church system of high schools or “academies,” beginning with Brigham Young Academy in 1875 in Provo,

23. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), 235–56.

24. Jill Mulvey Derr, Janath R. Cannon, and Maureen U. Beecher, *Women of Covenant: The Story of Relief Society* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1992); Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 252.

Utah (later Brigham Young University), owed much of its *raison d'être* to encroaching secular thought and outside educational influences.

As Arrington has concluded, "The School of the Prophets and Relief Society managed to prevent, for good or for ill, the immediate and complete assimilation of Mormon institutions, in the years immediately after 1869, by the dominant laissez-faire institutions of postbellum America. At least two decades were to pass before the Great Basin Kingdom was to make substantial accommodation to the more powerful institutions characteristic of America at the turn of the century."²⁵

To this list must now be added the building of new temples and the rise of temple consciousness among the Saints. Perhaps nothing would preserve their way of religious life and distinctive beliefs more effectively than the revival of temple devotions. It surely is not coincidental, facing the coming of the railroad as well as ongoing and frustrating delays in building the Salt Lake Temple, that in 1870, less than a year after Promontory Point, an anxious Brigham Young revealed his plans for the building of the St. George Temple in the arid desert landscape of "Utah's Dixie" in Washington County, some three hundred miles south of Church headquarters.

"The Great Experiment"—the United Order

While the Mormon Reformation gave little more than passing lip service to the importance of the law of consecration and stewardship to Church membership, this was not so with Brigham Young's later effort to reenshrine this way of life in the reinstitution of the "United Order." With its emphasis on economic cooperation, equality, sacrifice, and unity, the law of consecration has a long history in the Church, as far back as Kirtland. It was repeated at Winter Quarters, reiterated without success in the aforementioned Reformation, and made a central tenet of the renewed United Orders of the early 1870s. While most studies of the United Order have emphasized its economic and social aspects,²⁶ the consecration of all of one's time, talent, and means to the Church and the effort to "utterly cease buying" from the Gentiles became a battle cry of Church leaders as early as 1874.²⁷

25. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 256.

26. Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 135.

27. James G. Bleak, *Annals of the Southern Utah Mission*, January 4, 1874, typescript, p. 300, Ms 22894, Church History Library.

The intent of the United Order announced in 1874 was both economic and spiritual. Essentially a cooperative economic movement aimed at thwarting Gentile trade and business, the United Order required each person in the community to contribute his or her property to the Order in return for equivalent capital stock. Members also pledged all of their time, labor, energy, and ability. All such property became subject to the direction of an elected board of management. Furthermore, the Saints pledged to encourage home manufactures, cease importing, and deal only with other members of the Order.²⁸

While the period of depression that followed the Panic of 1873 offered to Church leaders “precisely the opportunity they had desired” to experiment with Mormon economic institutions,²⁹ the United Order, with its emphasis on living the law of consecration, was as much a spiritual renewal and recommitment as it was an economic order. It was designed to prepare a modern Zion “for the return of the City of Enoch at Christ’s Second Coming” and to forge a people one in heart and mind, with no rich or poor among them.

It was not enough simply to participate in this “Order of Enoch,” as it was sometimes called. As evidence of its religious underpinnings, one had to be baptized into it. There is even record of baptism by proxy for the dead into the Order.³⁰ Such baptisms reconfirmed “all former washings and anointings and ordinations,” clearly foreshadowing its place in future temple worship.³¹ As Stake President Joseph A. Young of the Sevier Stake interpreted it, the United Order “was but a stepping stone to that which would be given.”³²

With the completion of the St. George Temple in January 1877, many onlookers saw it as the fulfillment of the ideals and objectives of this

28. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 328.

29. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 323.

30. Kent Huff argues that the first use of the term “United Order” occurred on April 6, 1874. Kent W. Huff, “Brigham Young’s United Order: A Contextual Interpretation” (Provo, Utah: Theological Thinktank, 1994), 110. See also Bernice T. Robinson, Bleak Family Collection, November 26, 1878, Church History Library. Bishops throughout the territory were baptized into the United Order as early as July 1875. Huff, “Brigham Young’s United Order,” 100.

31. Sevier Stake Minutes, July 1, 1875, 101, Church History Library; St. George General Melchizedek Priesthood Minutes, January 26, 1878, Church History Library.

32. From remarks given by Joseph A. Young at priesthood meeting, September 5, 1874, Sevier Stake Miscellaneous Minutes, p. 80, LR 8243, Church History Library.

United Order. They viewed their many financial sacrifices in living it as essential to building the St. George Temple. “We had built the Temple *in the United Order*,” is how one participant described it,³³ which echoed Brigham Young: “This Temple in St. George is being built upon the principles of the United Order.”³⁴

And while it is true that the Order as an economic experiment eventually failed and faded away (John Taylor ended it in 1882), it accomplished much. It promoted thrift, created employment, and assured better, faster development of resources. Again from Arrington: “The United Order . . . helped to keep Utah economically independent of the East longer and more completely than would otherwise have been the case.”³⁵ And spiritually, many managed to live by the precepts of “the great experiment.”³⁶ Its central spiritual emphasis—obedience to the law of consecration—lived on inside the walls of the temple, where it found permanent expression in temple ordinances. Brigham Young was reported to have said, “Several attempts had been made to work in the United Order, and almost as many failures were the result. In consequence of tradition and the weakness of our human nature, we could not bring our feelings to obey this Holy requirement. The spirit had prompted him to see if the brethren would do anything by way of an approach to it, *and hence we had commenced to build Temples*, which was a very necessary work and which was centering the feelings of the people *for a still further union of effort*.”³⁷ “What was the United Order?” asked Brigham Young’s son Apostle Brigham Young Jr. in April 1877. “It was the order of heaven, the system which prevailed among the heavenly hosts, as we should find when we get to where God and His Christ dwelt. . . . The progress of the members of this Church who will not receive and carry out the principles of the United Order is at an end; and this temple [Saint George] will be a means to test the faithfulness and purity of the Latter-day Saints.”³⁸

33. From remarks by Marius Ensign, January 26, 1878, St. George Melchizedek Priesthood Minutes and Records, January 26, 1878, LR 7836 13 vol. 3, p. 292, Church History Library; italics added.

34. Bleak, “Annals of the Southern Utah Mission,” January 10, 1875.

35. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 338.

36. Sevier Stake Miscellaneous Minutes, 1875, LR 8243 11, p. 42.

37. Remarks by Brigham Young at a Salt Lake Stake priesthood meeting, August 11, 1877, Salt Lake Stake General Minutes, LR 604 11, p. 45, Church History Library, italics added.

38. Bleak, “Annals of the Southern Utah Mission,” April 8, 1877. John Taylor gave a remarkable address in the same month of April 1877, discoursing upon the

**“To Turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children”—
the Canonization of Doctrine and Covenants Section 110**

If the United Order was an attempt to revitalize the spirit of the law of consecration, then the canonization of section 110 into the 1876 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants likewise greatly furthered the cause of temple work in the minds of the Mormon faithful.

Well known to the modern Mormon reader is the sacred place section 110 now holds in the corpus of Mormon scripture. It tells of the return of Moses, Elias, and Elijah to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple in April 1836 and their restoration of specific keys, prophetic commissions, and temple-related covenants and administrations. In the vision, Elijah declared, “Behold, the time has fully come, which was spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he [Elijah] should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse” (D&C 110:14–15). With this declaration came the understanding of the place for temple ordinances for and in behalf of the dead who, in accordance with Mormon claims, live on hereafter in a paradise/spirit world existence. There they await the opportunity to be taught the fullness of the gospel of Christ, though such saving ordinances as baptism would yet have to be performed for them by proxy by living mortals in a sacred temple.

Though referred to in modern discourse as the scriptural cornerstone of temple work, prior to 1876 this revelation was virtually unknown. In a remarkably candid new thesis, Trever Anderson has shown that Joseph

new horizons of temple work as the means of attaining the spiritual goals of the United Order of Enoch, the Second Coming of Christ, and the return of Enoch and his holy city to his temple yet to be reared in the New Jerusalem. “This is the first temple which has been reared since the days of Enoch,” he said, that captured and performed all the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood. “The members of [Enoch’s] Zion, by their faithfulness, attained the power to be translated . . . and were caught up. We are engaged in the building up of a Zion—and to perfect ourselves temporally and spiritually. . . . All the righteous men who have lived as Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Seers, and Revelators, are all deeply interested in the work in which we are engaged. . . . They desire us to cooperate with them in administering the word and ordinances of life and salvation to the living and for the dead.” Taylor concluded his remarks by saying, “It is the duty of the Latter-day Saints to prepare themselves to unite with the Zion of Enoch, when that Zion shall return.” From a discourse of John Taylor, recorded in Bleak, “Annals of the Southern Utah Mission,” April 1, 1877.

Smith never directly referenced it in any of his later sermons. Neither, apparently, did Brigham Young or his counselors for most of his presidency. In fact, it was not published until November 1852 in the *Deseret News* by direction of Willard Richards. What led to its canonization in 1880 is not yet entirely clear, but Orson Pratt, a member of the original Quorum of the Twelve formed in 1835, was the driving force in its preservation and eventual canonization.³⁹

The significance of section 110 to modern Latter-day Saint temple work can hardly be overstated. Speaking of it, John Taylor, future Church President, said in Salt Lake City in October 1877:

Why a desire to build Temples? What for? That we may administer therein in these ordinances in which we are so greatly interested. You heard through Brother Woodruff how many more administrations there had been for the dead than for the living. This is because Elijah had been here and has delivered the keys that turn the hearts of the children to the fathers and we are beginning to feel after them. Hence we are building a temple here, one in Sanpete, another in Cache Valley, and we have one already built in Saint George. . . . Do we devote our labor and our means? Yes, we do; and it is this spirit which rests upon us that is prompting us to do it, and it will not rest until these things are done.⁴⁰

One month later, James L. Hart, a local Church leader from Bear Lake, said, “An angel came to the earth with the everlasting Gospel.” [And Elijah] “had also come and revealed the doctrine of the baptism for the

39. Trevor R. Anderson, “Doctrine and Covenants Section 110: From Vision to Canonization” (master’s thesis, Brigham Young University, 2010), 12–13, 54–55, 97–99. Orson Pratt may well have been the first General Authority to publicly sermonize on the vision of Moses, Elias, and Elijah in August 1859. As Anderson notes, at Brigham Young’s death in August 1877, Pratt was in England overseeing the printing of the Book of Mormon on new electrotype plates. With the consent of John Taylor, then president of the Quorum of the Twelve, Pratt printed the Doctrine and Covenants using the same latest technology. Taylor recommended the inclusion of cross references and explanatory notes and during their communication agreed to include several new sections heretofore not incorporated. These included not only sections 109 and 110 with their emphasis on the Kirtland Temple, but also sections 2, 121–23, 132, and other temple-related revelations. This new 1876 edition was finally ratified by conference vote in October 1880. (In all, twenty-six sections were added: 2, 13, 77, 85, 87, 108–11, 113–18, 120–23, 125–26, 129–32, and 136.)

40. Journal History of the Church, Dec. 12, 1877, Church History Library (chronology of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830–present), microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

dead, and that the hearts of the fathers should be turned to the children, and vice versa [and] for that reason temples had been built and others were in course of erection. Although it was a stumbling block to the world, yet such had been revealed.”⁴¹ Many more such newfound, local sentiments could be included if space permitted.

Elder B. H. Roberts, a leading theologian and historian of late nineteenth-century Mormonism and prominent Church leader, summarized the impact this long-neglected vision was beginning to have upon his fellow believers:

While the Gospel is preached in the spirit world, it appears from all that can be learned upon the subject that all the outward ordinances, as baptisms, confirmations, ordinations, anointings, sealings, etc. must be performed vicariously here upon the earth for those who accept the gospel in the world of spirits. This is the work that children may do for their progenitors, and upon learning this, the hearts of the children are turned to their fathers; and the fathers in the spirit world, learning that they are dependent upon the actions of the posterity for the performance of the ordinances of salvation, their hearts are turned to the children; and thus the work that was predicted should be performed by Elijah.⁴²

My argument, therefore, is that section 110 came into its own only after the completion of the St. George Temple. It became the touchstone of temple-related discussion and provided the necessary intellectual, doctrinal, and scriptural justification and framework for those new temple ordinances now to be enjoined.

“A Perfect Form of Endowments”

John Taylor’s reference to the St. George Temple as “the first temple” since Enoch to include all the ordinances of the Melchizedek Priesthood likely pertains to the fact that endowments for the dead began in St. George, Utah, on January 11, 1877. While the Kirtland Temple was a place of preparatory washings and anointings, and the Nauvoo Temple one of baptisms for the dead and endowments and sealings *for the living*, it was in the St. George Temple where endowments *for the dead* commenced.

Without trespassing upon the sacred nature of temple worship or repeating unnecessarily the main points of my earlier study, it is

41. From remarks made by James L. Hart, Logan Utah Cache Stake General Minutes, 1860–1978, LR 1280 11 vol. 2, p. 48.

42. B. H. Roberts, *The Gospel: An Exposition of Its First Principles* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1888 and 1913), 253.

nevertheless imperative to grasp the uniquely Mormon belief that the temple endowment is a supernal gift, a priesthood ordinance, and a covenant of eternal life. What now was revolutionary in Mormon thought was the application of this ordinance for the dead by those still living.

Such endowments for the living had been first administered in Joseph Smith's Red Brick Store in Nauvoo in 1843 and shortly thereafter in the Nauvoo Temple. They were later bestowed in the Salt Lake Council House and in the Endowment House. Neither place, however, was considered a true temple, and both were mere stepping-stones to something greater. Speaking at the dedication of the Council House, Brigham Young admitted such when he declared, "It is absolutely necessary that we should have a temple to worship the Most High God in. A Tabernacle is to assemble the multitude for meetings but a Temple is to gather the priesthood in that they may do the work of the Lord. . . . Is there a place prepared to go and redeem our dead? No there is not. We give Endowments here, but it is like trying to step on the top round first. . . . We do these things until we have time to build a Temple."⁴³

Said Brigham Young in 1873 during the construction of the St. George Temple, "The Lord permitted us to erect an Endowment House. . . . This we have for many years, and many ordinances have been administered therein; but there are other important ordinances, which have not been, and cannot be, administered except in a Temple built and dedicated to the Most High for that progress."⁴⁴

Groundbreaking for the St. George Temple occurred November 9, 1871, with Brigham Young in attendance and George A. Smith dedicating the site.⁴⁵ Construction was completed five years later. A jubilant Brigham Young then declared, "All I want is to see this people devote their means and interest to the building up [of] the Kingdom of God, erecting temples, and in them officiate for the living and the dead . . . that they may be crowned sons and daughters of the Almighty."⁴⁶

While the ordinance of baptism for the dead, first performed in Nauvoo, recommenced in the St. George Temple on January 9, 1877, it was

43. Woodruff, *Journal*, 4:123, April 9, 1852.

44. First Presidency and the Twelve, to the Bishops and Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Residing in the Various Settlements throughout These Mountains, October 25, 1876, Saint George Letter file, Church History Library. For more on this matter, see Bennett, "Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept," 38–77.

45. Church Historian's Office, General Church Minutes, 1839–1877, CR 100 318.

46. *Deseret News*, September 6, 1876.

two days later, on Thursday, January 11, that endowments for the dead were performed for the very first time. It was, as George A. Smith put it, “the beginning of an immense work.”⁴⁷ And Wilford Woodruff referred to the new system as “a perfect form of endowments.”⁴⁸

More than any other person, Wilford Woodruff must be credited as the architect of modern Mormon temple work, with its emphasis on recurring temple attendance to perform not only baptisms for the dead but also the much longer and more involved ordinance of endowments for the dead. Whereas previously one received his or her own living endowment once and for all, now the faithful would be called upon to return to the temple over and over again to perform that ordinance vicariously for their departed loved ones and friends.

In 1877 Wilford Woodruff proclaimed a vision while in St. George of the founding fathers of America and other world leaders and initiated on their behalf the ordinance of endowments for the dead.⁴⁹ It was in St. George that hundreds of his family and friends, including his long-deceased mother, were likewise blessed. It was in St. George that President Woodruff also began wearing pure white doeskin temple clothing in representation of the purity of temple worship, thereby setting a standard of dress for later generations to follow. And it was in St. George that congregations of temple “companies” began to “go through the temple” for scores, if not hundreds, of deceased, all at one time. As one temple worker, Alonzo Raleigh, described it, “Engaged all day and evening with President Woodruff, [John D. T.] McAllister, and [L. John] Nuttall under the direction of President B. Young in reorganizing parts of the endowment. . . . At work in the endowments. 136 persons were passed through. The house was tolerably crowded, though we got through in good season, having two vails to work at which doubles the capacity of the House in that respect, a thing not practiced before as far as we have any knowledge.”⁵⁰

This expanded vision of temple work soon became a labor of love and for many “a joy unspeakable.”⁵¹ Said Karl G. Maeser, founding principal of Brigham Young Academy in 1877, “The life-giving power of Temples is apparent to the Saints. . . . The redemption of our dead and the living

47. St. George Melchizedek Priesthood Minutes and Records, 1863–1973, LR 7836 13, December 25, 1874.

48. Woodruff, *Journal*, 7:340, March 21, 1877.

49. Woodruff, *Journal*, 7:367–369, August 19 and 21, 1877.

50. Alonzo Raleigh, *Journal*, February 12 and 15, 1877, Church History Library.

51. Woodruff, *Journal*, 7:333, March 1, 1877.

depends upon the erection of Temples.”⁵² Henry Eyring, a counselor in the St. George Stake presidency, “spoke of the building of temples and the ordinances attended to therein, that we [were] the first who could enjoy the privileges of entering into a temple and officiating therein.”⁵³ Addison Everett spoke in meeting about the work he was doing “for his old friends and neighbors,” some of whom he claimed “had appeared to him in his dreams” and “he was delighted to work for them.”⁵⁴ “In laboring for [our dead relatives and friends], no one can steal our labors,” said William Smith of St. George.⁵⁵ And Lucy B. Young said “her heart was full in the prospect of being received by [her dead relatives] with open arms, as all would be by those who could not do the work for themselves. She desired to live to redeem hundreds of her dead.”⁵⁶

“The dead are upon our minds day and night,” said John D. T. McAllister, first counselor in the St. George Temple presidency. “The brethren and sisters up north will be coming down by hundreds.”⁵⁷ Later he corrected himself: “They would come by thousands.”⁵⁸ In just its first year of operation, 30,384 baptisms for the dead and 13,168 endowments for the dead were performed in the St. George Temple—one-fourth the total number of ordinances in the Endowment House over its entire thirty-four years of operation.⁵⁹ Thus temple worship became a newfound recurring experience, a constant invitation for covenant renewal and changing personal behavior, and a place to return to repeatedly.

Commenting on this newfound enthusiasm for temple work, John Taylor called it a “movement” among the people and the leadership. “Why did President Young feel so?” he asked. “Because the spirit of God

52. Provo Utah Stake General Minutes, 1852–1977, LR 9629 11, Church History Library.

53. St. George Melchizedek Priesthood Minutes and Records, vol. 3, August 25, 1877.

54. St. George Melchizedek Priesthood Minutes and Records, LR 7836 13, vol. 3:315, June 29, 1878.

55. St. George Melchizedek Priesthood Minutes and Records, LR 7836 13, May 25, 1878.

56. St. George Stake Relief Society Minutes and Records, 1868–1973, LR 7836 14; July 5, 1877.

57. St. George Melchizedek Priesthood Minutes and Records, LR 7836 13; May 26, 1877.

58. St. George Melchizedek Priesthood Minutes and Records, LR 7836 13; February 26, 1881.

59. St. George Temple Records Book, 1877–1899, CR 343 57, pp. 330–342, Church History Library.

rested upon him, prompting him to move in this direction. Why did the brethren of these several quorums so readily respond to the call? Because the same spirit rested upon them . . . and the saints generally are all interested in this movement, [and have] evinced the same desire to accomplish this work of Temple building, as the saints of foreign lands do to gather to Zion.”⁶⁰

“Our Children Have Not Been Traditionated”

And come by the thousands they did. Furthering the augmented role of temple participation was the calling of scores of male and female temple workers. In the first year of operations of the St. George Temple, forty-six male and sixty-three female temple workers put in a total of 7,141 volunteer shifts. Wilford Woodruff attended 84 days; his first counselor, John D. T. McAllister, attended 248 days. In addition, women contributed 674 cleaning days in 1878 with men serving as night watchmen and Sunday guards.⁶¹

O. H. Berg was one of the very first temple workers called from Provo in early 1877 to travel the two-hundred-mile distance south to work in the new temple. “It is a miracle to erect such a House in the midst of a desert,” he observed, “and by a people poor and driven into a wilderness.”⁶² David John, also of Provo, was another such worker. Serving a temple mission in 1882, he performed hundreds of endowments for the dead for both his own ancestors and hundreds of others. “I have learned that there were given no endowments for the dead in Kirtland or Nauvoo,” he recorded with some surprise. “They only baptized for the dead, and gave endowments for the living.”⁶³

The women especially found new meaning for themselves in temple worship. “We cannot go out to preach,” said Elizabeth Morse in a St. George Relief Society meeting in April 1878, “but we can go to the temple to redeem the dead.”⁶⁴ In an age prior to women serving full-time

60. “Discourse Delivered by President John Taylor,” *Deseret News*, April 17, 1878, p. 2.

61. St. George Temple Records Book, CR 343 57, pp. 330–342.

62. From remarks by O. H. Bert, March 20, 1877, Provo Utah Central Stake General Minutes, 1852–1977, LR 9629 11, Church History Library.

63. David John Diaries, June 27, 1882, vol. 1, p. 353, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

64. St. George Stake Relief Society Minutes and Records, LR 7836 14; April 4, 1878.

Church missions, temple work became a well-attended outlet of new-found devotion, a form of “missionary labor” among Mormon women.⁶⁵ Seventy-nine female ordinance workers were called in St. George between 1877 and 1890 with a female president over such.⁶⁶ Margaret Mustard spoke in one Relief Society meeting of how thankful she was “to have been brought to St. George where a temple of the Lord has been erected, and to have been made a partaker in its blessings.”⁶⁷ Said a Sister Durham of Parowan, “When I came here to work in the temple I felt my weakness, I was afraid I could not learn what I came here for, but the Lord has blest me, and I am doing better than I thought.”⁶⁸ And declared Minerva W. Snow, “I believe that having the Temple here has wrought great changes in this people.”⁶⁹

With the Latter-day Saints beginning to flock to the temple in ever-greater numbers came the augmented sense of their being “Saviors on Mount Zion” for generations past. Though vicarious work for the dead was not a new concept to the Saints (since baptisms for the dead had begun back in Nauvoo), their place as partners in the salvation process was more widely spoken of in meetings and conferences after 1877 than ever before. “We more or less hold the keys for our dead,” said Franklin D. Richards in Richfield in 1881. “There [have] been baptized for the dead more than 100,000 in the St. George Temple. Men and women cannot receive their exaltation until they are sealed together. How can we become Saviors unless we save somebody[?] We can become Saviors by being baptized and receiving endowments for our dead. . . . Our children have not been traditionated and we should teach them the principles of the Gospel.”⁷⁰

A corollary to these newfound temple blessings and opportunities was a sense of guilt some Church leaders increasingly laid upon the

65. St. George Stake Relief Society Minutes and Records, LR 7836 14; March 6, 1879.

66. Female Ordinance Workers [St. George Temple], c. 1917, CR 343 3, Church History Library.

67. St. George Stake Relief Society Minutes and Records, LR 7836 14; July 6, 1883.

68. St. George Stake Relief Society Minutes and Records, LR 7836 14; October 2, 1884.

69. St. George Stake Relief Society Minutes and Records, LR 7836 14; February 1, 1883.

70. From a talk by Franklin D. Richards at the Sevier Stake conference, Richfield, November 26, 1881, Sevier Stake Historical Record, 1880–83, Church History Library.

membership for not participating. Said one local leader, "Our friends will ask us when we go behind the veil why we did not relieve them from bondage and if we have neglected to do so we shall feel very sorry."⁷¹ Commensurate with the joy many felt in their newfound temple service was the counterbalancing unease that others not yet so converted may have felt. Good or bad, positive or negative, it was all part of a growing temple sensibility.

If the catechisms of the aforementioned Mormon Reformation had effected a new level of Church commitment without the temple, so now did the bishops' and stake presidents' temple recommend interviews. What impact increased temple attendance had on personal behavior may be impossible to gauge, but certainly such worthiness interviews came more often and more regularly than ever before. By today's standards, these interviews were sometimes given leniently "as from a feeling of sympathy" or as encouragement for many to get to the temple for their first time. Still, the increasingly widespread use of temple recommend interviews imposed a growing sense of personal accountability, obedience, faithfulness, and integrity. The payment of tithing was a vital part of such interviews. "It was absolutely necessary to require payment of tithing and donations," one stake president instructed his bishops.⁷² And he implied that failure to pay tithing would not only disqualify temple attendance but would also lengthen out their days of persecution: "We may expect our enemies to continue to persecute us and pass laws against this people, unless we pay our tithing."⁷³

Temple attendance also played an ever-greater role in moral behavior and sexual conduct.⁷⁴ "Don't give recommends to the unworthy," said

71. From a talk by Eldon J. Pierce, Sevier Stake Historical Record, November 3, 1884, vol. 4:27–28.

72. From a talk by President F. Spencer, September 20, 1879, given at Richfield, Utah Territory, Sevier Stake Historical Record "B," 1879–85, LR 8243 11, vol. 3:25.

73. From remarks by F. Spencer, August 27, 1882, Sevier Stake Historical Record. Up until 1891 it was still the custom for the President of the Church to countersign or endorse all temple recommends. "A Letter to the Presidents of Stakes and Bishops of Wards," in *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1833–1964*, comp. James R. Clark, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 3:228. See also Devery Scott Anderson, ed., *Development of Latter-day Saint Temple Worship, 1846–2000: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011), 50–54. Anderson's book is a compilation of many temple-related matters and policies.

74. From remarks by George Teasdale, December 2, 1882, Sevier Stake Historical Record, 1879–80, LR 8243 11, vol. 3:214.

Elder George Teasdale. Even in matters of fashion choice, temples had an influence. “Do not come to the temple with the fashion of the world on you,” said John D. T. McAllister in St. George.⁷⁵ And by the late 1880s, adherence to the Word of Wisdom—abstaining from tobacco, liquor, and hot drinks—was becoming part of temple recommend interviews.⁷⁶ The point is that increased temple attendance imposed a reformation of behavior among thousands of believing Mormons anxious to do their part in redeeming the dead. Tithing, the Word of Wisdom, personal purity, and other expressions of obedience and worthiness played out upon the everyday lives of thousands of men and women who previously had not been so challenged. Recurring temple attendance would now accomplish what the Mormon Reformation had set out to do some twenty years before.

“Where Would We Be without a Temple”

The ink had scarcely dried on the newly written instructions for endowments for the dead at St. George before Brigham Young announced the creation of several new stakes in Utah Territory and the temple plot dedication of two other temples, in Sanpete and Cache counties. Leaving St. George on Monday, April 16, 1877, for his home in Salt Lake City, an ailing Brigham Young stopped off at Manti to dedicate the temple site “on a stone quarry hill,” which had been previously selected.⁷⁷ As in St. George, “the rules of the United Order . . . were read and adopted for renewal of our covenants wherein all former washings and anointings were renewed.”⁷⁸ The cornerstone laying for the Manti Temple occurred on August 3, 1878. A decade later, fully five years longer than anticipated because of the “tightness for means,” the Manti Temple was finally dedicated May 21–23, 1888, with over five thousand people in attendance.⁷⁹

75. St. George Stake Relief Society Meeting Minutes, LR 7836 14; December 6, 1877.

76. Anderson, *Development of Latter-day Saint Temple Worship*, 83.

77. Journal History, April 16, 1877. Brigham Young died August 29, 1877. The site for the Manti Temple had actually been located in the summer of 1875 with Joseph A. Young as original architect. “It was resolved” at a council meeting in Ephraim “that the pure in heart should build that temple.”

78. Sevier Stake Miscellaneous Minutes, July 1, 1875, LR 8243 11, vol. 1:101.

79. “At Manti,” *Deseret News*, May 23, 1888, p. 5. Many are the accounts of Pentecost-like manifestations at the Manti Temple dedication services, not unlike those recorded at Kirtland fifty-two years before. Some claimed to have seen Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and John Taylor in attendance. “George Q.

At a special conference back in Salt Lake City on May 12, 1877, John Taylor spoke of his recent trip through the southern Utah territory, and in visiting the people he had “discovered a strong desire among them” to build more temples.⁸⁰

Meanwhile, the site for the Logan Temple in northern Utah Territory, “on a piece of table land immediately east of the city,” was selected May 17, 1877, with Charles Ora Card, superintendent of construction, and Truman O. Angell Jr., architect. On the very next day at precisely 12 o’clock noon, groundbreaking occurred at the southeast corner. Orson Pratt knelt “near the broken ground” and offered the dedicatory prayer with both Brigham Young and John Taylor in attendance.⁸¹ In the last half of 1877, Cache County Saints contributed \$46,212 to the construction effort.⁸² President John Taylor, Young’s successor, dedicated the Logan Temple seven years later on May 17, 1884, four years before the completion of the Manti Temple. Meanwhile, construction continued apace on the Salt Lake Temple, which would not be completed until 1893. Whereas it had taken the early Saints almost thirty years to build their first temple in Utah Territory, it would take only sixteen more years to complete the next three. Said Abraham O. Smoot, president of the Utah Stake in Provo, just two weeks after the completion of the Logan Temple, “We are just beginning to have our eyes opened to the importance of this work. I look forward to the time when other temples will be completed throughout the valleys of these mountains,” including one, he predicted, “on the beautiful plains north of this city [Provo].”⁸³

Consequently, 1877—the same year Brigham Young died—marked a major turning point in the history of Mormon temple work, so much so that the Church-owned *Deseret News* editorialized as follows: “A gentleman who lately passed through Sanpete County informed us that he never saw so great a unanimity of sentiment and action among any people, upon the accomplishment of any object, as is being manifested in that locality in the matter of the Manti Temple. We understand a

Cannon indicated that there was no time when heavenly manifestations would be more likely to be given than at the dedication of a Temple.” St. George Stake General Minutes, May 27, 1888, LR 7836 11 vol. 17, Church History Library.

80. “Special Conference,” *Deseret News*, May 16, 1877, p. 12.

81. Journal History, May 18, 1877.

82. Logan Utah Cache Stake General Minutes, 1860–1978, LR 1280 11, January/February 1878, vol. 2:53, Church History Library.

83. From remarks by Abraham O. Smoot at the quarterly stake conference, May 31, 1884, Utah Stake General Minutes, LR 9629 11, Church History Library.

similar feeling and determination prevail in the northern part of the Territory in relation to the Temple at Logan.”⁸⁴ This temple-building fever captured the hearts and imaginations as well as the sacrifices of thousands. It was a case of the temples catching up to the people—they were now being built where the people were living throughout the territory. The proximity of the temples to the major centers of population was an essential factor explaining the growth of temple work.

Completing the three remaining temples may have been the grand objective, but including as many men, women, and children as possible in the needed sacrifices and labors to build them was hardly less important. Horace S. Eldridge of Provo related to the Saints who sacrificed to erect the Nauvoo Temple, despite “their sickness and poverty,” and spoke of “the reluctance we would have, or experience, on entering the Temple of the Lord if we had not committed to the same.”⁸⁵ The goal was to create a pervasive temple mind-set among the people. Wilford Woodruff admitted as much when he said, “We would like to see the names of every man, woman, and child in the Church recorded in the Archives of the Temple as having contributed towards its erection and completion.”⁸⁶

Local Church records show that while hundreds of workers dedicated their time and labor to the building of these temples, several thousand others gave of their money and means. Masons, quarrymen, freighters, and carpenters came from Fayette, Salina, Richfield, Glenwood, Monroe, Annabella, Prattville, and scores of other wards and communities to work on the Manti Temple. These volunteers answered the call for specifically trained laborers, often donating labor for weeks or even months at a time and using tools they themselves usually furnished.⁸⁷ In return, the members of the various United Orders and wards supplied the workers with the necessary grains, vegetables, and other needed commodities.

Each stake in the newly drawn temple districts was levied a “large appropriation” or assessment by Church headquarters, to be paid in cash or by contributions-in-kind. Each adult was asked to donate fifty cents monthly, and this at a time when bread cost four cents a loaf and a

84. “Local and Other Matters,” *Deseret News*, June 20, 1877, p. 1.

85. General Minutes of the Provo Utah Central Stake, March 11, 1979, LR 9629 11 Part 3.

86. *Deseret News*, October 26, 1887, p. 6.

87. Sevier Stake Historical Record, November 7, 1874, vol. 2, p. 75, LR 8243 11.

TABLE 1. Temple Donations*

Potatoes	Mutton	"Home Goods"	Oats	Leather
Flour	Cabbage	Dried Apples	Molasses	Coffee
Butter	Pottery Ware	Onions	Quilts	Tobacco
Pork	Shoes	Peas	Socks	Hay
Cheese	Apples	Cucumbers	Honey	Chickens
Peaches	Wine	Melons	Flannel	Barley
Wheat	Soap	Doz. Eggs	Salt	Tallow
Eggs	Yarn	Corn	Guarding hours	
Carrots	Fish	Brooms	Blacksmithing services	
Beef	Preserves	Grapes	Days of labor	

* St. George Temple Donations, CR 343/1 Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. Used with Permission.

common laborer's wages in New York were ninety cents a day.⁸⁸ As seen in table 1, the kinds of donations were long and varied, with everything from potatoes, cabbage, and dried apples to quilts, coffee, tobacco, and blacksmithing services.⁸⁹ Apostle Lorenzo Snow even advised the sisters to devote the proceeds of the sale of their "Sunday eggs" to the construction effort.⁹⁰ Because of these sacrifices, a widespread and deepening sense of temple building grasped the Saints, to the point that A. K. Thurber, counselor in the Sevier Stake presidency, could say, "With all our institutions and commandments we have received, where would we be without a temple wherein we can receive blessings in behalf of our dead."⁹¹

The construction of these temples, each at a minimum cost of approximately \$500,000 (the Salt Lake Temple considerably more), and associated tabernacles in St. George and Logan, came at a time of severe financial difficulty. The Church was already saddled with rapidly

88. Sevier Stake Historical Record, 1880–83, February 26, 1881, vol. 4, p. 52; also September 24, 1882, p. 237. LR 8243 11. For wages, see "The Labor Market," (San Francisco) *Daily Evening Bulletin*, February 9, 1878, p. 1.

89. St. George Temple Donations, 1873–1901, CR 343 1, Church History Library.

90. St. George Stake General Minutes, LR 7836 11, vol. 16, June 1, 1885.

91. Sevier Stake Historical Record, 1880–83, October 8, 1882, vol. 4, p. 240, LR 8243 11.

TABLE 2. Statistical Report of the Utah Central Stake of Zion (Utah County), August 31, 1877

<i>Ward</i>	<i>Families</i>	<i>Baptisms</i>	<i>Marriages</i>	<i>Tithe Payers</i>	<i>Temple Donors</i>	<i>Total Members</i>
Provo 1st	135	41	2	159	126	543
Provo 2nd	81	4	—	78	55	323
Provo 3rd	85	17	2	53	37	328
Provo 4th	147	66	2	125	40	662
Provo 5th	34	7	—	15	30	144
Springville	318	18	—	234	214	1,152
Spanish Fork	346	56	1	315	65	1,473
Salem	85	6	1	43	31	416
Payson	357	40	5	243	212	1,701
Spring Lake	20	2	—	20	20	90
Santaquin	125	36	—	110	102	494
Cedar Valley	87	47	—	57	85	388
Lehi	224	24	4	181	64	851
Alpine	49	2	—	55	30	262
Amer. Fork	244	56	2	157	35	1,221
Goshen	74	—	—	65	48	245
Pl. Grove	264	74	5	212	168	1,210
Totals	2,685	496	24	2,122	1,362	11,513

rising legal costs incurred in defending both Church corporation and numerous individual Church members who were charged with unlawful cohabitation—meaning plural marriage—under the Edmunds Act of 1882. Such an ambitious building project came during one of the most financially stressed times in Church history.

Table 2 is a representation of how pervasive financial contributions became. These figures, taken from the records of the Utah Central Stake, which was some distance removed from any of the temples, show the number of “temple donors” as of August 1877 as compared to tithe payers. In this typical stake, with a membership of over 11,500, there were 2,685 families. Of these, 2,122 (79 percent) were tithe payers, and 1,362 (almost 50 percent) were also temple donors. If such figures hold for the other stakes, half the adult population of the Church was donating cash to temple building projects in addition to their tithing donations. Such

sacrifices, even if small actual amounts, are evidence of the widespread growth in temple awareness and focus among the Latter-day Saints in the 1870s and 1880s.⁹²

What caught the eye of the regular member of the Church was not just the economics and sacrifices involved in building the new temples; there were also reports of highly spiritual events. John D. T. McAllister reported on the dedication of the Manti Temple in 1888. "Many heavenly manifestations were given at the dedication," he said, comparing the Pentecostal display at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple over fifty years before with what was now happening at the Manti Temple. "Heavenly singing was heard by some, and others saw heavenly sights."⁹³ News of such things spread far and fast among the Saints.

And what was the end result? As evidenced in table 3, the number of temple ordinances performed for both the living and the dead in all four Utah temples between January 1, 1877, and the end of 1898 totaled over two million. Note the large number of baptisms for the dead—over 965,000, or six times the number performed in the Endowment House (134,053) over a longer period of time. If the corresponding figures from the Nauvoo Temple and Endowment House are added in, there were still five times as many baptisms for the dead performed between 1877 and 1898 as in all the years previously.

Of special interest to our study is the number of endowments for the dead, which began in the St. George Temple in 1877. During this formative period through 1898, the number of such endowments totaled 488,451, some thirteen times the number of living endowments performed in temples and nine times the number of living endowments performed in the Salt Lake Council House and Endowment House combined over a thirty-five-year period. In addition, over 143,000 sealings (marriages) of deceased couples took place. Thus, the Mormon faithful entered their temples for proxy endowment work half a million

92. President Moses Thatcher of the Cache Stake in Logan reported that within a short time of the announcement of a proposed Logan temple, the Cache Valley Stake contributed \$22,213 towards its construction; from Bear Lake \$7,428, and from Box Elder \$4,275. By the end of 1877, the corresponding total figure of temple donations was \$46,212. From a talk by Moses Thatcher, November 3 and 4, 1877, Minutes of the Quarterly Conference of the Cache Valley Stake, Logan Utah Cache Stake Minutes, LR 1280 11, vol. 2, p. 20, 53, Church History Library.

93. From a report by President John D. T. McAllister, June 16, 1888, St. George Utah Stake Minutes, LR 7836 11 vol. 17, Church History Library.

TABLE 3. Ordinances in the Four Temples, from the Commencement to December 31, 1898¹

	St. George Temple from Jan. 1877		Logan Temple from 1884		Manti Temple from 1888		Salt Lake Temple from 1892		Totals	
	Living	Dead	Living	Dead	Living	Dead	Living	Dead	Living	Dead
<i>Baptisms, First</i>	881	278,060	1,211	291,181	1,225	187,851		208,332	3,317	965,424
<i>Baptisms, Renewals</i>	1,086		3,740		4,452				9,278	
<i>Baptisms, Health</i>	3,204		7,717		13,779		5,340		30,040	
<i>Endowments</i>	6,467	131,654	16,339	143,451	6,489	98,541	9,157	114,805	38,452	488,451
<i>Ordinations</i>	1,241	52,115	304	58,284	316	41,981	104	45,479	1,965	197,859
<i>Marriages/ Sealings</i>	3,402	42,164	8,036	37,160	3,230	34,499	3,963	29,277	18,631	143,100
<i>Children to Parents</i>	4,105	6,085	11,045	11,540	7,046	15,706	8,337	27,465	30,533	60,796
<i>Adoptions</i>	517	6,162	168	421	443	6,095	74	700	1,202	13,378
<i>Other</i>	1,350	1,427	1,520	767	1,019	526	1,312	703	5,201	3,423
Totals	22,253	517,664	50,080	542,804	37,999	385,199	28,287	426,761	Grand Total: 2,011,050²	
Totals in Each Temple	539,920		592,884		423,198		455,048			

1. Report, December 31, 1898, Church Historian's Letterpress Copybooks (1842?-1992), CR 100 39, Church History Library. Used with permission. The figures for the St. George Temple are substantiated in the St. George Temple Records Book, 1877-1899, CR 343 57, Church History Library.

2. These figures do not include those ordinances performed in either the Salt Lake Council House or the Endowment House. At least 2,200 endowments for the living were performed in the Council House 1851-1854. And in the Endowment House, 134,053 baptisms for the dead, 68,767 marriage sealings of both living and deceased couples, and 54,170 endowments for the living were performed between 1855 and 1889. See "Endowment House Records 1851-1885," Church History Library. See also Tingen, "The Endowment House, 1855-1889."

more times than they would have otherwise. With each endowment session lasting three to four hours, plus the substantial travel time to and from, one may begin to see the new and increased time commitment to temple attendance.⁹⁴ There were now so many more reasons to return to the temple than ever before. The ordinance of endowment for the dead particularly was the invitation to return to the temple over and over again.

Another critical temple innovation in St. George was that of sealing deceased children to their deceased parents, of linking past generations to their families. Work for the dead before St. George was primarily individualistic. Baptisms for the dead did not seal family members together. Even sealing deceased married couples did not include sealing children to their parents. What began in St. George was family-centered temple work wherein deceased children were sealed to deceased parents in a reconstruction of family units and (later) intergenerational linkages.

"There are some of the sealing ordinances that cannot be administered in the house that we are now using," Brigham Young said in 1863 in reference to the Endowment House in Salt Lake City. "We can only administer in it some of the first ordinances of the Priesthood pertaining to the endowment. There are more advanced ordinances that cannot be administered there; we would, therefore, like a Temple, but I am willing to wait a few years for it. I want to see [it] built in a manner that will endure through the Millennium. This is not the only Temple we shall build; There will be hundreds of them."⁹⁵ On another occasion, Young differentiated even more clearly between what could and what could not be done outside the temple. "We can at the present time receive our washings and anointing, etc. . . . We also have the privilege of sealing women to men, without a Temple . . . but when we come to other sealing ordinances . . . they cannot be done without a Temple."⁹⁶

It would appear that the reconstruction and redemption of deceased families was a critical element of proxy work not available without a temple. Once again, Brigham Young said as much in 1873 when referring to his own father, who had died and was buried back in Quincy, Illinois:

My father died before the endowments were given. None of his children have been sealed to him. If you recollect, you that were in Nauvoo,

94. Report, December 31, 1898, CR 100 34.

95. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 10:254, October 6, 1863.

96. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 16:186, September 4, 1873.

we were very much hurried in the little time we spent there after the Temple was built . . . Our time, therefore, was short, and we had no time to attend to this. . . .

Some brethren here are anxious to know whether they can receive endowments for their [deceased] sons or for their daughters. No, they cannot until we have a Temple . . . A man can be baptized for a son who died before hearing the Gospel . . . but no one can receive endowments for another, until a Temple is prepared . . . We administer just so far as the law permits us to do.⁹⁷

With this in mind, we can interpret the significance of the foregoing chart with even greater clarity and understanding. If the dead could now receive their endowments, then the dead could receive the priesthood; and if deceased fathers could receive the priesthood, then they could receive their wives and children in reconstructing priesthood-led family units. Little wonder that with this new vision of family temple work, the number of sealings of deceased children to their parents grew exponentially from virtually zero in 1877 to over sixty thousand before the end of the century. This emphasis on redeeming the dead through sealing past families together caught the spiritual imagination of the Saints as perhaps no other element of temple work could or did. Elder Charles W. Penrose, while visiting Logan in 1878, referred to temple work as “being all important to seek to pleasure union among our families, as families [were] the foundation of a kingdom, and inasmuch as we pursue this course the reach of God, and his blessings would rest upon us . . . and [the] Saints . . . and accelerate the [work] of God.”⁹⁸ Little wonder, then, that temple attendance was becoming the new and weighty invitation and expectation of Mormon worship.⁹⁹

97. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 16:187–88, September 4, 1873.

98. From remarks by Elder Charles W. Penrose, Logan Stake quarterly conference, August 3, 1878, Logan Utah Cache Stake Minutes, LR 1280 11, vol. 2:99–100, Church History Library.

99. The one figure that does not show much of an increase is adoptions. Excluding the small numbers of these ordinances performed in the Nauvoo and Exodus eras, this figure totaled barely thirteen thousand. Not to be confused with living family adoptions of a young child to its new parents, these refer to spiritual adoptions of salvation of individual members to various General Authorities of the Church, most of whom were apostles and prophets who the faithful believed held priesthood keys of salvation.

This new provision of endowments for one’s own ancestors removed a long-standing doctrinal impediment to family salvation. The linchpin in this practice of adoption had always been the sealing to priesthood authority. Endowments

Completing the Salt Lake Temple became increasingly important as the years went by. Decades in the making, the Salt Lake Temple represented the culmination of temple construction and the symbol of the newfound emphasis on temple work in the minds of the Saints. To give it up in the face of escheatment provisions of the newly passed Edmunds-Tucker Act would have been most galling. As John Taylor once said, "If we were to turn over to-day these buildings to the religious world, they would know no more how to use them legitimately, than a baby would know what to do with algebra; neither would we had not the Lord taught us by revelation from heaven."¹⁰⁰ During the dedication services, President Woodruff explained that the Lord had inspired him to appreciate what would happen if he had not issued the Manifesto signaling the end of plural marriage. He saw "by vision and revelation this Temple in the hands of the wicked . . . [in addition to great destruction among the people] had not the Manifesto been given."¹⁰¹

"They Are Aiming a Blow at the Sealing Ordinances"

This study has so far argued that for a host of reasons—the canonization of revelation, the introduction of endowments for the dead, the building of new temples, and the dramatic increase in family temple ordinances and attendance—the Church was entering a new era in its practices of worship and devotion. There would never again be a retreat from the paramount place temples were now occupying in Mormon doctrine, thought, and practice.

for the dead incorporated the provision for both the promulgation of the gospel to the dead in the spirit world and, with it, the conditional bestowal of priesthood authority and office to past generations of family ancestors. Endowments for the dead led also to sealings or marriages for the dead. For these reasons, the long-standing practice of spiritual adoptions no longer held the doctrinal urgency it once had forty years before. Thus, the introduction of endowments for the dead marked the beginning of the end of spiritual adoptions. Temple work was becoming more family centered than before and much more personalized. Wilford Woodruff's 1894 revelation ending the practice of spiritual adoptions owed everything to the beginning of endowments for the dead seventeen years before. And it foreshadowed Joseph F. Smith's Vision of the Dead (D&C 138) announced in 1918.

100. "Discourse Delivered by President John Taylor," *Deseret News*, April 17, 1878, p. 2, from a discourse transcribed October 21, 1877, in the Ogden Tabernacle.

101. Alexander, *Things in Heaven and Earth*, 296.

However, this rise in temple consciousness came in almost direct proportion to the increasing government-sponsored raids against plural marriage throughout Mormon territory. The Latter-day Saints continued to affirm their loyalty to plural marriage in the face of mounting political pressure, legal proceedings, and persecution. The government of the United States had made it abundantly clear since the first Mormon petition for statehood in 1848 that the Territory of Utah would never become part of the Union so long as polygamy was condoned. Both Democratic and Republican administrations had recognized the nation's repugnance toward the practice and the negative political fallout associated with it.

While the Morrill Anti-Bigamy Act of 1862 gave ample legal provision for a full-scale attack on that "twin relic of barbarism" or Mormon-style plural marriage, President Abraham Lincoln had chosen not to enforce it. Only after the Civil War had eliminated Southern slavery and only after the Radical Republicans (Reconstructionists) had tamed the South at the cost of suspending several civil rights did the federal government finally take forceful aim at the Mormons. Rebuffing every Mormon effort to gain statehood, Congress instead passed an intensifying series of laws aimed at abolishing polygamy. These included the Poland Act of 1874; the Edmunds Act of 1882, which initiated the so-called "Raid" era of federal marshals hunting down and arresting husbands and fathers; and the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887. This last action gave Congress the power to confiscate all Church buildings and properties, including churches, temples, and tabernacles valued over \$50,000, until and unless the Church ended polygamy. Only after the Edmunds-Tucker Act was upheld as constitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court in a narrow 5–4 ruling in May 1890 did the Church recognize the futility of continuing its legal defense. And with public opinion outside the territory overwhelmingly opposed to plural marriage, the stage was set for Wilford Woodruff's Manifesto of 1890.¹⁰²

Convinced that their conflict with America over the continuation of plural marriage was a "war" to defend their faith, a sure sign of the impending apocalypse, and their commitment to save, in the end, the Constitution of the United States, the Mormon faithful stoutly defended plural marriage right up to the eve of the Manifesto. While the number of new plural marriages declined significantly in actual numbers in the 1880s, Kathryn

102. Edwin Brown Firmage and Richard Collin Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts: A Legal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 160–209.

Daynes has well argued that “decline, however dramatic, is not demise.” Furthermore, the belief in the divine origin of plural marriage “united Mormons in a way that transcended differences in practice and set them apart from other Americans.” Daynes asserts that while the decline of new plural marriages made accepting the Manifesto easier for younger generations, “the institution was still vigorous during the raids in the 1880s and took a long time to die even after the Manifesto.”¹⁰³ And as Jan Shipps has argued, the Saints identified themselves as a people set apart and “were willing to defend to the last possible moment the practice of polygamy” to maintain that difference.¹⁰⁴

Despite the statistical decline in plural marriage in the 1870s and 1880s, private journals and local Church records are peppered with spirited defenses of the practice. “It is the duty of every Elder in Israel to take to himself wives, and raise up a righteous family,” Erastus Snow thundered in St. George in 1882, “and shame on the man that does not do it. If I have a son, that will go back on my testimony in relation to plural marriage, I will cast him off from my family and disown him. I advise the Elders of Israel to take wives, I mean plural wives . . . and all men who fight it will sink.”¹⁰⁵

As late as the dedication of the Manti Temple in 1888, Church authorities were stoutly defending the practice. “‘Are the Twelve Apostles going to desert the celestial law of God?’” asked Wilford Woodruff, then President of the Quorum of the Twelve, “I say, no, never; neither in this world nor the world to come. . . . It is the law of God. It is the fullness of the everlasting gospel. . . . Are we going to deny that law[?] We are not. Our brethren need not be afraid that President Woodruff and the Apostles are going to deny the faith, or any part of it. We are not, nor I don’t think we ever shall. . . . We are not going to desert the Kingdom of God.”¹⁰⁶

Why their continued commitment to polygamy? First of all, many rooted the practice in the very early history of the Church and with Joseph Smith himself. Joseph F. Smith, later sixth President of the Church and nephew of the founding prophet, clearly believed that it came by

103. Kathryn M. Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840–1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 174, see also 102 and 105.

104. Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 125.

105. David John, *Diaries*, October 27, 1882, vol. 1:369.

106. Dedication Services, May 17, 1888, Manti Temple Historical Record, 1873–1934, CR 348 21, vol. 2:62. Church History Library.

revelation of God. Joseph Smith, he insisted, had revealed it as early as 1831, and had taken several wives in Nauvoo, though his wife Emma had often objected. The essential doctrine was “the eternity of the marriage covenant, and includes a plurality of wives” and that “all who become heirs of God and joint heirs of Christ must obey this law or they cannot enter in the fullness.”¹⁰⁷ Bishop Dennison L. Harris of Monroe recalled how as a boy he had heard Joseph Smith “declare earnestly and in tears” that God had “revealed to him the principle of Celestial marriage, and said that he and his people must accept this principle or be damned: his enemies threatened to kill him if he did.”¹⁰⁸ Thus their own history demanded that members accept the principle.

Second, the faithful viewed celestial marriage as a command of God. Zina B. Young, speaking in Logan, “bore testimony to the truth of the Gospel and knew that polygamy was true that an angel with a drawn sword appeared to Joseph and commanded him to enter into it. [She] alluded to the fact that many of the sisters jeered at this doctrine, [but] if they knew what they were doing, they would not do so.”¹⁰⁹ Hannah Romney, speaking in a St. George Relief Society meeting, referred to the “stir” then being made in the courts. “Said all who had ever had the Spirit of God should know that it is a command from God and where practiced in righteousness would bring comfort and happiness to those who embraced it.”¹¹⁰ And Joseph F. Smith speaking in Logan “urged its observation and set forth the great blessings that would accrue to those who kept that law and showed the great curse that would befall those who did not enter it with pure motives.”¹¹¹ It was, as many phrased it, “the path of our duty”¹¹² and

107. From remarks by Joseph F. Smith, March 4, 1883. See also remarks by Joseph F. Smith, in Provo, February 27, 1881, General Minutes of the Provo Utah Central Stake, LR 9629 11.

108. From a talk given by Bishop Dennison L. Harris in Richfield at the Sevier Stake quarterly conference, August 23, 1879, Sevier Stake Historical Record, 1879–85, vol. 3, p. 19, LR 8243 11.

109. From a talk by Zina B. Young, Logan, Utah, January 10, 1878, Logan Utah Cache Stake Minutes, vol. 2, p. 67, LR 1280 11.

110. From a talk by Hannah H. Romney, February 6, 1879, St. George Relief Society Minutes and Records, LR 7836 11.

111. From a talk given by Elder Joseph F. Smith in Logan, May 5, 1878, Logan Utah Cache Stake Minutes, vol. 2, p. 81, LR 1280 11.

112. From a talk by President McArthur in St. George, November 15, 1885, St. George Utah Stake General Minutes, vol. 16, LR 7836 11.

“we should not give it up.”¹¹³ One reason why it was a commandment of God was “to raise up seed” or, in other words, to produce a large posterity. “There were millions of spirits awaiting an opportunity of taking upon themselves bodies. . . . And those who neglected their duties in this respect would be held to a great extent responsible.”¹¹⁴

Furthermore, many viewed polygamy as a divinely sanctioned means to their spiritual refinement. “The hand of God is in the crusade that has been instituted against us,” said Wilford Woodruff. “In fact we have not had persecution enough to make us sufficiently humble and to unite us as we should be.”¹¹⁵ And from another: “It is my firm opinion, that the Lord will not permit our oppressors to go beyond what is essential to purify his people, and bring us into line to magnify our callings in the Priesthood, and to bear off the kingdom victorious before all men.”¹¹⁶

And for some it was a matter of pride in doing what some others even in their own midst criticized, a necessary passport to Church leadership and the necessary way to preserve their religious legacy. “Many of our leaders are passing away,” said Bishop John H. Smith at Provo in May 1877. “Are the young Elders preparing themselves for positions of trust and honor? Some are seeking to hide their parentage from the world—ashamed of being polygamous children. That is not my position. I am truly proud of it.”¹¹⁷

Others were of the conviction that their obedience to this commandment would save and sanctify not only themselves but also the very nation that opposed them and would be the means of preserving the Constitution. “They have thrown down the safeguards of the American people,” said one stake president, “and have passed proscriptive measures against this people. . . . We have signaled the flag of our enemy and we should prepare for action.”¹¹⁸ W. H. Segmiller spoke on the destiny of this people and said that “no weapon formed against Zion would

113. From a talk by W. H. Segmiller, at a public meeting, May 8, 1881, Sevier Stake Historical Record, 1880–83. vol. 4:73, LR 8243 11.

114. From a talk by Brigham Young Jr., January 28, 1880, Salt Lake Stake General Minutes.

115. From a talk by Wilford Woodruff, St. George, June 14, 1885, St. George Utah Stake General Minutes, vol. 16, LR 7836 11.

116. David John, Diaries, May 7, 1885, 492–94.

117. From remarks by Bishop John A. Smith, May 6, 1877, General Minutes of the Provo Utah Central Stake, LR 9629 11 part 3.

118. From a talk by F. Spencer, May 28, 1882, Sevier Stake conference, Sevier Stake Historical Record, 1880–83 vol. 4, p. 205, LR 8243 11.

prosper. We should adhere steadfastly to this principle notwithstanding the opposition of Congress—that the time would come when Deseret would step forth and save the Constitution.”¹¹⁹ Hence adherence to the “Principle” was for many both a spiritual refinement personally and an urgent political responsibility.

And for a few it was one of the last signs of the times leading up to the inevitable apocalypse. Whether he viewed 1890 as fulfillment of an earlier prophecy of Joseph Smith (born in 1805) that if he were to live to be eighty-five he might see a coming of Christ (see D&C 130), one local leader said, “The signs that [were] to be given before the Second Coming of the Saviour [are] transpiring every day and his coming is not far distant.”¹²⁰ And from David John: “When the Saints will keep the commandments of God . . . he will cause wonders to be performed in the midst of Zion, even unto deliverance from her foes, and confusion and destruction will overtake the wicked. . . . The waste places of Zion will be rebuilt and Christ will come and dwell among his people.”¹²¹ Thus adherence to plural marriage would ensure, and might even hasten, the inevitable millennial day.

Finally, the line between defending plural marriage and protecting the expanded role of temple ordinances became increasingly thin, especially after 1880. The spirited defense of one was applied to the other in such a manner that the consciousness of the place of temples rose in direct correlation to the intensity of opposition arrayed against plural marriage. “Every time we begin work on a temple the Devil begins to howl,” is how George A. Smith worded it in 1873.¹²² Wrote Wilford Woodruff while in hiding in Arizona in January 1880, “I was again wrapped in a vision during a good deal of the night concerning the destiny of our nation and of

119. From a talk by W. H. Segmiller, February 23, 1879, Sevier Stake conference, vol. 1, LR 8243 11. President A. K. Thurber, responding to news of passage of the Edmunds Act in 1882 said likewise: “We are members of the kingdom of God and we will eventually rule and govern all the nations of the earth. . . . We will plead and contend for our rights as citizens until the Saints step forward and save the Constitution.” From a talk by A. K. Thurber at a “Public Meeting,” March 19, 1882, Sevier Stake Historical Record, 1880–83, vol. 4, p. 179 LR 8243 11.

120. From a talk by F. Spencer at a public meeting, January 21, 1883, Sevier Stake Historical Record, 1880–83, vol. 4, p. 276, LR 8243 11. See also entry for May 28, 1882. For more on the feeling of an impending apocalypse and a divine judgment on the land, see Alexander, *Things in Heaven and Earth*, 237–38.

121. David John, Diaries, May 7, 1885.

122. From a talk by George A. Smith, 1873, Sevier Stake Miscellaneous Minutes, p. 62, LR 8243 11.

Zion. It was strongly manifest to me [that] the duty of the Apostles and Elders [is] to go into our Holy places and Temples and wash our feet and bear testimony to God and the Heavenly hosts against the wickedness of this nation.”¹²³ Said another: “They are aiming a blow at the sealing ordinances of the Lord’s House.”¹²⁴ And in an epistle of 1886, the First Presidency issued this culminating statement: “Notwithstanding the violent and unabating opposition which is arrayed against us, the work of ministering in the ordinances of the Lord’s House continues. . . . It must not surprise us if the rage of the arch-enemy of mankind increases and his emissaries grow more relentless and cruel, more brutal and inhuman in their efforts to stay this work as the number of temples increases and the thousands of Israel go in thereto to minister the ordinances of salvation for their ancestors and departed friends.”¹²⁵

History, commandment, refinement, and commitment—for all of this to change in one sweeping October 1890 announcement was more than many members of the Church could immediately grasp or accept. Reaction to the announcement was said to be unanimous, when in truth many simply could not vote to sustain the measure for one reason or another. The fact is, plural marriage continued long after 1890 and would take years—and several personal and group apostasies—to finally come to an end.¹²⁶

123. Woodruff, *Journal*, January 28, 1880.

124. From remarks by President F. Spencer at the Sevier Stake quarterly conference, May 23, 1882, Sevier Stake Historical Record 1879–85, vol. 3:168, LR 8243 11.

125. From Nineteenth Century Mormon Publications at <http://lib.byu.edu/digital/mpntc>. An Epistle of the First Presidency, to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, read at the Semi-Annual Conference, held at Coalville, Summit County, Utah, October 1886. This is not to suggest that all plural marriages were performed in the temples or in the Endowment House. There were some instances when such marriages were performed by General Authorities in the local communities they were visiting, in local homes and meeting houses. For instance, President John Taylor, while visiting Logan in 1877, “referred to the subject of marriage; and as a matter of local interest intimated that proper arrangements would be made so that this ordinance might be performed at home, instead of having to go to St. George.” See Minutes of the Quarterly Conference of the Cache Valley Stake, November 3 and 4, 1877, Logan Utah Cache Stake Minutes, LR 1280 11 vol. 2, p. 22.

Plural marriages were usually approved by application to the President of the Church, after being recommended by the proper local officer(s). Statement by Erastus Snow, in Bleak, “Annals of the Southern Utah Mission.”

126. An enduring study of post-Manifesto plural marriage is B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University

We may never know all the reasons for President Woodruff's seeming about-face on plural marriage and his Manifesto announcement. For the majority of Saints, however, it was revelation that stopped one practice while enshrining the other, and a growing understanding that what they were preserving was at least as great as what they were giving up. Only in appreciating fully what was abandoned does one begin to plumb the Church's allegiance to temple work for the dead. It was as though the sense of the importance of temple work had finally caught up with the Mormon defense of polygamy; the expanded mission of redemption for the dead was a vision of such newfound importance that nothing could be allowed to get in its way. Clearly the mission of the Church was progressing in a remarkable way, and the culture of Mormon life would have to change with it. As important as plural marriage had been, for a variety of economic, demographic, cultural, geographic, and even doctrinal reasons it could not be enjoined or expected of all the Mormon populations, male or female, whereas the commission to redeem the dead in all its new temple-centered particulars and family-saving ordinances was a paramount, permanent expectation of all the Saints. In sum, temple work for the dead trumped plural marriage.¹²⁷

In the end, if what one willingly surrenders or is even forced to give up in return for something greater is an accurate measurement of how important that newfound thing has become, then it follows that the eventual demise of Mormon patriarchal marriage reflects on how very important temple work had become. The sunset of plural marriage heralded a new sunrise of Mormon temple work and worship. At least President Woodruff came to see it in that light. "Which is the wisest course?" he asked. The base issue was not the matter of statehood—as important as that objective had been for several decades—or surrendering to the rulings of the Supreme Court. Rather, it was a religious motivation, a revelatory one. "A large number has already been delivered from the prison house in the spirit world by this people, and shall the work go on or stop? This is the question I lay before the Latter-day Saints. You have to judge for yourselves." And convinced that what he had brought forth was of divine origin, he added: "I should have let all the temples go out of our hands. I should have gone to prison myself, and let every other man go there, had not the God of heaven commanded me to do what

of Illinois Press, 1992). The modern FLDS movement is evidence that some never did accept the Manifesto as revelation.

127. See Kathryn Daynes, *More Wives Than One*.

I did do.”¹²⁸ With this change would gradually come a more expanded vision, a new paradigm and understanding of what it meant to be a Latter-day Saint. No greater evidence exists for the pivotal role Mormon temple work would come to play in the twenty-first century than the eventual abandonment of plural marriage in the late nineteenth century.

They would find in their own theology, in their new canonized scriptures, and in continuing revelations a spiritual and perhaps the most fundamental answer to the increasing external political pressures to abandon the “Principle.” Thus, a fundamental reason for the Manifesto, in addition to the overwhelming legal and political pressures then being placed upon the Church, was very much a religious one whose roots preceded plural marriage and which extended back to the very beginnings of Mormonism.

Let us give the last word to Israel Ivins of St. George, a longtime defender of plural marriage, who said, right after the Manifesto was declared, “I do not think there is any foolishness talked although some may say it is fogyism [*sic*]. Things that are transpiring may look strange, but all will come out right, speaking of the Manifesto of Bro. Woodruff. I should like it when I die that the last words I say shall be[;] this is the true work of God.”¹²⁹

Richard E. Bennett (who can be contacted via email at byustudies@byu.edu) is Associate Dean and Professor of Church History and Doctrine and Religious Education, Brigham Young University. A previous version of this paper was presented at the Mormon History Association Conference in St. George, Utah, May 27, 2011.

Bennett thanks John W. Welch, Kathryn M. Daynes, and Brian Cannon for their careful and rigorous review and input. He also thanks Elder Marlin K. Jensen, former Church Historian; Elder Bruce Hafen, president of the St. George Temple; and Richard Turley Jr. for their kind support and permission to access many of the sources used in this paper. He also thanks Christian Solomon, his research assistant, for valuable assistance.

128. Official Declaration 1, “Excerpts from Three Addresses,” 292–93.

129. From a talk by Israel Ivins, September 27, 1890, St. George Melchizedek Priesthood Minutes and Records, vol. 5, p. 486. LR 7836 13.

Late States of Being

There were moments after dusk
when sky was a deep silk rinse,
a grace in receding.
You wanted those moments
more than others.
Evenings clouded over
left the mind pacing for windows.

From the attic where you grew
green edgings of moss along the north roof
have begun turning shingles to sod;
faint ceiling brocades of watermark deepen
where rain once leaked through.
You've helped empty
the farmhouse for sale.

There come days when
you can't tell how to be
anymore. You are water in the landscape:
in crowds you move to the perimeter,
wanting out. If someone speaks, you don't know
how to answer.



Some daily alarm is taking hold, but through all
the versions, friends and family
have been living and talking normally.
You stand among them, so they don't know,
either, where you've gone.
You think words like bloodroot,
feel the current of underground streams
in the soles of your feet.

One night you dream of faint steam rising
from earth turned by your father's plow
and wake remembering the smell of horses.

You anticipate walking back
along blue timothy fields to appear
with the deepening mist
near an ancient poplar

at the very moment you disappear
from the view of house panes.

—Dixie Partridge

Believing Adoption

Samuel M. Brown

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.

—Paul to the Church in Rome (Romans 8:15–17)

At the conclusion of my formal historical work on adoption theology in the earliest Restoration,¹ I felt drawn to reflect as a believer on the meaning of this theological and conceptual system. During my study of the contexts, connotations, and currents of early LDS adoption theology, I experienced what a famed scholar of late antiquity has called “salutary vertigo.”² The more I investigated, the more I realized that the earliest Latter-day Saints saw the world differently than I do. From this vertiginous vantage point, though, I have gained a greater awareness of the truth, power, and beauty of the earliest Restoration. I present these reflections on adoption theology not as a formal work of philosophy, theology, or history, but as one believer’s personal encounter with this set of concepts from the early years of the Restoration.

1. Samuel M. Brown, “Early Mormon Adoption Theology and the Mechanics of Salvation,” *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 3 (2011): 3–52; and Samuel M. Brown, “The ‘Lineage of My Priesthood’ and the Chain of Belonging,” in *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 203–47.

2. Peter R. L. Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), xvii.

Samuel M. Brown

By profession, Samuel Morris Brown is a physician and assistant professor of medicine. By avocation, he articulates the history and meaning of distinctive Latter-day Saint ideas, specifically illuminating the vibrant fabric of what academics call “lived religion.” His real-life experiences—with his wife, Kate Holbrook, and children, as well as through attending to critically ill patients—have imbued his academic reflections with considerable real-world insight.



This article explores the possible implications of his two recent publications. In 2011, he wrote a seminal article for the *Journal of Mormon History*, entitled “Early Mormon Adoption Theology and the Mechanics of Salvation”; in 2012, Oxford University Press published his *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death*. “Believing Adoption” personalizes and moves forward his study of LDS adoption theology and divine parenthood.

Readers may also want to review Gordon Irving’s article “The Law of Adoption” in *BYU Studies* 14, no. 3, and parts of Douglas Davies’s *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (London: Ashgate, 2000). Brown’s new work “bonds” with the view, as Davies describes it, that overcoming “death was a crucial factor in the emergence of Mormonism as it also is in its continuing success” (3), all the while revealing layer upon layer of subjects previously treated only on the surface.

Brown’s informative and creative material ponders spiritual meanings in realms where answers are not always readily available. Yet as an old proverb rightly says, a good question is half an answer. Samuel Brown asks just such questions. Whether his ideas here should be understood ontologically, soteriologically, or sacerdotally, there is much to be gained by building new theses on old foundations. Like the faithful scribe who brings forth out of his treasury things both “new and old” (Matt. 13:52), Samuel Brown compellingly illuminates and opens the way for much fruitful thought.

—BYU Studies Editors

First, a word about adoption, a theology that has become unfamiliar to many Latter-day Saints. The Apostle Paul, most famously in the epigraph to this essay, taught that Christ could adopt Gentiles into the Israelite covenant.³ This adoption generally meant two things to antebellum American Protestants: a step on the road to personal sanctification, and entry into the family of God. Joseph Smith appears to have begun his religious career with a reasonably Protestant view of adoption. This view changed dramatically, however, as he struggled prophetically with fundamental questions: How big was the society of heaven? Who could and would join it? What did election mean? What were the mechanics of salvation? What happened to one's offspring in the afterlife? Could their salvation be guaranteed? What role did one's ancestors play in the salvation community? As he answered these questions, Joseph rapidly expanded the notion of adoption to incorporate patriarchal blessings and their associated priesthood, his genealogical revision of the Great Chain of Being, baptism for the dead, the temple endowment, and polygamy.⁴ During Joseph Smith's lifetime, the rites of adoption were the seals of the temple, expressed through baptism for the dead and eternal marital sealings. Adoption into the family of God was at once the means and the definition of salvation. Heaven was an interlocking network of people who had committed to God and to each other; the works of salvation were works of connection and building a Zion community. Under Brigham Young, adoption became specific rites called "adoption" or the "Law of Adoption" that ultimately merged back into lineal family sealings in the 1890s under Wilford Woodruff.

This early Mormon adoption theology had important implications. First, Joseph had solved the vexing Calvinist problem of election, framed in early Mormonism as the belief that people could not know whether they had been saved in advance. Second, humans could be

3. On Paul's theological uses of adoption, see Caroline Johnson Hodge, *If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Francis Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1984), 67–99, discussing a legal metaphor in Romans 8:15, 23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5, and Ephesians 1:5. Compare also the image of grafting into the olive tree in Romans 11; see James E. Faulconer, "The Olive Tree and the Work of God: Jacob 5 and Romans 11," in *The Allegory of the Olive Tree*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1994), 347–66.

4. Samuel M. Brown, "The Early Mormon Chain of Belonging," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 44, no. 1 (2011): 1–52.

surrogate saviors, “Saviors on Mount Zion”; in this role they could seal loved ones simultaneously to salvation and to themselves. This salvation (often called exaltation) was radically, intrinsically collective and communal. The adoption theology of the early Saints served as a dramatic and sustained protest against Protestant theology, the individualism of America’s increasingly complex market economy, and the evolving nuclear family of early Victorianism.

Rather than revisit the history of adoption theology in detail,⁵ in this essay I consider what adoption theology means to me as an active, believing Latter-day Saint in the early twenty-first century. As I have considered adoption theology from a devotional and practical perspective, I have come to believe that this distinctive legacy of the Restoration informs at least three important questions: spirit birth, the nature of salvation, and the shape of what I term the heaven family, by which I mean the interlocking network of familial connection that will exist in the afterlife. I do not propose this discussion as normative for the modern Church but as a possible voice in our continued thinking about these complex ideas, always guided by the compass of continuing revelation. I do not believe that particular readings of Joseph Smith should be proposed as superior to the teachings of current Church authorities. Our history is littered with the marks of schismatics who believed they saw better than Joseph Smith or one of his successors. I propose these reflections by way of conversation about the rich texture and beauty of the Restoration and the applied meanings of its doctrines. I expect that I will be wrong in places, that much work remains to be done, but I believe this is a conversation worth having.

Spirit Birth

Adoption theology provides an important window on what has come to be called the doctrine of “spirit birth,” most commonly associated

5. For thorough treatments of adoption theology, see Brown, “Early Mormon Adoption Theology”; and the expert treatment of the post-Smithian period in Jonathan A. Stapley, “Adoptive Sealing Ritual in Mormonism,” *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 3 (2011): 53–117. Gordon Irving’s useful article, “The Law of Adoption: One Phase of the Development of the Mormon Concept of Salvation, 1830–1900,” *BYU Studies* 14, no. 3 (1974): 291–314, is now dated and primarily describes the law of adoption in its latter-nineteenth-century version without considering the theology underlying it or exploring its roots in Joseph Smith’s teachings. On the historical period generally, see Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

with Parley and Orson Pratt.⁶ By 1845, several Church leaders were arguing publicly that Joseph Smith's divine anthropology⁷ required a birth from prespirit into spirit, a transition graphically patterned on the process of gestation and parturition familiar from human biology.⁸ There is a relentless, albeit asymmetrical, logic in this attempt to describe the internal workings of the system Joseph Smith had revealed only in broad contours. If parenthood is the central relationship of the cosmos, then the relatively undifferentiated beings who witnessed the rise of Elohim through mortal saviorhood (according to an influential interpretation of Smith's late theology) to exaltation would have become his children, according to Orson Pratt and the others who followed, through a birthing process. They could as easily have chosen the spiritual rebirth of conversion and baptism, or the covenantal fatherhood proclaimed by King Benjamin, or the rebirth of resurrection as the exemplar for the process of premortal birth, but they chose mortal parenthood as their reference point. For over a century, the doctrine of spirit birth has inflamed Christian critics, providing them with scandalous images of pregnant goddesses in togas scattered about the Mormon heaven. Within the Church, on the other hand, this doctrine has become a touchstone for traditional beliefs surrounding the literal, ontological associations between God and humans exemplified by the LDS hymns

6. I am grateful to Jonathan Stapley and Terryl Givens for conversations on this topic. Stapley and I came to this concept in parallel in 2007 during our research on adoption theology; our collaboration on adoption has been a great boon to me. Givens explores spirit birth in detail in his *The Cosmos, the Divine, the Human*, volume 1 of *Wrestling the Angel: The Foundations of Mormon Thought* (forthcoming, Oxford University Press).

7. This is the term I use to describe the teachings of the Prophet Joseph regarding the nature of God and humanity as members of the same species. See Brown, "Divine Anthropology: Divining the Suprahuman Chain," in *In Heaven as It Is on Earth*, 248–78.

8. Orson Pratt taught spirit birth in a catechism published in summer 1844 in *Prophetic Almanac for 1845* (New York: *The Prophet* office, 1845), 4–5, and William Phelps may have taught something like spirit birth by spring 1845. See Samuel M. Brown, "William Phelps's Paracletes, an Early Witness to Joseph Smith's Divine Anthropology," *International Journal of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 62–82. Lorenzo Snow had speculated about "spiritual births in eternity" as early as 1842. Lorenzo Snow to Elder Walker, February 14, 1842, Lorenzo Snow Notebook 1841–1842, MS 2737, pp. 75–77, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Private formulations of spirit birth almost certainly began somewhat earlier.

“O My Father” and “I Am a Child of God.” Popular beliefs have followed and benefited from doctrinal supports. A variety of authoritative voices from the mid-nineteenth through the mid-twentieth centuries, including Brigham Young, James E. Talmage, and Bruce R. McConkie, have concurred with such a reading of the process by which we matured before mortality as the children of God.⁹

Spirit birth as traditionally understood is not the only account of God’s parenthood, though. I propose, on the basis of extant documents and their contexts, that Joseph Smith probably did not teach Orson Pratt’s specific doctrine.¹⁰ Joseph was never entirely satisfied with biology alone—he and Emma suffered three stillbirths before finally receiving Joseph III and adopting the Murdock twins during their bereavement over the stillbirths of Thaddeus and Luisa. The early Saints often experienced the stress exemplified by Jesus’s warning that the gospel would “set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother” (Matt. 10:35). However much he cherished his physical offspring, the Prophet created patterns of family life based on choice and commitment more than on the vicissitudes of biology. Relationships would not rest solely, according to Joseph, on the mere happenstances of biological reproduction.

An account of God’s parenthood based in adoption fits well in early Restoration scripture. In the premortal world, God desired the further progression, development, and happiness of the intelligent spirits who surrounded him. In an act of intense metaphysical and sacerdotal power, Elohim claimed these intelligences as his own—he “adopted” them, organizing them into a celestial kindred. Recognizing the ontological affinities between himself and the uncreated spiritual beings who became his children, God brought us out of our earliest existence and into the relationship that represented our development as spirit children. Joseph taught that we are all self-existent in some fundamental way but that we are interdependent, and God’s great creative act was

9. Givens, *The Cosmos, the Divine, the Human*, discusses twentieth-century beliefs about spirit birth.

10. The evidence that Joseph Smith taught spirit birth is from later reminiscences and does not meet modern historiographical standards. Brian Hales, “‘A Continuation of the Seeds’: Joseph Smith and Spirit Birth,” *Journal of Mormon History* 38, no. 4 (2012): 105–30, recounts later echoes but does not reliably tie the specific doctrine to Joseph Smith. Joseph’s use of “seeds” in D&C 132:19 invokes images of Abraham’s seed and does not reliably distinguish between spirit birth and adoption.

acknowledging and embracing that interdependence. This seems to be the meaning of Joseph's reference in his King Follett Discourse to the fact that in the premortal existence God, "find[ing] himself in the midst of spirit and glory because he was greater[,] saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself."¹¹ This language returned to the images of the book of Abraham, in which God "organized" the intelligences about him, a word that evokes a subtle merger of law and agency and community and hierarchy.¹²

The view of God's fatherhood as adoption appears to be the meaning of Brigham Young's sermons and dreams of February 1847. Struggling ardently to understand what Joseph Smith had intended for the rituals of adoption, Brigham preached on the 16th and then had an inspired dream the next afternoon. In his dream, he "went to see Joseph" and told the martyred Prophet, "The Bretheren have grate anxiety to understand the law of adoption or seeling principls and I said if you have a word of council for me I shall be glad to receive it." Joseph then instructed Brigham to

tell the Peopel to be humble and faithful and sure to keep the sperit of the Lord and it will lead them right be careful and not turne away the smal still voice it will teach how to due and where to goe it will yeald the fruits of the Kingdom . . . if they will they will find them selves jest as they ware organ[ized] by our Father in Heven before they came into the world. our Father in heven organized the human family but they are all disorganized and in grate confusion, then he shewed me the patern how they they [*sic*] ware in the beginning this I cannot describe but saw it and where the Prest hood had ben taken from the Earth and how it must be joined to gether so there would be a perfect chane from Father Adam to his latest posterity he said tell the people to be sure to keep the spiret of the [Lord] and follow it and it woul lead them jest right.¹³

11. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, Religious Studies Monograph Series, no. 6 (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 360, William Clayton's transcript. The Bullock report indicates that God found "himself in the midst of Sp[irits] & bec[ause?] he saw proper to institute laws for those who were in less intelligence that they mit. have one glory upon another in all that knowledge power & glory & so took in hand to save the world of Sp[irits]." Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 352.

12. See Abraham 3, which combines the Chain of Belonging with cosmogony narratives; discussion in Brown, "Chain of Belonging."

13. Brigham Young Dream, February 17, 1847, Brigham Young Office Files 1832–1878 (bulk 1844–1877), Church History Library.

This dream validated his sermon of the day before, during a family meeting at which he delivered his best-known sermon on adoption.¹⁴ In the sermon and the dream, Brigham made clear that the law of adoption was the method by which the cosmos was to be “organized” during and after mortality; the mortal organization of relational seals solemnized in temple rites reflected the premortal organization. We could see this sermon, in light of Brigham Young’s later endorsement of spirit birth, as indicating that we have misunderstood the details of his teachings about spirit birth, or that he felt that adoption mattered most and his spirit birth teachings were a speculation about mechanisms whereby adoption could be effected.

I want to be clear that I reject the caricature of Pratt’s spirit birth doctrine as a heaven filled with eternally pregnant goddesses arrayed in celestial harems.¹⁵ Such a view, advanced by partisan evangelicals and some secular critics, is crudely inflected by Victorian ideas about the meaning of sexuality. If indeed generativeness—creativity, the transition of being from simple to complex, a kind of metaphysical anti-entropy—stands as the essence of afterlife, then why would gestation and parturition not be sacred constituents of that experience? According to one reading of the Hebrew Bible’s cosmogony, it was the Fall from paradise that made of gestation and parturition the difficult and uncomfortable processes we know in this life. The mechanisms of creation and “increase” in heaven are likely to be as gloriously superior to what we know after the Fall as the rest of our lives will be. It is a lack of imagination that takes what could be a radically egalitarian, expansive view of the afterlife and turns it into a derisive image of female exploitation. That we humans have not always been righteous in our treatments of sex roles and the social status of women does not mean that heaven will be similarly broken. Gestation and parturition in heaven could easily be the glorious focal point of eternal creation. I do not reject Pratt’s elaboration of Smith’s theology because I think it is crass or crude or insulting. I believe that in the right context and connotation such a doctrine could in fact be sublime. I am not drawn to spirit birth primarily because I do not believe it accurately reflects Joseph Smith’s teachings. In this case, the biological may obscure the meaning of the sacred.

14. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–1985), 3:127–37.

15. While Orson Pratt did imagine something like the caricatured view, the meaning of his depiction differs from that of critics.

In some respects, the tension between spirit birth and premortal adoption reflects a question of what the metaphysical law of correspondence really means and entails.¹⁶ Correspondence, an organizing principle for natural philosophy from antiquity through Neoplatonism to early modern folk religiosity, maintains that there are parallels between human and cosmic planes of existence. Heaven and earth share structures and meaning; their harmony expresses the divine will and the natural order of things. In one formulation, correspondence means that “as above, so below.” In its most basic form, correspondence maintains that similarities between the human and cosmic planes of existence are both meaningful and powerful. In terms favored by learned adherents, the “microcosm” (“small world,” representing human life or the human body) parallels the “macrocosm” (“large world,” representing the galaxy or universe), and microcosm and macrocosm influence each other. As Orson Pratt expounded spirit birth, he seems to have believed that the microcosm of earthly gestation and parturition defined the macrocosm of eternal increase. He may also have thought that Smith’s teachings about a spiritual creation before physical creation (for example, in Moses 3) suggested the need for a spiritual birth before physical birth.

Orson Pratt’s choice was not the only one available to the Saints after Joseph’s death. An adoptive model of our premortal relationship with God may be every bit as important and binding as the biologically intoned images of spirit birth. An adoptive model also highlights the role of choice in the creation of these relationships. We were not imposed upon God by some accident of celestial biology; in some significant sense, he chose us to be his children. In the adoption account, God’s premortal parenthood is directly analogous to his parenthood of

16. On this antique worldview, termed by some the “cosmological,” see Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map Is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (1978; repr., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 132. Catherine Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit: A Cultural History of American Metaphysical Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 13–16, 26–27, 59–62, reviews correspondence in American religion, while Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 199, ably conjures that idea world within early Christianity. See Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), esp. 8–9, 23, 72, 155–72, for a more general review. Jared Hickman and I incorporate early Mormon ideas about metaphysical correspondence into a work in progress preliminarily entitled *Human Cosmos: Joseph Smith and the Art of Translation*.

us as mortals. The new birth of conversion and belief mirrors the first birth before mortality (see D&C 39:4).

There are several ways to connect microcosm to macrocosm, and the choice between human parturition and sacerdotal adoption is not inevitable. What I believe were the essential characteristics of the generative cosmos Joseph Smith revealed are a sacerdotal power known by various names (most durably “priesthood”) and the creation of relationships among eternal beings at various stages of maturation and development. The earthly echoes of this grand, cosmic process are the saving rituals of the temple, inflected by the sacred experience of parenthood. In my view, the beauty and the power of Restoration teachings on God’s divine parenthood do not rely on Pratt’s formulation. Priesthood was both the sacerdotal authority and the metaphysical power by which adoption occurred.

Understanding as I now do the ways in which Joseph Smith put priesthood to work among the early Saints, I believe that the adoption model of divine parenthood accurately portrays what the Prophet taught in the 1840s. I do not propose this by way of criticizing a popular doctrine or aspiring to an authority that I do not possess. I also recognize that spirit birth has enjoyed substantial support for many decades within the Church. Revelation is a living thing; Latter-day Saints are not bound by every belief of early Church members. Still, adoption theology has the potential to complement the core of LDS doctrines on God’s divine parenthood as it draws to our attention crucial documents and contexts from the early Restoration.

Most theologies persist because they fill needs and solve problems. Spirit birth has been important to bereavement and general self-conception for decades. Spirit birth provides the promise that God would honor parents’ love for lost children on into the eternities. He himself is a biological parent, and he understands our visceral attachments to our children. It can be difficult to explain to outsiders the power of the image of the physical, literal parenthood of God. There is something unspeakably magnificent about the inevitability of physical parenthood, about the impulses that bind humans to their genetic offspring. The biologically parental is a model for the love of God—many of us seem to worry that a willed love is not as powerful as an instinctual love. We want people to love us not by principle but by passion. Perhaps the miracle of adoption lies in its capacity to transform willed love into inviolable love. Surely that is a miracle that stands at the core

of Christ's being and his Atonement. As he chose to bear our burdens, he nourished a love that will never die. If it is our task to become as God, is it better to ride the coattails of instinct or to apply the power of will? Throughout our lives, God calls us to a love we will, a love we choose.

I think most of us would acknowledge the power of a willed love. Marriage and parenthood are relationships that require both willed and instinctual love. The romance brings us to wedding vows, but the covenant of marriage is also choosing to stay even when the going is tough. The two loves inform each other, and adoption theology offers us a powerful reminder of the meaning of both forms of love: that which we feel and that which we choose. Many theologians rightly draw attention to the fact that will and agency are harder to grasp than we would like, that our instincts and cultural contexts inform what we experience as our will in important ways. I do not require a model of an independent will, unshaped by context or history. Instinctual loves will never go away and should not. Within the theology of adoption, a love that feels chosen can complement and transform a love that feels inescapable. Perhaps that sometimes desperate dance between the chosen and the inescapable is part of the work of making us divine. I think that it probably is.

Some may feel that adoption theology takes away from the possibility that humans and God are conspecific, that they are ontologically similar to each other. It is natural to see references to being the "literal" children of God as requiring a spirit birth model of divine parenthood, but that is not entirely true. While the theology of spirit birth makes it somewhat easier to imagine ontological similarity between God and humans, nothing about adoption requires ontological difference. There is nothing necessary about the connection between spirit birth and ontological identity. In fact, a basic interpretation of Joseph Smith's teachings on this point suggests that God saw entities who were less mature, rather than ontologically distinct, and he sought to enable their greater maturity. I believe that we are, in some crucial way, conspecific with God, and that he has adopted us. We are not just his pets or his creatures; the relationships of adoption are the relationships of beings who share some important level of identity and reciprocity. That relationship is literally real and eternally potent regardless of whether we conceive it as celestial gestation or premortal adoption. The sacred and radical truth at the heart of Mormonism, that we are literally God's family, does not force us to choose between the spirit birth and adoption models to describe our premortal maturation.

Salvation, Agency, and Will

There is in my view a much more complicated theological question related to adoption theology, a topic that deserves careful, thorough, and respectful attention: the relationship between the will and salvation. While this essay can only point toward the general contours of a satisfactory treatment, it seems nevertheless worthwhile to outline a few issues in Joseph Smith's teachings about the nature of salvation. I offer one crucial caveat: I am not a theologian by training or inclination. I am a believing Latter-day Saint, a medical researcher, and a self-taught cultural historian. I write here on the will as a believer rather than as an academic specialist.

The Restoration took place in the early post-Calvinist world of the new American Republic. American Calvinism maintained complex ideas about the relationship between the will and the possibility of salvation, generally couched in terms of the inability of the unregenerate will to choose salvation. In the Calvinist account, humans were so depraved that no exercise of their corrupt will could lead to something as glorious as salvation. The protesting Arminians, mostly represented by the Methodists, believed that the proper exercise of human will was important to salvation. Despite notorious theological differences, Arminians and Calvinists tended to behave in fairly similar ways. Though the logic required some twists and turns, both sides saw behavior as central to salvation. Calvinists famously felt the pressure to behave in order to maintain the hope that they were among the elect. Arminians fought powerfully to avoid "backsliding" into sin. The two groups saw the righteous exercise of will as tied to salvation—they just differed about the direction of the relationship. Universalists and deists—the bugaboos of the Second Great Awakening—mocked Calvinists and Arminians with chants that a loving God would assure salvation for all, regardless of their behavior in this life.¹⁷ Over the course of the nineteenth century, Victorian mores and reform movements tamed the relative dissolution of early American social life, with increasing emphasis on piety as the pathway to heaven.¹⁸

17. E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), reviews the history of the relevant theologies of the period.

18. Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815–1837*, rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), is somewhat dated but correctly draws attention to the ways that religious revival reinforced social order in that period.

Joseph Smith, ever on the margins of established religions, rejected both Arminian and Calvinist rhetoric. The salvation offered by these theologies seemed so fragile, particularly with the omnipresent specter of death stalking believers at every turn. Methodists famously sang and chanted on their deathbeds in hopes of preventing a final act of backsliding,¹⁹ while Calvinists sometimes admitted in the midst of death's agony that they might not be elect. Joseph saw the frantic misery of Protestants and cherished the revelations that showed the Saints the "road between" the "Presbyterian" (Calvinist) and the "Methodist" (Arminian) doctrines of salvation.²⁰ Throughout the 1840s, Smith gave special instructions to his followers that indicated their happiness in the life to come did not depend as thoroughly on their own piety as they had been led to believe by the Protestant faiths in which they grew to adulthood.²¹ In March 1844, Joseph Smith preached a sermon after the burial of his friend King Follett, killed by accidental rockfall while building a well. During Follett's funeral sermon, Joseph made a claim that scandalized some of his listeners. "If you have power to seal on earth & in heaven then we should be crafty: . . . go & seal on earth your sons & daughters unto yourself & yourself unto your fathers in eternal glory: . . . use a little Craftiness & seal all you can & when you get to heaven tell your father that what you seal on earth should be sealed in heaven. I will walk through the gate of heaven and Claim what I seal & those that follow me & my Council."²² Joseph's phrases are extreme assaults on Protestant ideas about virtue and salvation, reflecting doctrines that continued to cause friction with outside neighbors and conflicted followers like the Law brothers. Joseph evoked in this sermon the image of the Latter-day Saints confronting the Protestant God and telling him that the caprices of election and regeneration were powerless in the face of the temple priesthood.

19. A. Gregory Schneider, "The Ritual of Happy Dying among Early American Methodists," *Church History* 56, no. 3 (September 1987): 348–63.

20. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 327–32. Joseph Smith had been preaching this "road between" for years. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 62.

21. See Brown, "The 'Lineage of My Priesthood,'" for details.

22. Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 2:364–65. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 327–36, reprint the entry from Woodruff's journal and add five other sources for this March 10 sermon. Follett died March 9. Eulogies and accounts of the funeral are printed as "Communicated," *Nauvoo (Illinois) Neighbor*, March 20, 1844, 2. This sermon is distinct from the better-known "King Follett Discourse" preached at the Church conference in April, a second sustained reflection on the meaning of Follett's death.

Traditional Christians see these as scandalous phrases, then and now. They seem to indicate that Mormons believed they could control God, bend him to their will. But these need to be understood contextually—Smith was assaulting the Protestant God in caricature. The God Joseph Smith gave his followers power over was a God who elected or damned with perfectly excellent arbitrariness. In his mocking recommendations that his “crafty” children conquer the Protestant God, he was telling his followers that temple seals contained the solution to election. Sometimes the language the Prophet used was intended to shock his audience, to draw out distinctions between the Restored Church and the Protestantism that had lost its way, to caricaturize the God of Calvinism. Joseph was trying to communicate that the God of Calvin and Wesley was not the true God. Sometimes Joseph’s rejection of election or Arminian regeneration was hyperbolic, and we should be careful not to overread specific claims about the Calvinist God.²³

Even after considering Joseph’s use of hyperbole, we can be reasonably certain that he taught that the seals of the priesthood and the temple power of Elijah contained the power of salvation. This was a staggering power, the capacity to tell the God of Calvinism who would and would not be saved. This was the promise underlying the great work for the dead. The Saints, as “Saviors on Mount Zion,” were to save their deceased kin. In his King Follett Discourse (delivered about a month after the funeral sermon, at the church’s annual conference), Joseph taught, in Wilford Woodruff’s account, that “any man that has a friend in eternity can save him if he has not committed the unpardonable sin,” an image confirmed in Thomas Bullock’s account, which recalled Joseph preaching that “every Sp[irit] in the Et[ernal] world can be ferreted out & saved unless he has com[mitte]d that Sin which cant be rem[itte]d to him.”²⁴ George Laub, a rank-and-file Nauvoo Saint whose journal is a treasure trove for historians interested in the theologies of the early Restoration, provided a glimpse of the meaning of this in his Nauvoo journal. The middle child in his family, he wrote, “Since I have Embraced the gospel it oftentimes seemed to me having been Born in the maredian of my fathers family to become a saviour to my Leniage since I cam into the covanant of the celestial Law.”²⁵

23. See discussion in Samuel M. Brown, “The Prophet Elias Puzzle,” *Dialogue* 39, no. 3 (2006): 9–10 and n. 71.

24. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 346, 353.

25. George Laub, “Reminiscences and Journal,” MS 9628, Church History Library, 2.

Often Joseph and his father gave blessings that promised parents that their children would be protected by their righteousness, by the sacred bonds of priesthood, protected to such a degree that even mishaps and indiscretions—short of the sin against the Holy Ghost—could not prevent their children’s salvation.²⁶ When he announced polygamy, the controversial rite that I have framed as spousal adoption,²⁷ Joseph reminded the Church of the power of the adoptive seals of the temple. The Saints were assured that their salvation was preserved by the sealing power of the temple. According to the 1843 polygamy revelation:

Then shall it be written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, that he shall commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, and if ye abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.²⁸

This concept of assured salvation was unpopular then and now, and it could be quite dangerous in certain interpretations.²⁹ John C. Bennett famously distorted polygamy into frank sexual predation.³⁰ This doctrine was not precisely antinomianism, the famous heresy of seventeenth-century Massachusetts Bay Colony, by which converted believers stood above the law. One author has called this “institutional

26. H. Michael Marquardt, comp. and ed., *Early Patriarchal Blessings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2007), 72 (blessing on Joseph Cooper, May 14, 1836), 76 (blessing on Amos Fuller, June 17, 1836), 104–5 (blessing on Joseph Bosworth, probably 1836), 120 (blessing on Allen Gray, probably 1836), and 163 (blessing on Clarissa Perry, May 27, 1837); Lyndon W. Cook, *William Law: Biographical Essay, Nauvoo Diary, Correspondence, Interview* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 1994), 121.

27. I describe polygamy as spousal adoption in “The ‘Lineage of My Priesthood’ and the Chain of Belonging.”

28. D&C 132:19.

29. Debates over antinomianism and universalism in early America contain the elements of such concern. Recognizing how close to universalism the Restoration was may provide some insight into this discussion today.

30. Bennett’s distinctive life is well described in Andrew F. Smith, *The Sainly Scoundrel: The Life and Times of Dr. John Cook Bennett* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

antinomianism,” though this too fails to describe what Joseph was teaching.³¹ The Prophet was moving away from traditional Christian ideas about salvation and law. He was saying something about salvation that existed in the creation of durable family relationships. Being bound to heaven meant being bound to other people. True conversion was no isolated encounter between a single penitent believer and the mighty God; it was the creation of or integration into a family.

Joseph was not proposing libertinism among temple-sealed Latter-day Saints, and neither am I. I believe, as I always have, that when we are presented with the option of living our lives well or poorly, we should choose to live well as much as we possibly can. I am proposing, rather, that adoption theology provides a strong and clear mechanism by which our inadequacies and frailties can be absorbed into Christ. By owning us, giving us his name, Christ acknowledges and creates relationships with us. Joseph Smith taught us that the compass of the Atonement could be expanded by our integration into the network of salvation. Our frailties and inadequacies can be absorbed into the loving relationships we create with each other through the power of the sealing sacraments much as they are absorbed into Christ. Through adoption theology, I am more aware of a Savior of those who are tattered and torn, of an Atonement with the magnificent power to save even souls as confused, rebellious, and hard as mine. I am also more aware of the ways in which we tattered and torn Savors on Mount Zion can carry salvation to each other.

American political and cultural ideology, now centuries old, resists the conclusion that our salvation might rest in our relationships. According to the prevalent culture, we stand or fall on our own; we have no responsibility for the exercise of another person's will, and no one has responsibility for ours. The possibility of communal and adoptive salvation may seem to run afoul of the Restoration's rejection of original sin; we are not responsible for Adam's transgression but for our own sins. This is correct—the Prophet Joseph did reject original sin, the creedal Christian doctrine that humans are inherently depraved as a result of the Fall. He also taught that “all intelligence” is “independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself” (D&C 93:30). Joseph did not thereby exclude the possibility that we as humans could be interdependent in our salvation. We should not let the Prophet's rejection of the Christian

31. John Brooke, *The Refiner's Fire: The Making of Mormon Cosmology, 1644–1844* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 262.

doctrines of original sin and traducianism cloud our thinking about the nature of salvation.

My bishop in college, a brilliant scholar and deeply spiritual man, once used simple mathematical images to illustrate the meaning of the Atonement to me. Any number added to or subtracted from infinity equals infinity, he observed. In mathematical notation,

$$\infty \pm x = \infty$$

Using the actual if dramatic number googol to make the point,

$$\infty + 10^{100} = \infty$$

and

$$\infty - 10^{100} = \infty$$

When we discussed this salvific arithmetic in college, we emphasized the fact that through Christ our failings and our successes were subsumed into his infinite righteousness. However righteous or unrighteous we are (with the strange and poorly understood exception of the “sons of perdition”), our merits are absorbed into Christ’s infinite perfection. This was and is a beautiful and inspiring insight, one for which I am grateful to my college bishop.

The adoption theology clarifies the meaning of each of these symbols in a way I did not appreciate when I was a college freshman. The addition and subtraction signs represent the sacraments of adoption, the ordinances by which a sacred transformation occurs. The sign of infinity, ∞ , represents not just Christ but the grand family of heaven, the Chain of Belonging which we enter through adoption, and the = sign represents our actual integration into that chain.³² This is a brief sketch of one possible view into the relational meanings of Atonement, a model of Christ’s power that abstracts beyond many of the debates about law or cosmic balance or propitiation or substitution. Whatever ultimate model we believe for the efficacy of the Atonement, I am hopeful that appreciating the relational aspects of salvation will strengthen our understanding of the Atonement.

I do not entirely understand how to square the possibilities of salvation through adoptive seals with the almost mechanistic view of salvation some of us have adopted over the last century. We Latter-day Saints are pilloried and occasionally praised as a people whose yearnings for pious or material success make us a grand hyperbole of Max Weber’s “Protestant work ethic,” a people whose overburdened women

32. Brown, “Early Mormon Chain of Belonging,” 24–31.

reportedly find solace only in pharmaceutical treatments for depression.³³ I disagree with the broad and often malign brushstrokes with which we have been painted (including misleading claims about antidepressants). There is great beauty and power in what we have become as a people. Even so, I see the spiritual trouble that stands behind the phenomena outsiders have been prone to attack. We do sometimes get lost in exclusive rhetoric about obedience; we sometimes seem as legalistic as the Pharisees Christ so roundly criticized. The adoption theology holds out to me the possibility that what matters most are the sacred bonds we create with each other, the spiritual energies we invest in those we care for. I remember the Desert Fathers, the famous first monks of the fourth-century East. As historian Peter Brown has carefully and persuasively demonstrated, the monks' rejection of food and sexuality, the traditional components of asceticism as we moderns have understood it, was only the preamble to the real work of purification: the creation of a heart that could live in interdependence with others.³⁴

We will inevitably encounter difficulties living such an approach to salvation. Lives of obedience bordering on asceticism sometimes seem easier than maintaining harmonious spiritual relationships. Relationships are notoriously difficult to maintain successfully. As every parent knows, the agency of each individual belongs to the individual—children often disappoint the aspirations of their parents; spouses squabble; Church members may have radically different ideas about how a ward should operate; neighbors and communities may contest issues of policy or approach, sometimes with great vitriol. But these are the problems that stretch us, that transform us gradually into the divine beings of the Chain of Belonging. Lehi wanted us to understand that there is no salvation without struggle (2 Nephi 2); in the struggles to love and respect and strengthen each other stands the work of salvation.

Perhaps most importantly, these are the problems that will persist forever, no matter how godly our ultimate fate. The scriptures tell us clearly and repeatedly that God and Christ continue to emphasize relationships with all of us. And we are imperfect: we fail, we fight, we commit iniquity. If our fate is to be something like God, we will not be

33. As one example of the common trope that Utah/Mormon women are more depressed (as measured by pharmaceutical prescriptions) than other Americans, see Julie Cart, "Study Finds Utah Leads Nation in Antidepressant Use," *Los Angeles Times*, February 20, 2002.

34. Brown, *Body and Society*, 213–40.

plagued by struggles over issues of personal temptation or addiction. We will, however, struggle and weep, as does God, over the fates of our children, those beings with whom we will in turn enter into eternal adoptive relationships.

The Heaven Family

Many of us in the global West live in a world of harsh individualism, focusing at most on a “nuclear” family in competition with the outside world. When Joseph was restoring the gospel, such an atomistic tradition was only just establishing itself against an older, larger view of how families should be shaped.³⁵ As Joseph restored ancient doctrines and sacraments for the Latter-day Saints, he set about this work with an eye toward a family structure expansive enough to accommodate everyone. The marvelous society of Zion, a history the Prophet recovered from obscurity in the prophecy of Enoch (now published as part of the book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price), represented a society in which community and family were largely coterminous. At times in the early Restoration, the lines between biological and ecclesiastical family blurred so heavily that many participants and observers could not reliably distinguish them. After Joseph’s death, the complex merger of biological and ecclesial families continued under Brigham Young’s leadership.

As C. S. Lewis has noted (albeit with a sexism unbecoming a spiritual guide of his stature), we are prone to allow our sense of our nuclear family to dominate our encounters with the outside world.³⁶ This has been a longstanding problem, well recognized throughout human history. Acute awareness of the needs of our own family often pushes us away from awareness of the needs of those outside our family. The tensions between individual and communal needs rocked the early American

35. On the period when this is often felt to have happened, see Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); compare Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

36. See, for example, C. S. Lewis, *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis: Books, Broadcasts, and the War, 1931–1949* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 395. Lewis proposed maternal protectiveness of children as a reason why women might not be suitable for service in government.

Republic in which the gospel was restored, and they have continued in various forms to the present day.

Joseph Smith sought to teach the Saints how to love the way God loved—expansively. One of the most dramatic and distressing methods by which he sought to teach this lesson was polygamy. While polygamy is long gone (a fact for which I personally am grateful), I believe that we bear the responsibility to stay true to its animating vision, a vision at once more familiar and more difficult than the sensationalistic images associated with plural marriage. I believe that adoption provides some insight into the meaning of that animating, nonsexual vision underlying polygamy. Joseph hoped that we could begin to practice a commitment that is beyond pettiness, a love beyond boundaries, a love that could encompass every living soul. We are too much titillated by the sexuality surrounding polygamy: the core message, one of nonsexual love that stretches us, that expands our vision and imagination, is often lost.

In practice, living Joseph's vision is very difficult. Such commitments do not come naturally to us, particularly when we perceive competition between the broader world and our own families. On the other side, responsibilities to the outside world can become a convenient excuse for a man who thrives on the praise of outsiders and fears his own inability at home. We should beware the invocation of the love of humanity as a cloak to hide the sins of pettiness and selfishness, the inability to relate to those with whom we live directly. The heaven family should be a way to grow one's own family rather than to sacrifice it on the altar of good works. While there is sacred pleasure in a family centered in a domestic nucleus, God has great work for all of us to perform across the boundaries of our biological families.

Adoption theology also provides a sacred exemplar for the human practice of legal adoption. Though narratives about giving bodies to waiting spirits have affected ideas about parenting for many decades, parenthood can matter equally or perhaps more when it is a chosen relationship. While questions of parenting, family planning, and fertility are intensely personal, I believe that understanding adoption theology may comfort Latter-day Saints facing infertility and support those who adopt or serve as foster parents as part of their personal devotions or life's work. Adoption is a central tenet of Christ's work of redemption.

Conclusion

The Prophet Joseph gave clear, strong encouragement to those believers who would seek out their dead. We as Latter-day Saints are part of a

grand adventure that ranges across the entire length of human history. Our work, a work that will continue long after we are dead, is to attach ourselves to each other in limitless networks of belonging. In this regard, we are much like the founding prophet of the Restoration. Adoption theology, a now unfamiliar doctrine of the early Restoration, provides ready access to these inspiring ideas.

Samuel M. Brown, MD MS (who can be reached via email at byustudies@byu.edu) is Assistant Professor of Pulmonary/Critical Care Medicine and Medical Ethics and Humanities at the University of Utah School of Medicine and Attending Physician in the Shock Trauma ICU at Intermountain Medical Center. He majored in linguistics with a minor in Russian at Harvard College and then obtained his medical degree from Harvard Medical School. His primary focus is clinical research to understand variations in patients' responses to life-threatening infection, and on weekends he writes history of culture and religion. He is the author of *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death*, which won the Mormon History Association Best First Book Award. He lives in Salt Lake City with his wife, who is a religious historian, and their young children. He is currently counselor to the elders quorum president and home teacher to two fine families in his ward. He and his family like to read, garden, and cook.

A Tribute to High School English

There is a tree, bowed and bent
as if some boy
had run up its spine.
But there is no ice storm here
just the snow, which baptizes
and the wind making naked
limbs that leaves once covered,
so that the tree bends, not broken
by blooded youth
but bared and weighed out by winter.
With branches held out
as if in supplication,
or understanding.
For nakedness reveals truth.
And what would we swing for anyway?
To reach high, glimpse visions,
and fall again?
Better yet to stand
where trees have broken themselves
where the winds strips leaves and faces.
To see and yet remain.
Then perhaps,
to bow.

—Dan Belnap

Game Theory, the Prisoner's Dilemma, and the Book of Mormon

Robert F. Schwartz

In all of man's written record there has been a preoccupation with conflict of interest; possibly only the topics of God, love, and inner struggle have received comparable attention.

—R. Duncan Luce and Howard Raiffa¹

If people do not believe that mathematics is simple, it is only because they do not realize how complicated life is.

—John von Neumann²

After five hundred years of bloodshed, mistrust, and mutual antagonism between two nations, a Nephite prince follows his inner voice and goes to preach to his historical enemies, the Lamanites. On arrival, Lamanites straightaway seize the prince and arraign him before the local king. The fate of the Nephite prince lies in the hands of the enemy king, who has utter discretion and power to execute, detain, imprison, or deport him. In what appears to be an act of cruel whimsy, the king asks his captive whether he intends to stay and live among the Lamanites. The Nephite responds emphatically that he intends to dwell among Lamanites until his dying day. Responding to this affirmation,

1. R. Duncan Luce and Howard Raiffa, *Games and Decisions: Introduction and Critical Survey* (1957; repr., New York: Dover, 1989), 1.

2. The source of this semiapocryphal quote is set out at <http://www.math.uiowa.edu/~jorgen/vonneumannquotesource.html>.

the king unshackles the prince and offers to make him part of his family, and from this point forward Nephite-Lamanite interaction changes profoundly.

What could explain this exchange? Ammon, the prince, has not yet opened his mouth to preach, yet something in the nature of his contact with the king reverses deep-rooted suspicion and gives rise to cooperation. While arguably the Book of Mormon's most important case of conflict resolution, the Ammon example is merely one of many interactions in the Book of Mormon that, on closer inspection, demand further thought and scrutiny.

The Book of Mormon brims with conflict from its earliest to its latest pages, and each struggle poses its own questions. When Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi approach Laban to get the brass plates, could they more effectively anticipate Laban's reaction and work to counteract it? Why does sibling rivalry and discontent in Lehi's family repeat itself in similar ways and ultimately spiral down into ongoing violence? How is it possible for Nephite authors such as Enos and others to express concern for Lamanite welfare and simultaneously pursue war against Lamanites, condemning them as wild, bloodthirsty, idolatrous, and filthy (Enos 1:20)? Why does war disappear for almost three centuries after Jesus's postresurrection appearance? Why does the Book of Mormon end in apocalyptic ruin rather than peace?

Because the Book of Mormon is holy writ (many principal characters proclaim themselves to be—or are viewed by later authors as—prophets of God), a believer will naturally view such questions through the lens of faith. The answer of a believer to many of these questions says that character X is devoted and obedient to God's will in a given conflict and is thus divinely prospered, whereas character Y is prideful in defying God and suffers ill effects as a result. Observations like these find intrinsic support within the Book of Mormon and its Judeo-Christian belief system, but failure to inquire further may deprive readers of crucial insights and patterns that are hidden in plain view.

A comparative study of game theory and the Book of Mormon provides such insights. Some comparative studies make more intuitive sense than others. Almost forty-five years have passed since a twenty-three-year-old student published groundbreaking work that revealed the existence and extent of chiasmic patterns in the Book of Mormon, joining centuries-old knowledge of poetic forms in the Bible with then-nascent Book of Mormon studies. The ongoing enthusiasm of academics and

lay observers for the chiasmus study flows partly from a feeling that the Book of Mormon *should*, given its origin, evidence ancient Hebrew poetic forms.³

Many later studies uniting various disciplines with close analysis of the Book of Mormon evoke similar responses of accord and praise. For example, the record's descriptions of lands, seas, and general topography give a natural entrée to geographic studies.⁴ Other topical suitors include ancient history,⁵ American history,⁶ modern literature,⁷ geology,⁸ semiotics,⁹ and law.¹⁰ Despite this diversity, no student of the Book of Mormon has ever rigorously applied game theory to its histories and social structures.

The architects of game theory sought to provide a mathematical, axiomatic base for economics, and by this measure the discipline admittedly fails to present itself as a natural scriptural bedfellow.¹¹ From its earliest days, however, game theory has set about to measure, map, and try to resolve conflicts of interest, identifying optimal outcomes

3. John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10, no. 1 (1969): 69; see also, for example, Joseph M. Spencer, *An Other Testament: On Typology* (Salem, Ore.: Salt Press, 2012), 2–7.

4. See, for example, David Palmer, review of *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, by Joseph L. Allen, *BYU Studies* 30, no. 3 (1990): 136.

5. See Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 89–116; C. Wilfred Griggs, "The Book of Mormon as an Ancient Book," *BYU Studies* 22, no. 3 (1982): 259–78.

6. See Richard L. Bushman, "The Book of Mormon and the American Revolution," *BYU Studies* 17, no. 1 (1976): 3–20.

7. See Gordon K. Thomas, "The Book of Mormon in the English Literary Context of 1837," *BYU Studies* 27, no. 1 (1987): 37–45; Richard H. Cracroft, "The Gentle Blasphemer: Mark Twain, Holy Scripture, and the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 2 (1971): 119–40.

8. See Benjamin R. Jordan, "'Many Great and Notable Cities Were Sunk': Liquefaction in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 38, no. 3 (1999): 119–22.

9. See Steven L. Olsen, "Cosmic Urban Symbolism in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 23, no. 1 (1983): 79–92.

10. See John W. Welch, *The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, 2008).

11. John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*, 60th anniv. ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 1–15.

where struggles arise between individuals and groups. Recognizing the power of game theory as an analytical tool, modern jurists, politicians, lawyers,¹² sociologists,¹³ Bible scholars,¹⁴ and others continually work to grasp and apply its principles in their fields. This article represents the first sustained effort to do so in the Book of Mormon.

In their influential 1957 treatise on game theory, Duncan Luce and Howard Raiffa explain: “Game theory is not *descriptive*, but rather (conditionally) *normative*. It states neither how people do behave nor how they should behave in an absolute sense, but how they should behave if they wish to achieve certain ends.”¹⁵ During the 1930s and 1940s, luminaries of twentieth-century mathematics (most notably John von Neumann and John Nash) developed game theory’s bedrock principles and assumptions. A vital example of these principles is John Nash’s “equilibrium point.” Nash shows that the best choice in many conflicts is the choice that cannot be bested regardless of the approach taken by one’s opponent (more on this later). Though central to game-theory decision making, Nash’s equilibrium point is called into question by a simple game/conflict called the “Prisoner’s Dilemma.”

The Prisoner’s Dilemma has its origin in research by game theorists Merrill Flood and Melvin Dresher (and takes its name from a story about two prisoners that was created to explain the research to lay audiences).¹⁶ Initially aiming to validate Nash’s work in a practical trial, Flood and Dresher demonstrate that individuals might choose a mutually beneficial outcome even though it carries more risk than an equilibrium point approach. Hailed as the foundation of “many of the best-developed models of important political, social and economic processes,”¹⁷ the Prisoner’s Dilemma has grown over time to be seen as game theory’s most persistent call to reflection on the pursuit and

12. See Douglas G. Baird, Robert H. Gertner, and Randal C. Picker, *Game Theory and the Law* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994).

13. See Luce and Raiffa, *Games and Decisions*.

14. See Steven J. Brams, *Biblical Games: Game Theory and the Hebrew Bible*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002).

15. Luce and Raiffa, *Games and Decisions*, 63.

16. Merrill M. Flood, “Some Experimental Games,” U.S. Air Force Project RAND Research Memorandum RM-789-1 (June 20, 1952). For a brief explanation of the origin of the Prisoner’s Dilemma, see note 31 herein.

17. Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (London: Penguin, 1990), 28–29.

possibility of cooperation where conflicts arise. This call finds particular expression in the Book of Mormon.

The thesis of the present work is threefold: first, the Book of Mormon can be read as an extended, iterated Prisoner's Dilemma, with its unique histories reflecting outcomes that are consistent with modern game theory; second, reading the Book of Mormon in light of the Prisoner's Dilemma brings the text's patterns of conflict into sharp relief and provides a useful framework for understanding those patterns; and, last, a close reading of the Book of Mormon yields insights into the Prisoner's Dilemma that reaffirm a pattern not generally evident in studies of the Prisoner's Dilemma but which can be seen in the initial experiment carried out by Flood and Dresher.

AN INTRODUCTION TO GAME THEORY AND THE PRISONER'S DILEMMA

Although the primary aim of this article is to explore how the Prisoner's Dilemma can (and should) inform study of the Book of Mormon, the Prisoner's Dilemma must first be understood in relation to certain foundational principles of game theory. To this end, the introductory section of this article will briefly lay out principles established by von Neumann and Nash. Having laid this foundation, it will then explain what the Prisoner's Dilemma is and how it has developed conceptually. The main portion of the article will then discuss how the Prisoner's Dilemma relates to the Book of Mormon.

Von Neumann, Zero-Sum Games, and the Minimax Principle

Princeton-based Hungarian mathematician John von Neumann worked out game theory's threshold and starting point, which constitutes his best-known contribution to the field: the minimax principle. Von Neumann developed the minimax principle in what he referred to as "zero-sum two-person games."¹⁸ "Game" in this context means a conflict between two individuals or groups over a finite resource or reward. The label "zero-sum" comes from the condition that the sum of all outcomes in the conflict must equal zero; in other words, one person's gain is the other person's loss, and neither "player" can gain more by adding to the limited resource that is the subject of the conflict (another term for "zero-sum" in game-theory parlance is "strictly competitive").

18. Von Neumann and Morgenstern, *Theory of Games*, 48.

Attempts to explain zero-sum games sometimes involve children and a cake.¹⁹ Two children have a cake that they are to divide and consume, and the entire cake can be assigned a value of 1. Any portion of the cake that one child can secure for itself (creating positive value for that child) will come at the expense of the other child. Suppose that child 1 secures a portion equal to 0.6, meaning that 0.4 goes to child 2. The 0.4 to child 2 creates a value of -0.4 for child 1, giving child 1 a net gain of 0.2. The opposite will be true for child 2, who receives a positive value of 0.4 but a lost value of 0.6, leaving child 2 with an overall position of -0.2 . While child 1 wins this conflict, the overall gains and losses of both children amount to zero.

But more is needed. In a zero-sum conflict, each player makes a choice that is independent of the other player and that must be made without knowledge of how the other player will exercise her choice (the game is, in other words, what game theorists would refer to as “noncooperative”).²⁰ In making choices, each player seeks to achieve two aims: (1) increase as much as possible the amount gained from the conflict and (2) guard as much as possible against the risk posed by the other player seeking to do the same.

Von Neumann’s great insight is that the optimal choice for either player in a zero-sum game is not simply the choice that yields the possibility of greatest gain. Instead, the minimax principle prescribes a course of action that combines the qualities of increasing as much as possible the minimum amount one player receives (maximize the minimum, or maximin) and decreasing as much as possible the top amount accruing to the other player (minimize the maximum, or minimax).²¹ Applying this to the cake example, if one child cuts the cake and the other has first choice of the pieces then the cutter will cut the cake directly down the middle. This both minimizes the maximum that the other child will receive (no more than half) while maximizing the minimum amount that she will receive (half).

19. See William Poundstone, *Prisoner’s Dilemma: John von Neumann, Game Theory, and the Puzzle of the Bomb* (New York: Anchor, 1993), 52–55; Katie Salen and Eric Zimmerman, *Rules of Play: Game Design Fundamentals* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004), 239–41; Steven J. Brams, Michael A. Jones, and Christian Klamler, “Better Ways to Cut a Cake,” *Notices of the American Mathematical Society* 53, no. 11 (December 2006), 1314–21. Other well-known examples of zero-sum games include tic-tac-toe, checkers, and chess.

20. See Luce and Raiffa, *Games and Decisions*, 88–89.

21. See von Neumann and Morgenstern, *Theory of Games*, 153–54.

Von Neumann called the optimal solution to such a game its “saddle point.”²² A saddle point can be simply understood as the point at which the interests of each individual in a zero-sum conflict are optimally balanced—the confluence of minimax and maximin in a way analogous to a mountain saddle pass that joins two opposing peaks.²³ In formulating theorems and identifying saddle points, von Neumann backed up his reasoning with rigorous mathematical proofs that go far beyond the scope of the present article. The vital point here is that the minimax principle elegantly illustrates the type of question that game theory seeks to address: where the interests of individuals or groups diverge, under what conditions can those interests find a mutual balance point?

Nash, Non-Zero-Sum Games, and Equilibrium Points

Someone who has grasped the minimax principle or notion of a saddle point already understands to a notable degree the intuition behind John Nash’s “equilibrium point.” However, where the minimax principle applies solely in the context of strictly competitive games, equilibrium points can be located in games where outcomes do not sum to zero.²⁴ Nash formulates the notion of equilibrium points explicitly to find a principle of more general applicability,²⁵ and a basic understanding of equilibrium points is key for anyone who wishes to grasp the Prisoner’s Dilemma.

22. Von Neumann and Morgenstern, *Theory of Games*, 93–95.

23. Von Neumann and Morgenstern, *Theory of Games*, 95.

24. The remaining discussion in this article revolves around games that are competitive but not strictly competitive (not zero-sum). As discussed further in the context of the Prisoner’s Dilemma, this means that while the interests of the players conflict, they do not conflict in all instances. In a competitive game, there may exist one or more outcomes that the players jointly prefer above all others despite conflict on other outcomes. In thinking about the distinction between competitive and strictly competitive conflicts, we should take care not to conflate the question of whether a game is competitive with whether it is cooperative. The former deals with the question of whether (and to what extent) the interests of the parties conflict, whereas the latter deals with the question of whether the parties can communicate before making their decisions (that is, whether they can collaborate in order to reach a given outcome). While this article has discussed both strictly and “merely” competitive games, all of the games discussed in this article (including the Prisoner’s Dilemma) are non-cooperative. For further discussion on strictly competitive vs. nonstrictly competitive games, see, for example, Luce and Raiffa, *Games and Decisions*, 59–60.

25. Howard W. Kuhn and Sylvia Nasar, eds., *The Essential John Nash* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), 49–50, 85–86.

To understand the nature of an equilibrium point, consider two players (A and B) who can decide among the possible choices and related outcomes in a game that is represented in the table below (as illustrated, the first outcome in a given cell is for player A and the second outcome is for player B—for example, reading figure 1 below, if both players deploy choice 2, then A will have an outcome of 3 and B will have an outcome of 80):²⁶

		B	
		Choice 1	Choice 2
A	Choice 1	7, 4	4, 0
	Choice 2	0, 3	3, 80

FIGURE 1. Player A's outcome is listed first, then player B's. The equilibrium point is 7, 4.

The equilibrium point for A and B in this game emerges when both players employ choice 1. Choice 1 represents an equilibrium point for both parties because *neither party can expect to benefit by employing any other choice*.²⁷ If A employs choice 1, the best possible outcome will be 7 and the minimum outcome will be 4. Likewise, if B employs choice 1, the best outcome is 4 and the worst outcome is 3. While B could potentially achieve an outcome of 80 by employing choice 2, B cannot expect to benefit by employing this strategy because A cannot justify choice 2 and will not choose it given the relative outcomes under choice 1.²⁸

Where von Neumann's saddle point was the point at which minimax and maximin interests find optimal balance (an outcome that Nash called the "basic ingredient" of his equilibrium point theory),²⁹ Nash's equilibrium point can be understood as a similar but more general result where "each player's strategy is optimal against those of the others."³⁰ In other words, a player in a game reaches the equilibrium point when she happens upon a choice that cannot be bested when taking into account all strategies that the other player (or players) could employ.

Due to this article's focus on the Prisoner's Dilemma and given the intricacy of Nash's proofs, this article does not further consider the detail or nature of the games that Nash explored. Nash's core insight of equilibrium

26. See Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma*, 98; see also Luce and Raiffa, *Games and Decisions*, 170–72.

27. See Luce and Raiffa, *Games and Decisions*, 170–72.

28. See Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma*, 98.

29. Kuhn and Nasar, *Essential John Nash*, 85.

30. Kuhn and Nasar, *Essential John Nash*, 87.

point must be understood at a general level, however, because its application is what makes the Prisoner's Dilemma a true dilemma.

The Prisoner's Dilemma

(from the Flood-Dresher Experiment to the Axelrod Tournaments)

Like the example of children and cake and the encounter between A and B in figure 1, the Prisoner's Dilemma is a game—a conflict where players' relative choices determine their received outcomes. Merrill Flood and Melvin Dresher conceived and carried out the original Prisoner's Dilemma study (titled the "Non-Cooperative Pair") in or around January 1950, publishing it in 1952.³¹ In the years following Flood and Dresher's experiment, the Prisoner's Dilemma became a subject of intense debate and analysis both within the game-theory community and far beyond.³²

31. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 17. The Flood-Dresher study took its moniker soon thereafter from a simple story involving two prisoners that Albert William Tucker (a Princeton mathematician and acquaintance of Flood and Dresher) produced to make the research accessible for audiences with little or no background in game theory. Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma*, 116–18; Luce and Raiffa, *Games and Decisions*, 94–95. Tucker, who was a colleague of von Neumann and had taught John Nash, told a story to illustrate the Prisoner's Dilemma that went something like the following (here as related by Luce and Raiffa):

"Two suspects are taken into custody and separated. The district attorney is certain that they are guilty of a specific crime, but he does not have adequate evidence to convict them at a trial. He points out to each prisoner that each has two alternatives: to confess to the crime the police are sure they have done or not to confess. If they both do not confess, then the district attorney states he will book them on some very minor trumped-up charge such as petty larceny and illegal possession of a weapon, and they will both receive minor punishment; if they both confess they will be prosecuted, but he will recommend less than the most severe sentence; but if one confesses and the other does not, then the confessor will receive lenient treatment for turning state's evidence whereas the latter will get 'the book' slapped at him." Luce and Raiffa, *Games and Decisions*, 95.

If illustrated in a table, the game would appear as follows:

		Suspect 2	
		Not Confess	Confess
Suspect 1	Not Confess	1 year, 1 year	10 years, 3 months
	Confess	3 months, 10 years	8 years, 8 years

Why, precisely, this game poses a dilemma and the nature of its implications are further explored in the body of this article.

32. See, for example, Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 28. Axelrod mentions Prisoner's Dilemma studies in relation to a variety of specific and abstract

Among the various debaters and students, Robert Axelrod (a mathematician and political scientist at the University of Michigan) published a pivotal subsequent study in 1984, *The Evolution of Cooperation*.

Axelrod boils down the Prisoner's Dilemma into the following tidy narrative:

In the Prisoner's Dilemma game, there are two players. Each has two choices, namely cooperate or defect. Each must make the choice without knowing what the other will do. No matter what the other does, defection yields a higher payoff than cooperation. The dilemma is that if both defect, both do worse than if both had cooperated. . . . The Prisoner's Dilemma is simply an abstract formulation of some very common and very interesting situations in which what is best for each person individually leads to mutual defection, whereas everyone would have been better off with mutual cooperation.³³

Axelrod summarizes the game's payoffs as follows:³⁴

		B	
		Cooperate	Defect
A	Cooperate	3, 3	0, 5
	Defect	5, 0	1, 1

FIGURE 2. Player A's outcome is listed first, then player B's. The equilibrium point is 1, 1.

Looking at figure 2, someone schooled in game theory should immediately note that the game is not strictly competitive, since the outcomes for the players do not all sum to zero (for example, it is possible for both players to come out ahead if both players cooperate). Dealing with a non-zero-sum game and unable, therefore, to apply the minimax principle, we must ask where the equilibrium point lies.

The clear equilibrium point is, as Axelrod hints, mutual defection; stated another way, neither player can expect to do any better in a non-cooperative environment than to defect. Although both players will perform better if they cooperate, each player faces the constant temptation to defect, scoring additional value and leaving the cooperator with a loss. Because cooperation opens up to each player the greatest possibility of loss, the only strategy that cannot be bested independent of any decision made by the other player is to defect. And therein lies the dilemma: the

fields including the arms race, "oligopolistic competition," vote trading, women's rights, collective action, rational thought, and others.

33. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 8, 9.

34. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 8.

most efficient result comes when both players choose an option that, while relatively safe, yields less overall utility (2) than if the players were to both take a choice that creates greater overall good both individually and collectively (6 when both cooperate).³⁵

As part of his Prisoner's Dilemma analysis, Axelrod introduces nicknames for the payoffs (allowing him to avoid constant reference to numerical values). The payoff to each player for mutual cooperation is the "reward," or *R*. Where one player cooperates and the other defects, the defector gains the "temptation" (*T*) while the cooperator is left with the "sucker's payoff" (*S*). Where both defect, both players receive the "punishment" (*P*):³⁶

		B	
		Cooperate	Defect
A	Cooperate	<i>R, R</i>	<i>S, T</i>
	Defect	<i>T, S</i>	<i>P, P</i>

FIGURE 3. Player A's outcome is listed first, then player B's. The equilibrium point is *P, P*.

Generalizing in this way, Axelrod injects a further dose of mathematical rigor in establishing two conditions that must be met in order for payoffs to qualify as a Prisoner's Dilemma:³⁷

35. A rational observer would comment that the value of the 1.5 cents should be discounted to take account of the risk of the other player choosing choice 2 and subjecting the player to loss.

36. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 8–9, 206–7.

37. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 9–10, 206–7. The Axelrod version of the Prisoner's Dilemma meets both of these conditions: condition 1 is met because $5 > 3 > 1 > 0$, and condition 2 is met because, once the calculation has been made, $3 > 2.5$. While these conditions provide a handy guide in relation to Axelrod's version of the Prisoner's Dilemma (which one could call a "symmetric Prisoner's Dilemma," given the equal payoffs to both parties), they do not adequately describe the conditions that would have to exist for a Prisoner's Dilemma of the type described in the Flood-Dresher experiment (an "asymmetric Prisoner's Dilemma"). For an asymmetric Prisoner's Dilemma, the conditions would have to be revised slightly as follows:

Condition 1*: $(T_1 + T_2) > (R_1 + R_2) > (P_1 + P_2) > (S_1 + S_2)$

Condition 2*: $\frac{(R_1 + R_2)}{2} > \frac{(T_1 + S_1) + (T_2 + S_2)}{4}$

It should be noted here that while the Flood-Dresher experiment (explored later in the article) meets condition 1 (after sums are performed, $5 > 1.5 > 0.5 > -2$), it does not meet condition 2 (having done the math, $0.25 = 0.25$; this fails

Condition 1: T (temptation payoff) $> R$ (reward payoff) $> P$ (punishment payoff) $> S$ (sucker's payoff)

Condition 2: $R > \frac{(T+S)}{2}$

The first condition is essential because even in circumstances where it is hard (or practically impossible) to attach cardinal values to payoffs, we can still apply an ordinal hierarchy to assess payoffs relative to one another and have certainty that the players are receiving incentives that match the Prisoner's Dilemma model. The second condition speaks less to the relative value between payoffs and more to the power of the proposed reward (R) relative to the temptation (T) and the sucker's payoff (S). If R does not have greater value than the average of T and S , then this could suggest that a player does not have strong enough incentive to seek R because T could invariably yield higher returns (even if only obtained sometimes).³⁸ These generalized terms combined with the conditions make the Prisoner's Dilemma more flexible and easy to apply in a wide variety of situations while still retaining consistency.

Two primary questions drive Axelrod's analysis of the Prisoner's Dilemma: (1) "In situations where each individual has an incentive to be selfish, how can cooperation ever develop . . . without the aid of a central authority?"³⁹ and (2) "Since the Prisoner's Dilemma is so common in everything from personal relations to international relations," what

because the former should be greater than the latter as in the Axelrod experiment). While the Flood-Dresher experiment presents the first instance of a Prisoner's Dilemma (a game where the optimal outcome yields less overall gain than an outcome where both players spontaneously cooperate), we might argue that the failure of the reward (R) to outweigh the average of the temptation and the sucker's payoff ($(T + S)/2$) creates a more powerful incentive for the players to defect (noting that AA defects on almost $\frac{1}{5}$ of his plays, and AA and JW together defect on just over $\frac{1}{4}$ of the 100 plays). Where symmetric and asymmetric payoffs are concerned, Axelrod does admit that the payoffs do not need to be symmetric provided that the two conditions are met. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 17. However, for the conditions to apply to asymmetric payoffs, they must be amended in the same manner as condition 1* and condition 2* above.

38. Axelrod writes in relation to the second condition: "The second part of the definition of the Prisoner's Dilemma is that the players cannot get out of their dilemma by taking turns exploiting each other. This assumption means that an even chance of exploitation and being exploited is not as good an outcome for a player as mutual cooperation. It is therefore assumed that the reward for mutual cooperation is greater than the average of the temptation and the sucker's payoff." Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 10.

39. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 3, 6.

practical strategy can an individual apply to “choose effectively in an iterated Prisoner’s Dilemma”?⁴⁰

To test these questions, Axelrod organized and ran two Prisoner’s Dilemma computer tournaments. He invited experienced game theorists to submit computer programs with encoded rules on whether to cooperate or defect on every move of an iterated Prisoner’s Dilemma.⁴¹ Fourteen academics from five disciplines (psychology, economics, political science, mathematics, and sociology) responded in the first tournament, and, following that tournament’s success, sixty-two academics participated in the second tournament. Each tournament was structured as a round robin with 200 moves per round (making 400 separate choices per round for both players).⁴² Each move was awarded points in accordance with figure 2 above, and to win the tournament a program would have to score the highest average number of points across all rounds.

The winner of both tournaments was a very simple program named TIT FOR TAT (“TFT”).⁴³ The strategy encoded into TFT starts with a cooperative move and then does whatever the other player did on the prior move.⁴⁴ As long as the other player is willing to cooperate, TFT cooperates. The instant that a player defects, TFT follows suit. Axelrod calls TFT and strategies like it “nice” strategies, by which he means that they are never the first to defect.⁴⁵ The results of both tournaments show that TFT’s strength derives from a combination of four characteristics: it is (1) nice (never defects first), (2) retaliatory/provokable (quickly reacts to defection), (3) forgiving (holds no grudges in relation to past defection and promptly cooperates along with the other party) and (4) clear (very easy to recognize in iterated play).⁴⁶

A number of conclusions that Axelrod derives from the tournament results will be teased out as we apply the Prisoner’s Dilemma to the Book of Mormon, but one key conclusion must be mentioned here: the propensity of individuals to cooperate depends on their scope for future

40. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 27, 29.

41. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 30–31. Axelrod mentions that he specifically invited individuals with a “rich understanding of the strategic possibilities inherent in a non-zero-sum setting . . . who had published articles on game theory in general or the Prisoner’s Dilemma in particular.”

42. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 30–31.

43. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 31–32.

44. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 31.

45. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 33.

46. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 54.

interaction (something that he refers to as the “shadow of the future”).⁴⁷ Axelrod successfully demonstrates that TFT succeeds only if the value assigned to future interaction is high.⁴⁸ The lower the value that players attach to future dealing (perhaps, as Axelrod points out, owing to a “greater likelihood that the interaction will end soon, or to a greater preference for immediate benefits over delayed gratification”),⁴⁹ the more likely it becomes that players will defect and the poorer the results obtained by TFT. And the reverse is also true: as the shadow of the future lengthens, players become more prone to cooperate and the results obtained by TFT are more robust.

We are almost equipped to apply the Prisoner’s Dilemma, but there remains a variation of the game that yields results that must be understood before starting a Book of Mormon analysis: the asymmetric Prisoner’s Dilemma. The Prisoner’s Dilemma as described by Axelrod is symmetric; in other words, the players receive equivalent payoffs in similar situations (T , R , P and S are the same for each player). Axelrod accepts that this equivalence is not necessary for a Prisoner’s Dilemma to be considered as such (the important thing is for the two conditions described above to be met).⁵⁰ While taking this vital logical step, Axelrod does not explore how players might react if their payoffs are not equivalent.

Nonequivalent, asymmetric payoffs matter because they naturally occur in many (if not most) “real-life” situations, and the original Flood study gives us a compelling case in point. To carry out his “Non-Cooperative Pair” experiment, Flood chose Armen Alchian (AA) of UCLA and John Williams (JW) of RAND (both of whom were “familiar with two-person zero-sum game theory”).⁵¹ Flood presented AA and JW with the payoffs in figure 4 below, explaining that they would repeat the game 100 times and have an opportunity to record thoughts or reactions after each play:

47. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 59, 124–32.

48. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 126–32.

49. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 128.

50. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 17.

51. Flood, “Some Experimental Games,” 17; see also Poundstone, *Prisoner’s Dilemma*, 106. Flood noted more specifically, “They also knew something of the von Neumann–Morgenstern theory for non-constant sum games, but were not familiar either with the Nash work or the split-the-difference principle.” Flood, “Some Experimental Games,” 17.

		JW	
		Choice 1	Choice 2
AA	Choice 1	0.5¢, 1¢	-1¢, 2¢
	Choice 2	1¢, -1¢	0, 0.5¢

FIGURE 4. AA's outcome is listed first, then JW's. The equilibrium point is 0, 0.5¢.

Unlike the Axelrod tournaments, the Flood study has each player receive different payments in the same situations. The payoffs conform to the $T > R > P > S$ hierarchy, but they are not equal.

Flood ran the mini-tournament and then tallied up the results of the 100 games played between AA and JW. We can see that the AA-JW contest yields the following frequencies:⁵²

		JW	
		Choice 1	Choice 2
AA	Choice 1	60%	8%
	Choice 2	18%	14%

FIGURE 5.

In a study designed to test whether players would choose the Nash equilibrium in practice, the players do not generally choose the most efficient outcome.⁵³ The 60 percent frequency of mutual cooperation vindicates the “shadow of the future” conclusion of the Axelrod tournaments over thirty years before those tournaments ever took place. In repeated play over 100 iterations, the players’ scope for future interaction gives them incentive to do the risky thing and cooperate, steering away from the equilibrium point. Bolstering this “shadow of the future” analysis, AA even identifies explicitly that the end of the game could likely trigger

52. Flood, “Some Experimental Games,” 18.

53. Flood, “Some Experimental Games,” 1–4. Flood stated specifically: “I have long felt that the axiomatic structures developed by von Neumann-Morgenstern, and by others, should be tested for applicability and usefulness in controlled experimental situations—and I have called such activity ‘experimental games’” (at 3). Flood and Drescher both worked for the RAND Corporation (RAND stood for “research and development”), a project set up initially as a joint venture between Douglas Aircraft and the U.S. Air Force to conduct military research. Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma*, 84–86. Though in the years immediately following World War II RAND researchers concentrated mainly on the logistics and practical repercussions of nuclear war, their research broadened as the years progressed. Poundstone, *Prisoner's Dilemma*, 84–99.

defection by both parties. As the end of the game approaches and the players hit a stretch of prolonged cooperation, AA comments after move 91 of 100 (both parties having cooperated on the prior 9 moves): "When will [JW] switch as a last minute grab of (2) [defection]. Can I beat him to it as late as possible?"⁵⁴ AA knows that the end of the game will flip the players' incentives, giving them reason to value larger short-term gain over the steady long-term gains of cooperation.

In addition to the "shadow of the future," another trend jumps out of the Flood tournament: almost $\frac{1}{5}$ of the game's outcomes consist of JW choosing 1 while AA defects and picks choice 2. Why does AA take advantage of JW, and why does he do it to JW 10 percent more often than JW does it to him?

Figure 4 plainly shows inequality in the results received by AA and JW; whatever AA might achieve, JW will achieve more in the same circumstances. While choice 2 is the optimal, safest bet, it leaves JW with very little and AA with nothing when both choose it together (although it does have the virtue of protecting both players from receiving -1¢ in a scenario where one or the other player defects). Given the game's setup, the only way that AA can get a decent result is to defect by choosing 2 when JW chooses 1. So mere observation of the payoffs suggests that AA might defect more often simply to increase his score; however, the players' notes give this story more color and shed light on two distinctly varying narratives about the game's progression.

JW recognizes early in the process that choice 2 is the game's equilibrium point, but that both players will do better if they are willing to assist one another in mutually choosing 1.⁵⁵ It is obvious to JW that he will personally gain more than AA from both cooperation and equilibrium point scenarios, but JW's thought is that cooperation under choice 1 yields greater good to both of them so AA may as well "get on the bandwagon . . . [and] invest in his own future."⁵⁶ In short, JW

54. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 40.

55. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 41. JW's exact thoughts (recorded after play number 10) were as follows (he was apparently thinking in terms of 10-play intervals): "I can guarantee myself a gain of 5, and guarantee that Player AA breaks even (at best). On the other hand, with nominal assistance from AA, I can transfer the guarantee of 5 to Player AA and make 10 for myself too. This means I have control of the game to a large extent, so Player AA had better appreciate this and get on the bandwagon." Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 41.

56. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 41.

accepts the game's fundamental inequality and feels that both players should try to achieve as much as possible within their respective privileged and less-privileged spheres.

As AA defects throughout the game, trying to take points at JW's expense, JW expresses at turns bemusement and outrage. JW clearly views himself as a noble benefactor who is trying to do the "virtuous" thing while AA is jealous of his success, a petulant "stinker" who "learns slow."⁵⁷ JW's nutshell view of AA is probably best expressed after play 52, when he notes: "He *requires* great virtue but doesn't have it himself."⁵⁸

AA also recognizes the outcome inequality, but as the player destined to come up short, he reacts to it differently than JW. Immediately after the first play, AA implicitly makes clear that, in his view, an equitable outcome can result only if both players achieve equal points (and he wins only if he has more points than JW).⁵⁹ As the game progresses and AA scores fewer points, he sees that JW is trying to encourage the cooperative 1-1 scenario but that the score can be equalized by pulling away and occasionally choosing 2 as JW sticks to 1.⁶⁰

When JW retaliates against AA's capricious moves by choosing 2 himself, AA protests again and again that JW is unwilling to "share."⁶¹ From AA's perspective, JW's winning posture places on him an obligation to allow AA to win some points at his expense. After move 59, AA records, "He does not want to *trick me*. He is satisfied. I must teach him to share."⁶² Then, after move 70, "I'll try once more to share—by taking."⁶³ Faced with inequality, AA resorts to self-help to equalize results—vigilante justice.

And so a dichotomy emerges from the two narratives. For JW, the players achieve fair outcomes if they both obtain the maximum possible

57. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 41–42. JW's self-epithet (recorded after play 41) was "always try to be virtuous," and he saw himself as giving AA chance after chance to meet him in the virtuous land of choice 1. His impressions of AA were variously: "The stinker," "He's crazy," "Maybe he'll be a good boy now," "To hell with him," "—, he learns slow!" "The —," "A shiftless individual—opportunist, knave," and "He can't stand success."

58. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 42.

59. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 39. After play 1, AA recorded: "JW will play 1—sure win. Hence if I play 1—I lose."

60. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 39.

61. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 39. After moves 49, 58 and 67, AA remarked, "He will not share."

62. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 39, emphasis in original.

63. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 40.

points on a segregated basis. For AA, fairness requires absolute parity, which, given the setup of the game, requires JW occasionally to give AA extra points (that is, willingly allow AA to take advantage of his good will). In short, the better-off player in an asymmetric Prisoner's Dilemma is satisfied with the status quo while the player with the short straw desires actual equivalence and feels justified in taking advantage of his counterpart to achieve such equivalence (provoking retaliation from the better-off, for whom the setup works well).

The same trends that we see in the Flood-Dresher experiment and the Axelrod study permeate the Book of Mormon.

THE PRISONER'S DILEMMA AND THE BOOK OF MORMON

Given the (necessarily but unfortunately) long introduction to this article, we should remind ourselves of its core concerns: first, that the histories of the Book of Mormon can be read as an iterated Prisoner's Dilemma; second, that reading the Book of Mormon in light of the Prisoner's Dilemma will help us not only to understand its conflicts better but also to build a framework for understanding those conflicts; and, last, that a close reading of the Book of Mormon can offer us examples of asymmetric Prisoner's Dilemmas (that is, those with unequal payoffs similar to the Flood-Dresher study) and give us insight into the effects of asymmetry and how it might be addressed.

Approaching Book of Mormon History in a Prisoner's Dilemma Framework

Applying the Prisoner's Dilemma to the Book of Mormon raises vital questions and issues. Rather than address these points in the abstract, we will consider a story that arguably presents the first Prisoner's Dilemma in the Book of Mormon and use it as an entrée to further investigation.

In chapter 3 of 1 Nephi, we find the prophet Lehi and his family in the wilderness as recent exiles from Jerusalem. Lehi says to Nephi, his fourth son, that God has commanded him in a dream that Nephi and his brothers must backtrack to Jerusalem and obtain a set of scriptures and genealogy recorded on brass plates from a man named Laban (1 Ne. 3:2–4). Nephi and his brothers return to Jerusalem, where they “cast lots” on who will have to go and speak to Laban—who, we can surmise from the lot casting, does not have a reputation as an affable man (1 Ne. 3:9–11). Nephi's brother Laman comes up short and goes to Laban to ask for the plates, only to receive a terse, aggressive rebuff (1 Ne. 3:11–14).

After an intense debate on whether they should return empty-handed or try Laban again, the brothers decide to return to “the land of our inheritance” and collect “our gold, and our silver, and our precious things” to exchange for the plates (1 Ne. 3:15–23). As Nephi and his brothers again approach Laban to transact with their new wager, we might view the potential outcomes as follows:

		Nephi and Brothers	
		Cooperate	Defect
Laban	Cooperate	Laban gets “precious things” (<i>R</i>) Nephi & brothers get plates (<i>R</i>)	Laban gets nothing (<i>S</i>) Nephi & brothers take everything (<i>T</i>)
	Defect	Laban takes everything (<i>T</i>) Nephi & brothers get nothing (<i>S</i>)	Laban keeps plates (<i>P</i>) Nephi & brothers keep “precious things” (<i>P</i>)

FIGURE 6.

Nephi and his brothers hope for mutual cooperation, but what they receive from Laban is the sucker’s payoff while he takes the temptation payoff (1 Ne. 3:25–26).

To determine whether this describes a formal Prisoner’s Dilemma, we look to Axelrod’s two conditions. The first condition requires that T (temptation payoff) $> R$ (reward payoff) $> P$ (punishment payoff) $> S$ (sucker’s payoff). Because we are not dealing with numerical payoffs, the measurement becomes more subjective, and we must assess the hierarchy from the perspective of each party (assuming that the conditions are met, Axelrod notes along these lines that the “payoffs of the players need not be comparable at all”).⁶⁴

For both sides to this particular conflict, the temptation payoff consists of both the “precious things” and the plates together, while the sucker’s payoff is nothing. For Nephi and his brothers, the reward payoff would be the plates and the punishment payoff would be the status quo of keeping the family’s inheritance (and not obtaining the plates). The hierarchy of payoffs as it applies to Nephi and his brothers seems to fall into the following order:

Obtain plates and keep “precious things” (T) $>$ Obtain plates in exchange for “precious things” (R) $>$ Keep “precious things” and fail to obtain the plates (P) $>$ Lose “precious things” and receive nothing (S)

64. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 17.

Was *T* the most desirable option for Nephi and his brothers? Although seemingly innocuous as an initial step, Laman first seeks the plates from Laban while offering no cooperative compensation at all. A typical Book of Mormon reader does not think of Laman in this instance as acting in bad faith (and the textual evidence seems to indicate that he acts in good faith), but Laman effectively offers Laban the sucker's payoff. The brothers in fact seek *T* before they seek *R*. We also know that the brothers seek to give their precious things in exchange for the plates, making it safe to conclude that *R* is of greater worth than *P*, and that *S* is the least desirable option. For Nephi and his brothers, the text provides strong support for the hierarchy of $T > R > P > S$.

So what were Laban's preferences? Responding to Laman's initial wager with the avowal "thou art a robber, and I will slay thee" (1 Ne. 3:13), Laban makes clear that he is not going to give up the plates easily and that he is no one's sucker. Nephi's narrative also shows that after the second encounter Laban ends up with both the plates and the family inheritance, so Laban demonstrably values and goes for the *T* payoff. While Laban values *T* the most and *S* the least, it is less clear whether he places greater value on the plates (nominally his "punishment" payoff) or the "precious things" (his assigned "reward" payoff). Laban's repeated snubs of the brothers' attempts to get the plates indicate that he values the plates enough to hold onto them.

In regard to the "precious things," Nephi indicates that "when Laban saw our property, and that it was exceedingly great, he did lust after it, insomuch that he thrust us out, and sent his servants to slay us, that he might obtain our property" (1 Ne. 3:25). While this might indicate that Laban values the property higher than the plates, we must keep in mind that the story is being related by the recipient of the sucker's payoff (at least initially) and that Laban's desire for the property in this instance coincides with his grab for *T*. The dual facts that the plates contain a genealogical record and that Laban is their keeper could suggest that they also chronicle his family history and have idiosyncratic worth for him as well.

Thus, while Laban's hierarchy could follow the prescribed order, there is some question as to whether this was actually the case:

Obtain plates and keep "precious things" (*T*) > Obtain "precious things" in exchange for the plates (*R*?) ≥ Keep plates and fail to obtain "precious things" (*P*?) > Receive and retain nothing (*S*)⁶⁵

65. Wynn Stirling helpfully points out that another way of noting the Laban payoffs could be: "Obtain plates and keep 'precious things' (*T*) >

The same Laban caveat holds true for the second Prisoner's Dilemma condition:

$$R > \frac{(T+S)}{2}$$

Although Nephi and his brothers value the plates (R) more than the average payoffs of taking everything (T) and walking away with nothing (S) (especially given that their sole aim in returning to Jerusalem was to get the plates), the text provides less evidence that Laban values the brothers' property more than the average of T and S from his perspective (although one could rationally assume that this was the case).

This exercise illustrates the practical difficulty of applying the Prisoner's Dilemma to the Book of Mormon. The question as to whether Laban values the offered riches more than the plates is material because it goes to the heart of whether Laban has good (or even any) incentive to cooperate with Nephi and his brothers. While the fit is not perfect, the story of Nephi and Laban does hew to the Prisoner's Dilemma model and it seems fair (noting relevant caveats) to call it a Prisoner's Dilemma.

If we stipulate that we are dealing here with a robust instance of a Prisoner's Dilemma, what does this tell us? This story, after all, is explicable on a number of common sense levels. Laban is apparently a ruffian who wants to take property that does not belong to him. Further, he has already said no, and the brothers have their answer, so perhaps they should think more carefully about going back to strike a deal with a man who has a private security force. The Prisoner's Dilemma, however, demands that we look at the course of dealing and the scope for future interaction between these characters.

When we evaluate the Laban story as a Prisoner's Dilemma, it becomes clear that that the optimal course of action is mutual defection. This is where Laman and Laban end up after their first meeting, with each receiving the P payoff spelled out in figure 6. On this basis alone, the brothers might have taken a dim view of their chances (and the text shows that Laman and Lemuel do take a dim view, 1 Ne. 3:14). Further,

Obtain 'precious things' in exchange for the plates (R) ~ Keep plates and fail to obtain 'precious things' (P) > Receive and retain nothing (S).² Email, Wynn Stirling to Robert F. Schwartz, September 15, 2012. The "~" symbol means "is indifferent between," reflecting an antisymmetrical relationship. The statement $R \sim P$ formally means $R \geq P$ and $P \geq R$. In this instance, as we are not certain whether Laban's preferences were strictly indifferent and the ordinal preferences as laid out in the text are more easily understood by a lay reader, the "~" symbol has not been used.

the brothers and Laban have no scope for future interaction. Laban likely would have been aware of the family's hasty departure from Jerusalem, and his repeated death threats indicate that he does not anticipate future dealings with the brothers. With no shadow of the future to give the parties incentive to prefer delayed gratification over immediate gain, the man with the army does what is within his power to do.

And so, in this instance, the Prisoner's Dilemma can indicate *ex ante* what, *ex post*, was clearly destined to transpire when the brothers approach Laban. Approaching the text from this viewpoint does not detract from the divine importance of obtaining the plates as described in 1 Nephi. The brothers (or at least Nephi) recognize that they have a divine commission, but the lens of the Prisoner's Dilemma suggests that they could have, at the very least, gone to Laban with their family inheritance in the first instance instead of playing Laban for a sucker. Other strategies might likewise have boosted their chances (one of which Nephi is compelled to employ later). In any case, the Prisoner's Dilemma makes a prominent appearance in the earliest pages of the Book of Mormon.

Having applied the Prisoner's Dilemma to the encounter between Laban and Lehi's sons, we see that comparative study of the Book of Mormon and the Prisoner's Dilemma raises two fundamental challenges, each of which contains a multitude of questions and considerations:

First challenge. Assigning relative values to payoffs is difficult. Nephi desires the plates because he is deeply convinced that God has commanded him to retrieve them (see 1 Ne. 3:14–21). Laman and Lemuel, by contrast, lack apparent conviction and investment in obtaining the plates (see 1 Ne. 3:5, 14). As discussed above, the text does not fully resolve the question of whether Laban places greater value on the plates or the gold and silver. Does it matter that Laban would receive an *R* consisting of “gold and silver” whereas Nephi would receive *R* in the form of a brass-plate chronicle? What if Nephi derives more value from *R* than Laban? How does the brothers' status as sons of Lehi, a wanted criminal, change Laban's persuasion?⁶⁶ Do Laban's own legal duties (in respect of the plates or otherwise) impact relative payoffs values?

66. Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 3d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998); the relevant passage discussing Lehi's public order crimes in Jerusalem can be accessed at <http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/books/?bookid=60&chapid=612>. In chapter 28 (“The Way of the Wicked”) of *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, Nibley writes: “The pattern of crime in

To line up potential Book of Mormon payoffs and show that they fit the Axelrod Prisoner's Dilemma conditions, a reader must scour the text for evidence that might or might not be forthcoming. Compounding this evidentiary problem is the fact that we receive Book of Mormon facts from narrators who either live through the events in question or clearly recognize one or another side as being in the right. So even where the text reports facts, we have to tread carefully in forming an "objective" view. And finally, can an action fairly bear the "defection" label if the text suggests that it effectively fulfills God's will?

Fortunately, the Prisoner's Dilemma model (especially as both generalized and formalized by Axelrod) is robust enough both to respond to and to withstand these concerns while remaining useful as a tool for measuring conflicts and their outcomes. As noted already, the players' respective payoffs do not need to match (we should not be worried if we seem to be comparing apples and oranges).⁶⁷ As long as the payoffs to a player can be measured relative to each other, the two definitive conditions can be assessed and measured. The brothers might seek plates and Laban might seek riches, but as long as we know how the brothers rate plates relative to family inheritance and that Laban clearly prefers taking everything to accepting the brothers' offer of "precious things," then we can hope to draw conclusions about whether their mutual conflict proceeds as we would expect, given what the Prisoner's Dilemma tells us about human behavior.

Even if we accept that the payoffs to one or another party can qualitatively differ, should the players not be receiving payoffs that have equivalent value (that is, should they not be quantitatively matched)? Is it problematic, for instance, that in the mutual cooperation scenario of figure 6 Nephi seems poised (given his divine mandate) to derive more

the Book of Mormon is clearly established in the very first chapter, where we read of a plot among the Jews at Jerusalem to put Lehi out of the way. It was no excited street-rabble or quick impulse of a city mob that threatened his life; certain parties 'sought his life' . . . with purpose and design . . . and his awareness of the danger gave Lehi time to plan and execute an escape. . . . [In the view of these people,] Lehi was a dangerous and irresponsible troublemaker and, in view of the international situation, treasonable and subversive to the bargain."

67. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 17. Axelrod illustrates this point as follows: "For example, a journalist might get rewarded with another inside story, while the cooperating bureaucrat might be rewarded with a chance to have a policy argument presented in a favorable light." Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 17.

value from the plates than Laban would from the riches (in a way reminiscent of the asymmetric payoffs of the Flood-Dresher experiment)? Axelrod's thoughts on this point are important enough that they bear extended quotation:

The payoffs certainly do not have to be symmetric. It is a convenience to think of the interaction as exactly equivalent from the perspective of the two players, but this is not necessary. One does not have to assume, for example, that the reward for mutual cooperation, or of any of the other three payoff parameters, have the same magnitude for both players. . . . [One] does not even have to assume that they are measured in comparable units. The only thing that has to be assumed is that, for each player, the four payoffs are ordered as required for the definition of the Prisoner's Dilemma.⁶⁸

As the original Flood experiment demonstrates, asymmetric payments can affect the incentives and outcomes of the parties to a Prisoner's Dilemma, and we will shortly see how such asymmetry plays out more generally in Book of Mormon history.

So players can receive different payments, and those payments can give one player more value (even much more value) than another player, but should we still hesitate to label an action "defection" that in the Book of Mormon fulfills (or is responsive to) the will of God? A seed of an answer to this question is bound up in Axelrod's thought that "cooperation need not be considered desirable from the point of view of the rest of the world," citing bribery as an example.⁶⁹ The negative pregnant⁷⁰ of this statement is the notion that defection is not *per se* undesirable when viewed through the lens of a Book of Mormon author. One example of this appears in figure 6, where the brothers could have obtained the plates without rendering their possessions to Laban (Laman's initial plan), thus simultaneously fulfilling the will of God as expressed by their father Lehi and defecting vis-à-vis Laban. We will see other examples where a party is said to defect despite acting in furtherance of the expressed divine will, and this should not be problematic.

68. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 17. See note 35 for a discussion of the way in which one would have to modify the conventional Axelrod formulas to accommodate asymmetric payments.

69. Axelrod, *Evolution of Co-operation*, 17–18.

70. A negative pregnant is "a denial of an allegation in which a person actually admits more than he/she denies by denying only a part of the alleged fact." The Free Dictionary, <http://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Negative+pregnant>.

Second Challenge. Can the core assumption of self-interest/utility maximization that underpins game theory (including the Prisoner's Dilemma) contradict or even undermine the Christian ethos of care for others that resides at the heart of the Book of Mormon? The answer here is that self-interest, properly understood, is not mutually exclusive with reciprocal regard, friendship, or love. Siblings, spouses, and friends may care for one another deeply, but this does not make the potential for conflict between them disappear.⁷¹ A Book of Mormon prophet may express profound concern for the welfare of another nation and still admit or even pursue the possibility of war with that nation (see, for example, Enos 1:13–14, 20–24, explored in greater detail below). Axelrod précisés this issue tidily in explaining that “the assumption of self-interest is really just an assumption that concern for others does not completely solve the problem of when to cooperate with them and when not to.”⁷² In the Book of Mormon context, we might add that a desire to fulfill the will of God does not completely solve the problem of when to cooperate with others and when not to.

In sum, applying the Prisoner's Dilemma to a study of the Book of Mormon and its histories could offer unique insights. This effort should be rigorously controlled by careful fact gathering in the text with an eye to measure the incentives of an author against the way that he describes conflicts. Further control comes from applying the conditions that define the Prisoner's Dilemma. As these concerns are addressed, a more interesting question presents itself: if we apply the Prisoner's Dilemma to the Book of Mormon, what might we learn?

Patterns of Conflict in the Book of Mormon

Although the Book of Mormon covers in its Nephite histories a millennial span that includes the rise and fall of large nations, it begins with the story of one man and his family as they leave their home to travel across deserts in search of a promised land. The prophet Lehi and his wife, Sariah, have four sons as the story begins: Laman, Lemuel, Sam, and Nephi (1 Ne. 2:5; 5:1). Although Lemuel and Sam were not mentioned in the Laban discussion above, they were present on the excursion, and so we have had some introduction to the sons (Jacob and Joseph, two further sons, are born while Lehi and Sariah live in the desert, as described in 1 Ne. 18:7). Laman

71. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 6–7.

72. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 7.

and Lemuel are known in the Book of Mormon primarily as bad-tempered foils to Nephi’s righteous character and can-do personality. A recurring motif throughout 1 Nephi and the opening chapters of 2 Nephi (all written by Nephi) features Lehi asking his sons to perform some task (such as the Laban errand) or Nephi encouraging his brothers to take part in a divinely appointed charge; according to the usual pattern, Nephi earnestly pushes ahead while his brothers either (1) grudgingly comply or (2) openly rebel by following their own agenda and, in some instances, inflicting bodily harm on Nephi when he stands in the way of that agenda.

If we were to count Laman and Lemuel’s complaint-laden compliance as obedience to the relevant request, the potential interactions within Lehi’s family could be summarized as follows:

		Nephi	
		Cooperate	Defect
Laman and Lemuel	Cooperate	Nephi is obedient (<i>R</i>); Laman and Lemuel are obedient (<i>R</i>)	Laman and Lemuel are obedient (<i>S</i>); Nephi retaliates (<i>T</i>)
	Defect	Laman and Lemuel follow own agenda/beat Nephi (<i>T</i>); Nephi is obedient (<i>S</i>)	Laman and Lemuel follow own agenda/ beat Nephi (<i>P</i>); Nephi retaliates (<i>P</i>)

FIGURE 7.

Does this ongoing tension present a Prisoner’s Dilemma? As in the Nephi-Laban example, the payoffs here are not the same, so we must do a party-by-party analysis.

For Laman and Lemuel, the record suggests that following their own agenda (even at the cost of beating Nephi to have the ability to do so) clearly takes top priority. If Nephi is willing to work while they loaf, that is ideal. However, their reactions to the rare instances in 1 Nephi where Nephi (or God) retaliates against them indicate that if they are going to receive punishment, Laman and Lemuel would rather cooperate than continue to push back (see, for example, 1 Ne. 17:52–55; 18:15, 20). From Laman and Lemuel’s perspective, therefore, it seems reasonable to argue that:

Following own agenda while Nephi shoulders the hard work (*T*) > Rendering obedience while Nephi shares the labor (*R*) > Following own agenda while suffering Nephi’s (or God’s) ire (*P*) > Rendering obedience while suffering Nephi’s (or God’s) ire (*S*)

The second condition also seems colorable, since we could argue that sharing the labor with Nephi is better from Laman and Lemuel’s

perspective than the average of *T* and *S*. So we seem to have the foundation of a Prisoner's Dilemma.

Nephi's actions are harder to parse, because his narrative presents a relentless desire to fulfill God's will. The *T* that exerts such pull for Laman and Lemuel does not seem to attract Nephi at all, which throws the $T > R > P > S$ hierarchy into question—few readers of the Book of Mormon can imagine Nephi wanting to lash out at his brothers while they diligently keep their heads down on the task at hand. While Nephi's narrative is replete with occasions where he urges family members to loyal tractability (1 Ne. 2:16–18; 3:7, 21; 4:1–3; 7:8–12; 16:22; 17:23–47), we can locate at least one example where Nephi arguably strikes out against his brothers at a time when they are cooperating.

This instance of Nephi opting for *T* happens in the famous “shocking” incident that takes place during his shipbuilding. The incident requires some background: After eight years of desert drifting and hardship, Nephi and his broader family arrive in a land of “much fruit and also wild honey” situated on a seashore next to “many waters” (1 Ne. 17:5). Nephi records that the weary travelers were “exceedingly rejoiced” to reach this choice spot (17:6). After some time in this place, Nephi receives a command from God to build a ship that will take Lehi's entire family to a “promised land” (17:7–14). When Nephi encourages his brothers to join him in shipbuilding, Laman and Lemuel deride Nephi's enterprise and refuse to take part (17:15–18). First move: Nephi, *S*; Laman and Lemuel, *T*.

Laman and Lemuel soon notice that their refusal to take part has deeply upset Nephi, and they take the opportunity to use the perceived absurdity of Nephi's shipbuilding to further underscore grievances from their time in the wilderness dating back to the departure from Jerusalem (17:19–22). In response, Nephi recounts at length the dealings of God with Moses and the children of Israel in the wilderness at Sinai, causing Laman and Lemuel to approach Nephi to “lay their hands upon [him] . . . to throw [him] into the depths of the sea” (17:23–48). Seeing that his situation is precarious, Nephi warns his brothers not to touch him, for he is “filled with the power of God . . . and whoso shall lay his hands upon me shall wither even as a dried reed . . . for God shall smite him,” going on to say “many things” to them about God's power (17:48–52). Nephi records that after his speech to them, Laman and Lemuel were “confounded and could not contend against me; neither durst they lay their hands upon me nor touch me . . . even for the space of many days” (17:52).

This second incident is less about building a ship and more about working out their perceived differences. Although Laman and Lemuel come close to attacking Nephi, they back down and leave him alone for the “space of many days” (17:52). Viewing these events together, we might say that the second move in this particular back-and-forth is: Nephi, *R*; Laman and Lemuel, *R*.

Nephi then receives a command from God: “Stretch forth thine hand again unto thy brethren, and they shall not wither before thee, but I will shock them, saith the Lord, and this will I do, that they may know that I am the Lord their God” (17:53). Despite the fact that Laman and Lemuel pose no imminent threat (having, in Nephi’s words, left him alone for “many days”) and chose not to attack him previously, Nephi goes to Laman and Lemuel, lifts his hand to them, and “the Lord did shake them, even according to the word which he had spoken” (17:54). Third move: Nephi, *T*; Laman and Lemuel, *S*. From this point, Nephi and his brothers all proceed to build a ship together (1 Ne. 18:1–5) (fourth move: Nephi, *R*; Laman and Lemuel, *R*).

A Book of Mormon reader would not typically class Nephi’s decision to shock Laman and Lemuel as choosing a temptation payoff (*T*) (maybe as encouraging a mutually beneficial outcome, *R*), but Nephi does inflict bodily pain on Laman and Lemuel when they had previously chosen not to go through with an attack on him. Nephi being Nephi, his motivation for pursuing *T* is not a “selfish” desire but rather an urge to follow God’s will and try to promote obedience once and for all. As argued above, this should not prevent us from applying the *T* label or recognizing that Nephi defects vis-à-vis his brothers. To paraphrase Axelrod, Nephi’s desire to fulfill God’s will does not resolve the issue of when he should cooperate with Laman and Lemuel and when he should not.

Even so, this one incident does not provide enough evidence to substantiate a claim that Nephi would have preferred *T* to *R*. It is clear, however, that Nephi would have preferred *T* or *R* to both *P* and *S*, so a possible hierarchy for Nephi would be: $T \geq R > P > S$. While this hierarchy is close (if not perfect), there can be no doubt that Axelrod’s second condition would be satisfied in Nephi’s case:

$$R > \frac{(T + S)}{2}$$

Although the fit is not impeccable, the Book of Mormon text supplies evidence that the conflicts among Lehi’s sons follow a Prisoner’s Dilemma format. The level of exegesis in the “shocking” incident is not possible for each interaction between Nephi and his brothers, but their course of interaction can be briefly summarized as follows:

Event	Nephi	Laman and Lemuel
First attempt to get the brass plates (1 Ne. 3:1–13)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)
Second attempt to get the brass plates (1 Ne. 3:14–26)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)
Third attempt to get the brass plates (1 Ne. 3:27–4:26)	Cooperate (<i>S</i>)	Defect (<i>T</i>)
Return to Jerusalem to get Ishmael and his family (1 Ne. 7:1–5)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)
Return to the wilderness from Jerusalem with Ishmael and his family (initial attempt) (1 Ne. 7:6–16)	Cooperate (<i>S</i>)	Defect (<i>T</i>)
Return to the wilderness from Jerusalem with Ishmael and his family (subsequent attempt) (1 Ne. 7:17–22)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)
Nephi shares insights from his vision of the tree of life (1 Ne. 15:21–16:5)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)
Invitation to build the ship (1 Ne. 17:8–18)	Cooperate (<i>S</i>)	Defect (<i>T</i>)
Postinvitation back-and-forth (1 Ne. 17:18–52)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)
Postinvitation “shock” incident (1 Ne. 17:53–55)	Defect (<i>T</i>)	Cooperate (<i>S</i>)
Ship building (1 Ne. 18:1–5)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)
Sailing: merriment and Nephi bound (1 Ne. 18:9–11)	Cooperate (<i>S</i>)	Defect (<i>T</i>)
Sailing: Nephi bound, Liahona stops working and storms arise (1 Ne. 18:12–14)	Defect (<i>P</i>) (note that here it is God who “defects,” not Nephi directly)	Defect (<i>P</i>)
Sailing: Nephi loosed, Liahona works, storms cease (1 Ne. 18:15–22)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>) (here again it is God who “cooperates,” not Nephi directly)	Cooperate (<i>R</i>)
Split into two nations upon Lehi’s death (2 Ne. 5:1–6, 12, 14)	Defect (<i>P</i>) (Nephi and his people depart, taking key parts of Lehi’s estate)	Defect (<i>P</i>) (Laman and Lemuel seek to kill Nephi once and for all)

Setting out all of the potential conflicts between Nephi and his brothers in this manner shows that Laman and Lemuel cooperate more often than they defect (although the selection of incidents is by no means scientific,

it suggests a 60 percent rate of cooperation that, by coincidence, is a dead match for the rate of mutual cooperation in the Flood-Dresher study with AA and JW). While the bellicose pair in fact cooperate often, they also defect more often than one might expect where the scope for future interaction between two parties is long. If, as Axelrod suggests, a long “shadow of the future” should have a positive correlation with cooperative behavior, why do Laman and Lemuel defect so often?

One explanation for their behavior might be that they are simply bad and want to get away with whatever they can. In the Axelrod tournament, by way of analogy, one entrant submitted a strategy that Axelrod dubbed “All D” because his rule was to defect without exception.⁷³ Though tempting to view Laman and Lemuel in a similar light, the text shows them cooperating often during the family’s eight-year desert trek and subsequent sea voyage and settling in the promised land. More importantly, the text shows that the brothers have multiple moments of genuine remorse and desire to improve. After rebelling in the wilderness with Ishmael’s family—seeking to return to Jerusalem—Laman and Lemuel eventually choose to “bow down before [Nephi] and . . . plead . . . that [he] would forgive them” (1 Ne. 7:20). When Nephi relates his vision of the tree of life, Laman and Lemuel “humble themselves before the Lord,” desiring to do right (16:5). And again, after the “shocking” incident, Laman and Lemuel bow down to Nephi (17:55). Although their contrition frequently follows some form of conflict, they show contrition all the same and so the “pure evil” explanation does not wash.

An alternative explanation for Laman and Lemuel’s behavior is that the benefit they derive from obedience (*R*) is less than the benefit that Nephi derives. As in the Flood-Dresher experiment, the Book of Mormon gives evidence of asymmetric payoffs to the interacting parties. Although all of Lehi’s sons go to Jerusalem to get the plates (and Laman goes first to Laban), all sons return for Ishmael and his family, all sons hunt for food, all sons build the ship, and all sons ultimately suffer eight years of wilderness hardship, the outcomes for all sons are not equal. In a family where a key part of the father’s profession is to prophesy and preach, Laman and Lemuel (the eldest) fail to show much aptitude for the family trade while Nephi (among the youngest) shows huge promise.

When Lehi urges his eldest to be “firm and steadfast . . . in keeping the commandments of the Lord” during their desert travels, Laman and Lemuel complain that they cannot understand why it was necessary to

73. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 63.

leave Jerusalem in the first place (1 Ne. 2:9–14). When Lehi shares with all family members his vision of a tree filled with marvelous fruit, he says that the dream gives him reason to “rejoice . . . because of Nephi and . . . Sam” but to “fear exceedingly” for Laman and Lemuel (1 Ne. 8:2–12). Following Lehi’s account, Laman and Lemuel “disput[e] one with another concerning the things which [Lehi] had spoken” (1 Ne. 15:2). Besides difficulty in parsing their father’s intentions and proclamations, Laman and Lemuel fail to bail their family out of a food crisis (1 Ne. 16:15–32), fail to lead in the shipbuilding (1 Ne. 17:17–55), and, according to the record, precipitate a crisis at sea (1 Ne. 18:8–22).

Nephi, by contrast, receives praise from the beginning as someone “favored of the Lord” (1 Ne. 3:6, where Nephi reports his father’s words). It is Nephi who succeeds in obtaining Laban’s plates (1 Ne. 4:6–24), cracks the spiritual code of his father’s complex dream (1 Ne. 15:6–36), feeds the family during a time when hunting has become nearly impossible (1 Ne. 16:15–32), and leads the shipbuilding (1 Ne. 17:7–55). Coming from a culture where the eldest traditionally enjoy priority and unique blessings (see, for example, Esau and Jacob in Genesis 27), Nephi by his actions turns tradition on its head and finds more than one occasion to remind his brothers that he is younger (1 Ne. 7:8, 17:55).

Shortly before his death, Lehi formalizes Nephi’s privileged status, doing so in a way that leaves Laman and Lemuel in a curious quandary. Lehi gives Laman, the eldest, “a blessing, yea, even my first blessing,” but solely on the condition that Laman, Lemuel, and the other brothers and brothers-in-law must “hearken unto the voice of Nephi” (2 Ne. 1:28).⁷⁴ If Laman and Lemuel fail to observe the condition, the “first blessing” reverts to Nephi and stays with him (2 Ne. 1:29). And so even if Laman obtains his birthright, it is a birthright in name only, subject always to Nephi’s oversight.

74. The text of 2 Nephi 1:28 reads, “And now *my son*, Laman, *and also* Lemuel and Sam, *and also* my sons who are the sons of Ishmael, behold, if ye will hearken unto the voice of Nephi ye shall not perish. And if ye will hearken unto him I leave unto you a blessing, yea, even my first blessing” (italics added). A close reading shows that Lehi’s primary addressee here is Laman, his eldest. 2 Nephi 4:3 expressly states that Laman is the “firstborn.” As Lehi’s firstborn, the mentioned “first blessing” would belong to him subject to the condition. Alongside Laman, Lehi also addresses Lemuel, Sam, and the sons of Ishmael, urging them all to do the same thing as Laman, namely listen to Nephi. The sons of Ishmael fall under Lehi’s patriarchal jurisdiction owing to the earlier death of Ishmael in the wilderness (1 Ne. 16:34).

Laman and Lemuel are stung by the insult contained in Lehi's blessing and its condition (2 Ne. 5:3). Adding injury to this insult, Lehi blesses Laman and Lemuel's children and successors that they will eventually find redemption, but not before enduring a "curse" and "destruction" (2 Ne. 4:3–9). These parting words and Lehi's death prove to be the breaking point of the family's pattern of conflict. Nephi tries to fulfill his assigned role as the leader of all parties (2 Ne. 4:13–14), but his efforts lead to an immediate power struggle with Laman and Lemuel, who soon declare: "Our younger brother thinks to rule over us; and we have had much trial because of him; wherefore, now let us slay him, that we may not be afflicted more because of his words. For behold, we will not have him to be our ruler; for it belongs unto us, who are the elder brethren, to rule over this people" (2 Ne. 5:3). Faced with an ongoing conflict where Nephi would have the upper hand, Laman and Lemuel seek to eliminate Nephi altogether.

Laman and Lemuel's relationship with Nephi calls to mind the asymmetric Flood-Dresher experiment with AA and JW. In Laman and Lemuel's complaint that Nephi "thinks to rule over us; and . . . we will not have him to be our ruler," we hear echoes of AA's frequent protest that JW "will not share."⁷⁵ In Laman and Lemuel's repeated beatings of Nephi and their ultimate plan to kill him, we can again hear AA's declaration: "I'll try once more to share—by taking."⁷⁶ Frustrated by perceived or actual inequality in outcomes, AA and Laman and Lemuel resort to vigilantism (not unlike the self-help to which Joseph's brothers resort in Genesis 37, another example of asymmetric outcomes that led to resentment).

Likewise, Nephi shares JW's incredulity in dealing with a counterparty who seems intent on scoring points at his expense. Where JW remarks that AA "isn't [bright] but maybe he'll wise up,"⁷⁷ Nephi comments (more tactfully) that Laman and Lemuel "knew not the dealings of that God who had created them" and prays that they might come to know better (1 Ne. 2:12, 18). Where JW expresses constant frustration that AA is a "shiftless individual—opportunist, knave" who "learns slow,"⁷⁸ Nephi scolds Laman and Lemuel for being "swift to do iniquity but slow to remember the Lord your God" (1 Ne. 17:45). JW could

75. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 39.

76. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 40.

77. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 41.

78. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 42.

have been speaking for both himself and Nephi when he sums up his perception of AA: "He *requires* great virtue but doesn't have it himself. . . . He can't stand success."⁷⁹

And so although the unequal results do not excuse or justify Laman and Lemuel's behavior, the asymmetry does provide some insight into why they act as they do. Amid all these compelling parallels, we must note that while AA's outcomes are stipulated *ex ante* and he has no input or say as to their disproportion, Laman and Lemuel have power over time to influence the outcomes that they receive. AA struggles helpless against a fixed universe of results, but Laman and Lemuel have constant invitations from both their father and Nephi to step up and claim their rightful place as leaders.

While Laman and Lemuel (and Nephi) must bear a material share of responsibility for their respective situations, the conflicts inherited by their children and further descendants increasingly resemble the fixed outcomes faced by AA and JW. The violent split between Laman and Lemuel and their followers on the one hand, who swear to kill Nephi (2 Ne. 5:4), and Nephi and his followers on the other (including Sam, Jacob, and Joseph) produces two critical effects: (1) the shadow for future interaction between the two groups shortens radically and (2) inequality between the two groups widens dramatically.

As for future interaction, Nephi takes his people, who come to be known as "the people of Nephi," or "Nephites" (Jacob 1:14), and flees "into the wilderness . . . journey[ing] in the wilderness for the space of many days" (2 Ne. 5:5–9). Now in two different places, the Nephites and the people of Laman (or "Lamanites") develop independently and at a distance from one another, having ruptured over a fierce difference of opinion.

Drastic inequality develops immediately between the two groups. Nephi relates that when they depart into the wilderness, they take with them "the plates of brass; and also the ball, or compass, which was prepared for my father by the hand of the Lord . . . [and] the sword of Laban" (2 Ne. 5:12, 14). These items are the crown jewels of the family's shared travels, and their significance cannot be overstated. We know that the brothers travel together to Jerusalem to get the plates and obtain them at great personal risk. Laban's sword comes from the same excursion. The compass that leads them through the wilderness holds such deep importance that the Nephites subsequently pass it down from king to king as

79. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 42.

part of the rites of passage along with the plates and sword (Mosiah 1:16). While Nephi has legitimate claim to the items (having personally slain Laban by Laban's sword, obtained the plates, and exercised the faith necessary to make the compass work), Laman and Lemuel as the eldest also have had strong claim to the items (and would certainly have had sturdy incentive to forget the nuances of their acquisition and prior use).

Nephi's unilateral settlement of the most prized items from his late father's estate lays the foundation for a lasting narrative of grievances and division between the two nations. Nearly five hundred years later when (Nephite) Ammon and (Lamanite) Lamoni happen upon Lamoni's father, a Lamanite king, the father's immediate response is, "Whither art thou going with this Nephite, who is one of the children of a liar? . . . [T]hese Nephites . . . are sons of a liar. Behold, he robbed our fathers; and now his children are also come among us that they may, by their cunning and their lyings, deceive us, that they again may rob us of our property" (Alma 20:10, 13). The Lamanites apparently never forget that the Nephites had taken away what they view as their rightful inheritance.

The prized items (plates, sword, and compass) allow the Nephites to maintain more sophisticated standards of construction (2 Ne. 5:15–16), weapons manufacture (2 Ne. 5:14), and education (2 Ne. 5:29–34), leading to wealth and prosperity (2 Ne. 5:17, 27). Whereas Nephites build temples like Solomon's (based on descriptions in the brass plates, 2 Ne. 5:16), clothe themselves well (Jacob 2:17–22), and learn to farm land and raise livestock effectively (Enos 1:21), the Lamanites live in tents, wander "about in the wilderness with a short skin girdle about their loins," and feed on "beasts of prey" (Enos 1:20).

Further, the ascendance of Nephite culture and the deprivation experienced by Lamanites give rise to two distinct narratives. In the Nephite worldview, the Nephites are "industrious" (2 Ne. 5:17), "fair and delightful" (2 Ne. 5:21), wealthy (Jacob 1:16), and hopeful that the Lamanites will return to "the knowledge of the truth" about God (Jacob 7:24; Enos 1:13–19). In that same view, the Lamanites are, by contrast, "an idle people, full of mischief and subtlety" (2 Ne. 5:24), possessed of "an eternal hatred against [the Nephites]" (Jacob 7:24), and a "wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people, full of idolatry and filthiness" (Enos 1:20; see also Jacob 3:5, Jarom 1:6). These descriptions reflect (even more closely than Nephi's view of Laman and Lemuel) JW's judgments that AA is "a shady character," "shiftless," "crazy," and unintelligent.⁸⁰

80. Flood, "Some Experimental Games," 41–42.

Because Nephites are literate and only their records remain, we catch mere snippets of the Lamanite narrative. For much of the Book of Mormon, until Ammon provides an eyewitness account of the Lamanite worldview not based on hearsay, we read only staid accounts of Lamanites hating Nephites and wanting to shed their blood (a narrative that applies as much in the Nephite consciousness when Laman and Lemuel are alive as it does hundreds of years later). The Ammon account, recounted after hundreds of years of conflict, shows a Lamanite self-narrative that remains surprisingly rooted in the original events that transpire at the split of the two nations. Nephites are “liars,” who are “cunning” and wish to deceive in order to continually rob Lamanites of their property (Alma 20:10, 13; see also Mosiah 10:11–17). It is not lost on the Lamanites that the Nephites possess more learning (since they are “cunning”) and more wealth, but that wealth continues to be viewed in terms of Nephi’s robbery of the family inheritance. In the Lamanite worldview, we can see AA’s torment reiterated: *They will not share*.

A simple summary of the Prisoner’s Dilemma between the two nations can be modeled as follows:

		Nephites	
		Cooperate	Defect
Lamanites	Cooperate	Lamanites maintain mutual peace (<i>R</i>) Nephites maintain mutual peace (<i>R</i>)	Lamanites maintain unilateral peace (<i>S</i>) Nephites make unilateral war (<i>T</i>)
	Defect	Lamanites make unilateral war (<i>T</i>) Nephites maintain unilateral peace (<i>S</i>)	Lamanites make mutual war (<i>P</i>) Nephites make mutual war (<i>P</i>)

FIGURE 8.

In each of these cases, the asymmetric outcomes favor the Nephites except where the Nephites are on the receiving end of a sucker’s payoff (*S*). As we have learned, these outcomes must meet Axelrod’s two conditions truly to represent a Prisoner’s Dilemma.

For either side, taking the spoils of war with no resistance from the other side (*T*) would have seemed the best possible outcome (for the Nephites, perhaps as the preface to a Lamanite return to paths of rectitude; for the Lamanites, as payback). Mutual peace (*R*) is preferable to mutual war (*P*) for economic, social, and other reasons, and both *R* and *T* stand superior to being utterly ravaged (*S*). The outcomes do seem to follow a $T > R > P > S$ hierarchy.

As for the second Axelrod condition, it is hard to say whether, in each case, the product of mutual peace is worth more to one or the other side than the average gains of taking all spoils and receiving a sucker's payoff. For Nephites, this is almost certainly the case. In times of mutual peace (R), the Nephites enjoy their ornate temples, work hard in their fields, and improve themselves in learning.

In the same circumstances, Lamanites live from day to day, hunting what they can and providing as well as possible. The Book of Mormon suggests that the Lamanites have fewer gainful activities to fill their time, which makes war more attractive because score-settling T could be the best chance for a good outcome.⁸¹ Speaking to the role of T in the second condition (which says that the reward for mutual cooperation should be greater than the average of the temptation payoff and the sucker's payoff), Axelrod explains that the second condition is so important because the two sides to a conflict should not be able to "get out of their dilemma by taking turns exploiting each other. This assumption means that an even chance of exploitation and being exploited [should not be] as good an outcome for a player as mutual cooperation."⁸² Because of the asymmetry in Nephite-Lamanite payoffs, however, it could be said that the Lamanites prefer the "even chance of exploitation and being exploited," since the reward of mutual cooperation is not much of a reward. In a society where mutual peace (R) yields washed-out takings, the Lamanites naturally find their equilibrium point.

Although the Nephites profess a longing to reconcile differences with the Lamanites, no Nephite makes any effective effort to realize this desire in a period that spans hundreds of years. Jacob relates that "many means were devised to reclaim and restore the Lamanites to the knowledge of the truth" (Jacob 7:24). Sadly, the record provides little detail on the nature of these labors, but Jacob laments that "it all was vain, for

81. When the Nephites are prepared, mutual war (P - P) does not often play well for the Lamanites; however, when the Lamanites are able to catch the Nephites off-guard, as they do in attacking the remnant of the people of King Noah, the temptation payoff (T) often yields rich dividends. An example of the efficacy of T for the Lamanites appears in Mosiah 24, where the Lamanites have unilaterally attacked and overcome the people of King Noah. In this setting, the king of the Lamanites engages a Nephite named Amulon to teach his people the ways and language of the people of Nephi, which causes this pocket of Lamanites to "increase in riches, . . . to trade one with another and wax great, and . . . to be a cunning and a wise people, as to the wisdom of the world" (Mosiah 24:7).

82. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 10.

[the Lamanites] delighted in wars and bloodshed, and they had an eternal hatred against us, their brethren. And they sought by the power of their arms to destroy us continually” (Jacob 7:24). This Nephite belief in eternal Lamanite hatred and continual war appears so often that we as readers are left to wonder whether the Nephites could truly accept peace from adversaries perceived to be so unscrupulously evil.

Fueled by their deeply ingrained contrary narratives, the two nations descend into a vicious circle. The Nephites become richer, more educated, more sophisticated, and enjoy ever higher standards of living, while the Lamanites appear to subsist at lower levels. While the Nephites look down on the Lamanites for their apparent dirtiness and lack of industry (despite declarations of concern for Lamanite souls), Lamanites hate Nephites for their wealth and alleged guile. The inequality combined with mutual distrust and enmity pushes the nations apart, which leads to wars, which fuel further misunderstandings, which lead to more wars (see, for example, Jarom 1:13–14; Omni 1:2–3, 10, 23–24; W of M 1:13–14; Mosiah 1:13–14; 10:11–17; Alma 16:2).⁸³ The shadow of the future for the two nations is so short as to be practically nil.

Ammon as a Book of Mormon Standard: Lengthening the Shadow of the Future, Eliminating Asymmetry and Territorial Invasion

This state of affairs continues for the better part of five hundred years, from the time when the nations split, sometime between 588 and 570 BC, until the time when Ammon enters the kingdom of Lamoni, in

83. In this context, the interactions between Lamanites and Nephites that occur at the demise of King Noah should be briefly noted. Noah is an ineffective monarch who is ultimately burned to death by his own priests, appearing in chapters 11 to 19 of the book of Mosiah. Weak after years of poor rule, two separate offshoots of Noah's Nephite people are overtaken and occupied by Lamanites. In the midst of seemingly endless Nephite-Lamanite wars, we see an episode where Lamanites occupy Nephite land and exact heavy (50 percent) taxes from Nephites (Mosiah 19:22) and place heavy burdens on them (Mosiah 24:9, 14). A number of controversies and standoffs occur between the Lamanite and Nephite groups, with the end effect that both groups of Nephites devise plans to escape from Lamanite occupation and return to live in the Nephite capital of Zarahemla. Far from signaling a dawn of Nephite-Lamanite cooperation, these episodes illustrate both the lengths to which Nephites will go to distance themselves from Lamanites (22:10–16; 24:21–25) and the propensity of certain Nephites to exploit the Nephite-Lamanite conflict to their personal advantage (as did Amulon, 24:1–8).

approximately 90 B.C. The Book of Mormon describes Ammon, along with his brothers Aaron, Omner, and Himni, as a son of the Nephite King Mosiah (Mosiah 27:34). After a rebellious youth, the princes experience a miraculous conversion and determine to go preach to the Lamanites (Mosiah 28:1–9; Alma 17:1–8).⁸⁴

Ammon (who is described in Alma 17:18 as “chief” among his brothers) strikes out alone on his mission to the “land of Ishmael,” a Lamanite enclave (Alma 17:19). Arriving with a peaceful mission, Ammon finds himself immediately seized, bound, and brought before the king of the land, a man named Lamoni. The text tells us that Lamanite law and custom gave royal prerogative when Nephites were captured, leaving it “to the pleasure of the king to slay them, or to retain them in captivity, or to cast them into prison, or to cast them out of his land” (Alma 17:20). In response to his cooperative approach, Ammon faces potential outcomes that read like defection mad libs. First move: Ammon, S, Lamanites, T, and we are not surprised to see the Lamanites defect in arresting Ammon as part of their perpetual war against the Nephites. Cultural and historical considerations aside, the Lamanites choose an equilibrium point strategy with no incentive to do otherwise.

With Ammon set before him, Lamoni asks “if it were [Ammon’s] desire to dwell in the land among the Lamanites, or among his people” (Alma 17:22). Lamoni could have expected only a negative answer to this question—the Book of Mormon gives no prior example of a Nephite who voluntarily goes to live among Lamanites—suggesting that he asks it merely to bait Ammon and help him determine which of the short straws Ammon is about to draw.

Ammon responds: “Yea, I desire to dwell among this people for a time; yea, and perhaps until the day I die” (Alma 17:23). Beyond simple cooperation, Ammon’s statement concurrently expresses ground rules for future engagement. Where Lamoni thought he was dealing with a typical one-shot (or short-term) conflict (in which the equilibrium point demands mutual defection), Ammon has just told him that their future dealings are potentially indefinite. In Axelrod’s terms, Ammon has just

84. The narrator of this portion of the Book of Mormon (the penultimate Book of Mormon prophet, Mormon) frames the mission to the Lamanites in terms of familiar inequality tropes, recording that the sons of Mosiah were brave to face “a wild and a hardened and a ferocious people; a people who delighted in murdering the Nephites, and robbing and plundering them; . . . yet they sought to obtain these things by murdering and plundering, that they might not labor for them with their own hands” (Alma 17:14).

lengthened the shadow of the future, and we might expect accordingly that his Lamanite hosts will be more amenable to cooperative peace.

Lamoni's immediate response is fairly delirious: "Lamoni was much pleased with Ammon, and caused that his bands should be loosed; and he would that Ammon should take one of his daughters to wife" (Alma 17:24). The Lamanite king could have executed, imprisoned, or exiled Ammon, all of which the text suggests were in his power. Ammon is a Nephite, with all that symbolizes and entails, and Lamoni is a Lamanite. The inequality and grievances between the two nations have not changed, but Ammon's cooperative affirmation changes Lamoni's incentives. If the Nephite desires to interact with Lamoni and his people on an ongoing basis and Lamoni also desires ongoing interaction due to Ammon's sincere cooperation, then conventional opportunities to defect no longer make sense. Lamoni breaks tradition and offers to make Ammon one of the family rather than eliminate him (a mirror reversal of the state of affairs at the time the nations split when Laman and Lemuel want to end family relations by killing Nephite).

Ammon declines Lamoni's generous offer, asking to take up employment as one of Lamoni's servants instead and become a shepherd and stableman for the king (Alma 17:25). What follows is one of the Book of Mormon's most famous passages wherein Ammon defends Lamoni's flocks from marauding Lamanites who are enemies of the crown, slaying some by slingshot and slicing off the arms of others by sword (Alma 17:26–38). Having guarded the king's property, Ammon goes right back to watering royal flocks and attending to the stable (Alma 17:39; 18:9). Ammon's loyalty and diligence make such an impression on Lamoni that (after a period of utter speechlessness) he asks Ammon by what power he performs his great acts (Alma 18:14–21). Ammon tells the king that his power comes from God and proceeds to preach the entire message that he came to share, leading Lamoni and many in his kingdom to convert to Ammon's message and adopt his cooperative approach (Alma 18:22–19:36).

With Lamoni converted, Ammon and Lamoni set out to free Ammon's brother Aaron (who is also arrested by Lamanites, albeit with a less successful outcome than Ammon), and on the way they have their telling encounter with Lamoni's father (Alma 20:8–13). After his initial outrage, Lamoni's father draws his sword on Lamoni and, outmatched by Ammon, is thrust to the ground and told that his life is forfeit unless he cedes complete autonomy to Lamoni to run his kingdom without oversight (Alma 20:14–25). When Lamoni's father sees what Lamoni earlier saw—namely that Ammon has genuine regard for Lamanites and

desires long-term interaction with them—he also wishes to understand Ammon’s motivation and is ultimately converted along with thousands in his kingdom (Alma 20:26–27; 22:1–26; 23:1–5).

Taking a step back to consider Ammon, we see a Nephite prince (son of the man who is the primary caretaker of the plates, sword, and compass) who leaves his homeland to dwell among a historical enemy, works in the employ of that enemy to fulfill relatively menial tasks, and (having made a friend of the enemy) defends the king’s property against potential threats. Like the TFT (tit-for-tat) strategy that won Axelrod’s tournaments, Ammon’s cooperative strategy is nice (Ammon is not the first to defect) where the Lamanites are aggressive, forgiving (Ammon holds no grudge in relation to Lamanite defection/arrest and promptly cooperates when the Lamanites want to cooperate) where the Lamanites show an initial reluctance to forget past Nephite wrongs, and clear (the text shows that Lamoni and Lamoni’s father recognize Ammon’s intent to cooperate) where the Lamanites are initially unpredictable.

Unlike TFT, Ammon’s strategy in regard to Lamoni and his people is not immediately retaliatory or provokable, which is to say that Ammon is not quick to react to defection. Ammon’s cooperative response is in fact stronger than TFT—not a “tit-for-tat” strategy but a “tit-for-two-tats” or “tit-for-multiple-tats” strategy (TFMT). The result of this modification is that Ammon’s strategy is inherently more risky, since the Lamanites could be more likely to defect if they think there is no likelihood that Ammon will retaliate. Ammon’s facility with the slingshot and sword, while not aimed at Lamoni or his people directly (at least not those with fealty to the crown), might arguably have some deterrent effect that helps Ammon appear provokable without his actually being provokable. And it is notable that in relation to Lamoni’s father, Ammon does follow a TFT strategy almost to the letter.

As already noted, Ammon significantly lengthens the shadow of future interaction between himself and his Lamanite interlocutors. In response, as Axelrod predicts, the Lamanites begin to cooperate with Ammon, and a cycle of peaceful mutual cooperation (*R*) emerges from what had previously been an unbreakable cycle of warring mutual defection (*P*). This process of adoptive change from one cycle to another and the study of how various Prisoner’s Dilemma strategies might collectively fare against one another are points that Axelrod explores in his study of what he calls “territorial systems.”⁸⁵

85. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 160.

A territorial system is a community of individuals using the same strategy who are grouped together as neighbors, and the system is stable if foreign strategies cannot “invade” it. “A strategy,” explains Axelrod, “can invade another if it can get a higher score than the population average in that environment.”⁸⁶ Axelrod goes on:

In other words, a single individual using a new strategy can invade a population of natives if the newcomer does better with a native than a native does with another native. If no strategy can invade the population of natives, then the native strategy is said to be collectively stable.

To extend these concepts to territorial systems, suppose that a single individual using a new strategy is introduced into one of the neighborhoods of a population where everyone else is using a native strategy. One can say that the new strategy *territorially invades* the native strategy if every location in the territory will eventually convert to the new strategy. Then one can say that native strategy is *territorially stable* if no strategy can territorially invade it.⁸⁷

Applying this to the Nephite-Lamanite context, we know that Nephite-Nephite interaction is stable enough to support significant commerce and that Nephites are led by kings who encourage them to “walk in the ways of truth and soberness; . . . to love one another, and to serve one another” (Mosiah 4:15). The Lamanite-Lamanite interaction that we see through Ammon shows Lamanites who steal property from fellow Lamanites and fear execution from their king in return for failure to fulfill duties properly (Alma 17:27–29). Where Ammon has a clear TFMT or TFT strategy, the Lamanite strategy in regard to other Lamanites is more ambiguous.

Ammon’s entry into Lamanite lands followed by subsequent mass conversion to his way of thinking and acting seems to provide an example of what Axelrod might refer to as “territorial invasion.” To use Axelrod’s formulation, Ammon is “a single individual using a new strategy . . . introduced into one of the neighborhoods of a population where everyone else is using a native strategy.”⁸⁸ In guarding the king’s flocks better than other servants (and then continuing on quietly with other tasks) and guarding Lamoni against his father’s wrath, Ammon fares better with Lamanite natives than Lamanites do with one another. The strategy that Lamanites follow with one another lacks collective stability

86. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 160.

87. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 160.

88. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 160.

perhaps because it is unpredictable. As the Lamanites recognize the clarity of what Ammon has to offer, they “convert to the new strategy” en masse.

It is worth noting that the account of Ammon’s “territorial invasion” provides a concrete example of a phenomenon that Axelrod explains only in theory. Axelrod gives practical, non-tournament-based examples to illustrate the “shadow of the future” (such as the live-and-let-live system of trench warfare during World War I)⁸⁹ and other Prisoner’s Dilemma–related principles, but his examples for territorial systems and the ability of an individual to invade such systems stick closely to theoretically modeled and tournament-based results.⁹⁰

Moreover, beyond lengthening the shadow of the future for Lamanite interaction and territorially invading Lamanite culture, Ammon also takes the first step toward eradicating the asymmetry of the outcomes experienced between the two nations. In a “Nixon to China” spirit, only a Nephite prince could symbolically debase himself for the Lamanites in a way that would set the conditions for equalizing the payoffs received by both nations. Soon after the mass Lamanite conversions, the equalization of payoffs becomes a practical as well as a symbolic reality.

Following their “territorial invasion” that began with Ammon and the subsequent mass conversion, the converted Lamanites, who fittingly come to be known as the people of Ammon, or “Ammonites,” forswear all violence and bury their weapons (Alma 27:26, 57:6; 24:1–18). Unarmed, the Ammonites suffer punishing slaughter from neighboring, unconverted Lamanites who had been “stirred up” by former Nephites, and their act of supreme cooperation in the face of brutal defection (practicing what they have now accepted as their strategy) paradoxically causes more mass conversion and territorial invasion among unconverted Lamanites who participate in or at least witness the slaughter (Alma 24:19–27). To protect the nation that has converted to their strategy, the Nephites resolve to provide for the common defense of the Ammonites and give them land to inhabit in a region named Jershon by the sea (Alma 27:22–30).

And so we see a striking equalization of the payoffs to both nations that goes so far as to tip the scales in favor of the converted Lamanites.

89. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 73–87.

90. Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation*, 160–68.

Where previously the Nephites had superior weapons, commerce, and education, while the Lamanites lived from day to day, the Nephites now give the Ammonites a seafront land of “inheritance” and vow to protect them against their enemies. To defend the new political order, the Nephites are quickly drawn into “a tremendous battle [with the non-Ammonite Lamanites]; yea, even such an one as never had been known among all the people in the land from the time Lehi left Jerusalem” (Alma 28:2). The battle causes “tremendous slaughter among the people of Nephi . . . [and] great mourning and lamentation” (Alma 28:3–4). Far from a symbolic gesture, the Nephites paid for their Ammonite defense pact with blood and sacrifice. Surprisingly, the Book of Mormon does not describe any political blowback from the Nephites against the Ammonites for the Nephite suffering. Nephite cooperation was robust enough to withstand significant stresses even when Nephite cooperative gestures worked to discount the value (to the Nephites) of peace with the Ammonites.

With outcomes to the two nations now symmetrical (or even skewed in favor of the Ammonites), the Nephites and Ammonites live together in peace for decades. Where as Lamanites they had been “an idle people, full of mischief and subtlety” (2 Ne. 5:24), “wild, and ferocious, . . . full of idolatry and filthiness” (Enos 1:20), the Ammonites are now viewed by the Nephites as “a zealous and beloved people, a highly favored people of the Lord” (Alma 27:30). Where AA and JW are locked together in an asymmetric struggle with no way to amend the outcomes, Ammon’s mission followed by Nephite reciprocation allows payoffs to align and the nations to cease warring based on perceived unequal treatment. The Nephite-Lamanite cycle that had been unremittingly vicious becomes (in relation to a subset of Lamanites) just as perpetually virtuous when ongoing interaction between the two nations becomes a matter of generosity and life-and-death necessity.

As an important aside, we should recognize that the method of payoff equalization that the Nephites practice with the Ammonites works so well that they resort to the same strategy when contention arises decades later with another faction. In 29 to 30 AD, the Nephites are dealing with Mafia-like bands of robbers who seriously disrupt their political and economic order. The Nephites are able to broker peace with some of these robbers, and the Book of Mormon relates that the Nephites “granted unto those robbers who had entered into a covenant to keep the peace of the land, who were desirous to remain Lamanites,

lands, according to their numbers, that they might have, with their labors, wherewith to subsist upon; and thus they did establish peace in all the land” (3 Ne. 6:3). Faced with constant defection from warring robbers, the Nephites seek to equalize payments to their counterparty, appreciating from their Ammonite experience that offering land (giving the enemy somewhere to labor and “wherewith to subsist upon”) can be a powerful tool in equalizing payoffs and bringing peace.

Book of Mormon history continues for some five hundred years following the Ammonite experience, but the patterns of conflict and the lessons learned can be explained by the same principles we have already explored. We are not surprised that incursions by the anarchist Gadianton robbers occur at a time when “the people began to be distinguished by ranks, according to their riches and their chances for learning; yea, some were ignorant because of their poverty, and others did receive great learning because of their riches. . . . And the people were divided one against another; and they did separate from one another into tribes” (3 Ne. 6:12, 7:2). Once Jesus Christ appears and imparts wisdom and grace directly to Nephites and Lamanites alike, we are again not surprised to hear that nearly two hundred years of peace ensue in conditions where the people “had all things in common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift” (4 Ne. 1:3). And as the Nephites and Lamanites begin their final, nauseating decline, we see “exceeding riches” and vanity making a last appearance as various tribes go their separate ways to close scope for future interaction once and for all (1:43). The human conditions for long shadows of interaction and symmetrical payoffs (and the opposite thereof) yield surprisingly consistent outcomes in the Book of Mormon text.

CONCLUSION

If the lessons learned from applying the Prisoner’s Dilemma to the Book of Mormon had to be summed up in three lines, the lines might read: *The shadow of the future is important. Territorial invasion is interesting. Equalization of payoffs is indispensable.* Axelrod’s research amply demonstrates the first two of these three postulates (even if the Book of Mormon provides a compelling practical example of the second), but the Book of Mormon uniquely illustrates that where two groups are locked in a Prisoner’s Dilemma conflict with asymmetric payoffs, the payoffs must be balanced and aligned for the groups to have a hope of consistently achieving mutually beneficial outcomes.

Often human judgment can get in the way of vital equalization. Like Nephites, we can see others as unclean. Like JW, we can view an interlocutor as crazy or unintelligent. Stuck underfoot, we may say like AA or a Lamanite that an oppressor is unwilling to share ill-gotten gains. Whatever the excuses or reasons, Ammon shows that those with privilege must be willing to roll up sleeves and get hands dirty to make relations clean, while Lamoni and his people show that those at a relative disadvantage must lift themselves up. The Book of Mormon suggests that parents, politicians, religious interlocutors, social opponents, and others must seriously consider whether their conflicts might stem (at least in part) from a payoff imbalance and, if so, how to remedy the imbalance to aid cooperation. Once parties are linked arm in arm and locked eye to eye, they can find a common path that stretches out to the horizon.

In a final estimation, the Prisoner's Dilemma and its application in the Book of Mormon provide another way of looking at the Book of Mormon's core messages of atonement, redemption, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Knowledge of Jesus Christ and Christian teachings might motivate the Nephites to foster concern for the Lamanites and their condition, but only after Ammon takes action to equalize payoffs to the Lamanites and lengthen the scope for future interaction do the Lamanites become amenable to Christian teachings. Just as Nephites teach that the suffering of Jesus Christ would make atonement between the imperfect actions of men and the laws of God (2 Ne. 2:5–10), so too Nephites eventually learn that their belief in that divine Atonement should spur efforts to make practical atonement for unequal payoffs experienced by their long-lost brethren. As the prophet Alma suggests, the works of good men and women can create space for a "preparatory redemption" in this world that hints at an ultimate redemption that will hopefully follow in the next world (Alma 13:3).

The Book of Mormon appears to have Prisoner's Dilemma patterns and conflicts running from its earliest to its latest pages. In a book variously decried as "chloroform in print,"⁹¹ "a prosy detail of imaginary

91. Alan Wolfe, "Chloroform in Print: Does the Book of Mormon Get a Bad Rap?" *Slate* (May 17, 2010), http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/books/2010/05/chloroform_in_print.html. This quote is attributed to Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens).

history,”⁹² and “so compulsively Biblical that all the action seems to take place underwater,”⁹³ we find intricate stories that illustrate and illuminate some of the Prisoner’s Dilemma’s harder-to-grasp applications. While the Prisoner’s Dilemma does appear in many contexts—in life as in literature, in fact as in fiction—it is nonetheless remarkable that a nineteenth-century work contains it so fully and so consistently.

Robert F. Schwartz (robert.schwartz@fulbrightmail.org) is a London-based investment funds lawyer. He received his BA in philosophy from Brigham Young University in 2002, fulfilled a Fulbright Fellowship at Warsaw University from 2002 to 2003, and obtained a JD from the University of Virginia in 2006. He has published articles in *Warsaw University Law Review*, *Fordham Journal of Corporate and Financial Law*, *Mazovian Humanities Studies*, and *BYU Studies*, among others. For their insight and helpful corrections, many thanks go to Wynn Stirling, James Faulconer, John W. Welch, Barry Bickmore, William Badger, Benjamin Whisenant, Roger Terry, and James Gregson. Special thanks also go to Father Brian of Quarr Abbey, Isle of Wight, for days of monastic quiet and reflection that allowed much of this article to make its way onto paper, and to Amy Schwartz for constant patience in the face of Quixotic undertakings. This article is dedicated to Douglas Tobler, whose advice to publish early and often has proven invaluable, and Terry Warner, who has opened many minds (including the author’s) to the depth and power of the Book of Mormon.

92. Adam Gopnik, “I, Nephi: Mormonism and Its Meanings,” *The New Yorker* (August 13, 2012), http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/atlarge/2012/08/13/120813crat_atlarge_gopnik. This is also a quote attributed to Twain.

93. Gopnik, “I, Nephi.” This is Adam Gopnik’s view.

My Vocation as a Scholar

An Idea of the University

John R. Rosenberg

This lecture was given on March 21, 2013, as part of the Brigham Young University Faculty Center's "My Journey as a Scholar of Faith" series.

In the fall of 1974, I settled into the sharply rectangular room 306 of "U" Hall in the old Deseret Towers and began my freshman year. Though I had been a relatively high-achieving adolescent, I arrived at BYU fearing that I might be out of my league academically—and my first-semester grades turned out to be a great example of the self-fulfilling prophecies I would learn about in Psych 101. I was shy and did my best to blend in, not always successfully. At my very first BYU ward activity, we ran a relay race with the laces of our shoes tied together. Following the race, everyone headed up a hill for a devotional—except me. I couldn't get the knots in my shoes undone. What to do? Stay behind wrestling with the laces and stand out, or nonchalantly attempt to climb the hill with the others with my feet laced together? I opted for the latter, but about halfway up the hill I realized the slope was too steep to manage, and I froze. If I wobbled one more step, I would tumble down the hill. If I tried to bend over to work out the knots, I would lose my balance. While I was contemplating my predicament, sure that this was going to be a metaphor for my entire time at BYU, kindly Bishop Busenbark noticed me, walked down the hill, knelt down, undid the knots, and walked with me to join the group. I realize now that this opening episode of my BYU life was indeed a metaphor: at every turn, it seems, I have encountered kind and competent people who have lent a hand in all things knotty.

Forty years ago, it never would have occurred to me that one day I would be a campus bishop, doing my best to untie knots of a different sort, that I would be on the faculty, and certainly not that I would be asked to give a talk about my journey as a scholar of faith. Not that I didn't have learned role models: my grandfather was a long-time educator and executive vice president to Ernest Wilkinson; my uncle chaired BYU's Language Department; my aunt was a professor at the University of Utah; my father was a high school teacher who each Monday brought home a stack of books from the school library that by week's end he had read and remembered. Nevertheless, I didn't know where I was headed; wherever it was, it wasn't here.

On other such occasions I have cited "Graduates," a short poem by E. B. de Vito:

Knowledge comes, in a way, unsought,
as in the Chinese tale
of the youth who came for daily lessons
in what there was to learn of jade.
And each day, for a single hour,
while he and the master talked together,
always of unrelated matters,
jade pieces were slipped into his hand,
till one day, when a month had passed,
the young man paused and with a frown,
said suddenly, "That is not jade."

As Life is something, we are told,
that happens while you make other plans,
learning slips in and comes to stay
while you are faced the other way.¹

"Learning slips in and comes to stay / while you are faced the other way." While I think that I have attended to some good habits that have made my life easier, most of the major events in my life have been characterized by spiritual serendipity—accidents of grace. I met my wife on a blind date—my one millionth. Or this: while studying for finals my last semester as an undergraduate, contemplating the graduate program I was about to begin, I had a prompting to drop everything and go to the temple. "Bad timing," I thought. "I'll go after finals." But the prompting persisted, and I went, and during the session I had the most distressing feeling that I was

1. E. B. de Vito, "Graduates," in James O. Freedman, *Liberal Education and the Public Interest* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2003), 69–70.

headed in the wrong direction, made more distressing because this was a “stupor” revelation: I was told what *not* to do, but not what *to do*. At graduation a week later, the first door opened, unexpectedly; a week after that, another; and the week after that, another. Amazingly, miraculously, my journey as a scholar of faith has been one of doors opened and knots loosened, often while I was faced the other way.

I am pleased that this lecture series is held in the Education in Zion auditorium. It is the right place to contemplate journeys and scholarship and faith. The Joseph F. Smith Building (JFSB), designed by Frank Ferguson and Mark Wilson at FFKR Architects, houses the Education in Zion exhibit and is a book, a very big book, with a few pages that can be read metaphorically. I would like to contemplate my journey as a scholar by taking a short walk, a journey of sorts, around the building.



FIGURE 1. Education in Zion Gallery, Joseph F. Smith Building. Courtesy Brigham Young University.

Arches

Approaching the building from the east we enter the courtyard with its arcaded perimeter, a collegiate cloister that recalls the medieval cathedral schools that birthed the modern university. In those distant days, students discussed reason and revelation in Latin as they gathered around the



FIGURE 2. Mary Lou Fulton Plaza, Joseph F. Smith Building. Courtesy Chris Bateman.

well; in our day, seated around an emblematic fountain, they speak one or more of five-dozen languages in pursuit of similar goals, ones we call the “Aims of a BYU Education.” The courtyard’s design invites the BYU community to think about its spiritual heritage, suggested by the rock and living water, and about its academic lineage, represented by the modified Romanesque arches. For me, the arch as a form has special meaning. It is beautiful, and its efficient management of tension and compression gives the impression that the stone is lighter than it really is. The arch makes possible the spanning of distances between columns far greater



FIGURE 3. Colegio del Arzobispo Fonseca, Salamanca, Spain. Courtesy José Luis Filpo Cabana.

than can be achieved with post and lintel applications. The collection of small stones that compose the arch is much stronger than a massive single lintel stone. And arches put shoulder to shoulder make possible arcades of covered passages—or bridges, or aqueducts—and spun 360 degrees on their axis, they make vaults and domes.

Arches work only when each part operates in appropriate relation to the others. And so it has been on my journey as a scholar. In the early years, much of my effort centered on the personal *p*'s: projects, programs, publications, positions, and promotions. Twenty-eight years in, it is all about relationships. One of the more poignant tasks I have in my current assignment is to visit with colleagues as they take the final steps toward retirement. I have become somewhat a student of retirement, anticipating my own, and have arrived at the conclusion that when all is said and all is done, what I will take away from my three and a half decades on campus are the relationships—the other pieces of stone who have stood with me or before me, hoping to build something sustaining.

Late in the eighteenth century, German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte delivered a series of four talks to a group of aspiring teachers. Known collectively as the “Lectures on the Vocation of a Scholar” and flavored by early strains of German idealism, they contain many insights and well-turned phrases that feel familiar to me. One of those sections, found in the third lecture, reads:

All these people have labored for my sake: all that were ever great, wise, or noble—these benefactors of the human race whose names I find recorded in world history, as well as the many more whose services have survived their names. I have reaped their harvest. Upon the earth on which they lived, I tread in their footsteps, which bring blessings upon all who follow them. As soon I wish, I can assume that lofty task which they had set for themselves: the task of making our fellow men ever wiser and happier. Where they had to stop, I can build further. I can bring nearer to completion that noble temple that they had to leave unfinished.²

In the twelfth century, John of Salisbury famously recorded that “Bernard of Chartres used to say that we are like dwarfs on the shoulders of giants, so that we can see more than they, and things at a greater distance, not by virtue of any sharpness of sight on our part, or any physical distinction, but because we are carried high and raised up by their

2. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, “Lectures on the Vocation of a Scholar,” *Philosophy of German Idealism* (New York: Continuum, 1987), 28.

giant size.”³ Bernard’s giants were the intellectuals of ancient Greece and Rome, and his now famous metaphor nudges us in the direction of intellectual humility. But I like Fichte’s architectural metaphor better—adding to the temple left unfinished by others—because the temple’s builders were not all giants. Some were “great and wise and noble,” and history tells us their names, but we have forgotten the names of the “many more” no less engaged in temple building and equally deserving of our gratitude. These figures from history are the plinths or bases of our arches, fundamental relationships that make possible what we now take for granted. The Education in Zion exhibit is filled with their stories and celebrates their sacrifices.

My history at BYU is defined by these fellow builders—associates, friends, and colleagues—who have been sustaining stones to me. Custodians, paver-layers, and planners, anonymous to most faculty, are faces with names and stories who have added immeasurably to my time at the Y. And then there are the leaders: President Samuelson, Bob Webb and his little brother Brent, John Tanner, and Todd Britsch, who one spring morning many years ago sunnily yelled from the far side of the parking lot, “Good morning, Johnny,” and left me wondering gratefully why someone of his stature would make such an effort to greet me.

And then there was Kay Moon. He had been my teacher, and I was, to be honest, a bit frightened of him. But my first year on the faculty he put his arm around me and said, “Let’s go to the temple,” and went we did, every Thursday at 4:00 p.m. for the entire year. It is hard to imagine a more powerful induction to Brigham’s university than those afternoons when faith was set free to form scholarship. Temple builders, indeed.

At the terminus of the pilgrimage route to Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain, we pass through the cathedral’s westwerk—the Pórtico de la Gloria—its massive central arch not that dissimilar in its basic structure to the ones that line the courtyard of the JFSB. But here each stone carries an artistic and acoustic message in addition to its architectural function. Every stone is different, each a musician in a heavenly orchestra. One can look at each in its singularity, admire its contours, imagine the polychrome that used to cover its surface, and tune in to the music produced by the individual instrument. Or one

3. John Salisbury, *Metalogican of John Salisbury* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955), 167.



FIGURE 4. Pórtico de la Gloria, Santiago de Compostela Cathedral, Galicia, Spain. Courtesy John R. Rosenberg.

can stand back and admire the whole, appreciating its structural and acoustic harmonies.

A university is a collection of individuals, admired at times for their individual graces, but relied upon to sustain a common project. One of the lessons I have learned on my journey is that those scholars who have left the legacies I most value are the ones who subordinated their personal ambition to *the idea of a university* (to paraphrase Cardinal Newman), to the idea of *this* university. Todd Britsch used to call this “university thinking” (and in my college we have created a professorship of university thinking named after Todd to perpetuate the virtue).

I remind new faculty that the university that hired them will not be the same university that retires them: the institution will evolve, change, and grow in ways predictable and unexpected. Will it change because of us or in spite of us? Will we be agents of improvement or of resistance? Those are questions each scholar answers consciously, or not, and, in my experience, how we respond depends on the degree to which we are responsible for ourselves but accountable to others—understanding that our individual gifts and actions find their ultimate form only in the way



FIGURE 5. Joseph F. Smith Building with sunburst paving pattern, viewed from the Harold B. Lee Library. Courtesy FFKR Architects.

they make the bigger project better, more beautiful, more harmonious. In that sense, a scholar of faith exercises faith in the gospel, yes, but also faith in colleagues, in their inherent goodness and possibility. We manifest faith in colleagues when we refuse to take offense, with “a determination that is fixed, immovable, and unchangeable” (D&C 88:133). We are scholars of faith when we suppress unconstructive cynicism about leadership that prevents us from embracing the prophetic destiny of the university. We are scholars of faith and hope when we nurture authentic hope in the potential of all our students, including those who are less gifted or motivated.

Scholarship of selflessness manifests itself in the syntax of instruction. “I teach Spanish literature . . . to students,” we say grammatically. Subject, verb, and objects follow their accustomed order. But the syntax of faithful instruction goes like this: “I teach students . . . Spanish literature,” an order that recognizes students (not the discipline) as the direct object of our professing. When Fichte wrote of “the task of making our fellow men ever wiser and happier,” he understood that a discipline is instrumental in accomplishing something greater, that a vocation is merely invocation to a higher calling.

Light

Strolling through the courtyard, we notice a pattern in the paving, and we follow the lines of an abstract web around the perimeter and then back to the east front of the building, where the pattern stretches toward the Lee Library. Looking more carefully, we realize that the lines of this web converge to create the image of a sunburst that surrounds the spiral staircase. The web, as it turns out, is not a web at all, but an evocation of horizontal light, its rays extending in all directions. Looking up, we notice that a contemporary structure rests atop the arcaded base, and that light perforates this structure at every turn. Huge windows—fifty square feet of glass—bring light to each faculty office. At each cardinal point, a glassed-in alcove makes the building transparent; the east façade features an immense glass curtain; in the suites hang four-by-eight-foot glass panels on which words and light combine to summarize the knowledge and values of what is taught there. “The glory of God is intelligence,” reads the university motto, “in other words, light” (D&C 93:36).

Light allows us to see, and seeing, it seems, has a complicated history. Our earliest ancestors gave sight a privileged place among the senses: apparently the “mind’s eye” was a more sensible metaphor for knowledge than the mind’s taste buds. When we experience a breakthrough on a difficult concept we achieve “in-sight,” and we celebrate leaders with vision more than those with acute hearing (though we probably get that backwards). The eye might be a passive receptor of light or, as some romantics believed, an active apprehender that assembles its own reality. Some think of the “gaze” as fiercely masculine compared to the feminine glance, though sociologist Georg Simmel wrote of the reciprocal gaze of lovers who must not be blind after all. As for the blind, beginning with Homer, they may not see, but they are often seers.

A couple of years ago, I experienced seeing intensely during a five-week stay at Madrid’s Prado Museum. On my last afternoon, I stood in a mostly empty gallery looking at Caravaggio’s *Entombment*, newly arrived from the Vatican. The intimacy of the painted scene moved me—the way green-robed John the Beloved’s right arm braces the Savior’s torso, fingers gently brushing the spear wound, while Nicodemus with interlocked arms cradles the Lord’s bended knees. The index and middle fingers of Christ’s muscular right hand stretch reassuringly toward the angular stone slab prepared for his three-day rest—a surface suggesting that even now (in the darkest moment), especially now, he is the cornerstone and foundation of hope. Thirty minutes passed, and I began to be

bothered by the way the second flank of characters, all Marys, seemed to disrupt the still intimacy of the scene. One Mary's arm juts out horizontally to the right; the second's right hand tenses into a despairing fist; the third raises both arms against the dark sky, parentheses of lament. Another half hour slipped by, and what had struck me as discontinuity between tranquility and motion in the painting's two groupings now made sense. Christ's rest is a catalyst that prods the figures around him to unwind like the spring of a watch in perfect sympathy—Christ as immutable cornerstone *and* as activating author of faith in the midst of despair.

The next morning my wife and daughters loaded me on a 6:00 a.m. flight to Paris and a day at the Louvre. The Tour de France was in its last weekend, and the city and its most famous museum were dripping with tourists. I had looked forward to a conversation with Botticelli, an exchange of ideas with Raphael, and at least a wink from Leonardo. But the halls were bustling with so many would-be viewers that mostly I saw rows of heads straining toward something in the distance, cameras raised like periscopes trying to capture a digital trophy of what couldn't be seen with the eye. I couldn't help but compare the two experiences, separated by only twenty-four hours, and reflect on how seeing well requires hovering in space and in time. Perceptiveness grows in a medium of patience.

Students understand time's relativity when fifty-minute classes last an eternity, sixteen-week semesters overstay their welcome, and graduation day is a twenty-five-watt bulb beckoning at the end of a very long tunnel. But every minute is a teacher, because time on task opens eyes; when earned, insights come in time. Eyes require several minutes to adjust to a semidark room; the eyes of the educated citizen strain for years to see things as they really are. Those who prematurely divert their gaze from the painting, or play, or book, or from "things which are abroad . . . and the perplexities of nations" (D&C 88:79), or those who think that graduation is the end rather than the beginning of disciplined seeing, risk experiencing life as if through a dim mirror, knowing in part.

John Gardner's polemical 1978 essay *On Moral Fiction* begins with a charming story:

It was said in the old days that every year Thor made a circle around Middle-earth, beating back the enemies of order. Thor got older every year, and the circle occupied by gods and men grew smaller. The wisdom god, Woden, went out to the king of the trolls, got him in an

armlock, and demanded to know of him how order might triumph over chaos.

“Give me your left eye,” said the king of the trolls, “and I’ll tell you.”

Without hesitation, Woden gave up his left eye. “Now tell me.”

The troll said, “The secret is, *Watch with both eyes!*”⁴

I suspect that each of us might assign a different meaning to the metaphor of Woden’s eyes: language and literature, art and science, reason and revelation. Seeing things in focus requires complex stereoscopic vision, and the process of learning to see well is the fruit of continuing and continuous education. In *An Anthropologist on Mars*, Oliver Sacks describes a patient (Virgil) who had been blind since childhood, and who had to learn to see when his sight was restored in his fifties: “Further problems became apparent as we spent the day with Virgil. He would pick up details incessantly—an angle, an edge, a color, a movement—but would not be able to synthesize them, to form a complex perception at a glance. This was one reason the cat, visually, was so puzzling: he would see a paw, the nose, the tail, an ear, but could not see all of them together, see the cat as a whole.”⁵ This is a variation on the theme already discussed: the arch is an arch only as an anthology of individual stones; the cat is a cat once its individual details are properly and perceptively assembled. Assembly is learned. We cannot form syntheses and complex perceptions (outcomes of a liberal education) “at a glance.” Sacks describes what we hope BYU students experience in our classrooms: “We are not given the world: we make our world through incessant experience, . . . memory, reconnection.”⁶

That idea of connection and reconnection brings us back to the web of light. As with the arch and the cat, we can see pieces of the web, study their dimensions, their color, the density of the concrete or of the pavers—each piece, perhaps, an object worthy of study. In fact, the whole cannot be properly assembled without a disciplined appreciation of the parts. I began my journey as a scholar in pursuit of the fresh detail—of that unstudied segment that might eventually lead to an understanding of the whole. The academy rewarded me for that work: continuing faculty status in my fifth year and promotion to professor in my tenth. Having completed three-quarters of my journey, I find that intellectual fulfillment

4. John Gardner, *On Moral Fiction* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 3.

5. Oliver Sacks, *An Anthropologist on Mars: Seven Paradoxical Tales* (New York: Knopf, 1995), 123.

6. Sacks, *Anthropologist on Mars*, 114.

comes from the act of assembly, from trying to see the big picture, the whole arc of the story, the horizontal plane of light. And from making connections. The horizontal web of light in the JFSB's paving has more meaning when I view it in connection with Michelangelo's design for the plaza on the Capitoline Hill in Rome. Things that at first might seem unique are echoes in the human conversation. I am often frustrated, partly because the kind of work I find most compelling requires an amount of intellectual horsepower I may not have, and partly because institutions of higher education for the most part are not equipped or organized to pursue the biggest questions. Job security and rewards generally come for tending the corner of the vineyard assigned to me. Though there is some recent movement away from this, over the last hundred years uni-versities have become multi-versities, and the human conversation has devolved into a loose collection of the arcane monologues of our academic specializations. We can rescue, repair, and reassemble the human conversation. At BYU our shared covenants facilitate the recovery process.

Apse

Early Christian architecture proceeded from a four-cornered nave, symbolizing the world, presided over by a circular apse on the east end. At the intersection of the temporal square and the eternal circle was the altar, where priests celebrated the incarnation, when Eternity became Mortal and where God met men.



FIGURE 6. Joseph F. Smith Building east façade (apse). Courtesy Brigham Young University.



FIGURE 7. Mary Lou Fulton Plaza. Courtesy Roger Terry.



FIGURE 8. Capitoline Hill, Rome. Courtesy Scott Gilchrist.

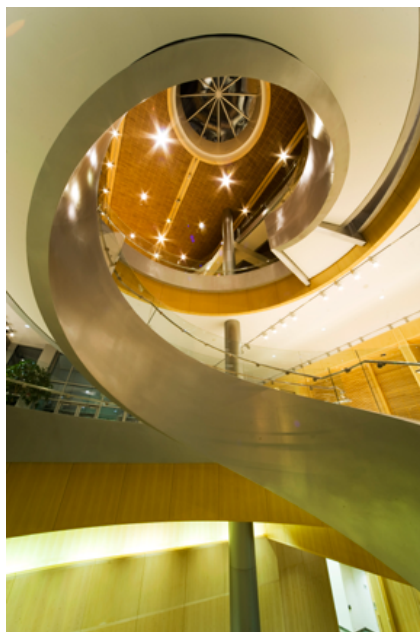


FIGURE 9. Spiral staircase, Education in Zion Gallery, Joseph F. Smith Building. Courtesy Josh Sudweeks.

Climbing the spiral staircase toward the JFSB's second floor, nearing our destination, we enter the gentle arc that houses the Education in Zion exhibit. It is a disruptive form; its eastward bulge distends the symmetry of the rest of the squared structure. It is an apse. Though its purpose is not liturgical—no ordinance is performed here—it is sacramental in that it is there we are prodded to remember. This space is not an appendage; it is an anchor that knots the work carried out in the square to the eternal verities of the gospel. The oculus of the spiral staircase directs a vertical beam of light through the center of the exhibit, and it eventually intersects the sunburst and its horizontally emanating rays: the vertical light of revelation

perforates the horizontal light of reason, suggesting the proper role and location of each.

In 1938, J. Reuben Clark gave a talk with the title “The Charted Course of the Church in Education.” In that message, he described our faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ and in the Restoration as the “latitude and longitude of the actual location and position of the Church, both in this world and in eternity. Knowing our true position, we can change our bearings if they need changing: we can lay down anew our true course.”⁷ I received my patriarchal blessing a year or so before I began my educational wanderings at BYU. The blessing was generic in the extreme, pronounced by an aged patriarch who a short time later would rest from his sacred calling. My saintly mother, who had high hopes for me, wondered privately if we should ask for a retake with the new patriarch. But that blessing contains a single line that ten years

7. J. Reuben Clark, “The Charted Course of the Church in Education,” *Educating Zion* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1996), 16–17.

later would take on riveting relevance. “And whatever you do, do not let the foolish ideologies of men change your testimony of the gospel.” There were many times during my doctoral work when I suspected I was earning a PhD in the foolish ideologies of men. I did not then have the wisdom or erudition to accomplish the reconciling of these two disparate traditions that attempted to understand human experience. And so I turned to the Book of Mormon. What I read there did not address directly the questions raised in class. I did not know how to refute or contextualize what I was learning or to reconcile it with what I had been taught at home, but the Book of Mormon told me in every page to be patient, that my scholar’s journey of faith would be as long as Lehi’s—it would last a lifetime—and that I could count on just enough light from above to center the rapidly expanding plane of secular expertise.

I was in the mortality of my mortality. I had left home and become separated from the daily counsel of wise and loving parents, had arrived in a strange place where I would be tested and tried and where I would be required to make decisions that would determine what opportunities and blessings I might claim in the future.

Fortunately, to paraphrase Dante, at not quite the “midway in the journey of life,” I encountered Virgils, trusted guides to lead me. Reading with Giuseppe Mazzotta, I learned about disciplined effort from the *Inferno*: “Now thou must thus cast off all sloth,’ said [Virgil]: ‘for sitting down . . . none comes to fame. . . . Rise, therefore, conquer thy panting with the soul, which conquers in every battle if it sink not with its body’s weight. There is a longer stair which must be climbed.’”⁸ From committed Catholic Ciriaco Morón Arroyo, I learned that reading literature was not a game; he read, he told us, to discover if there is heaven and hell—that is, that reading well and wisely could be redemptive and salvific. Barely out of graduate school, I invited one of the great Hispanists of this generation to join a panel I had organized. He accepted, and he offered to share a hotel room at the conference to save both of us money. As we visited one night before going to sleep, he offered a most unexpected insight to an ambitious young colleague. I could become the greatest Hispanist of my generation, he noted, but in the following generation I would be a footnote. In the generation after that, the footnote itself would vanish. His message was not that our work didn’t matter or that discipline and ambition in the professional sphere are a mirage. He did remind his youngest new colleague that there is more to what we do than what we do in our offices. That something

8. Dante, *Inferno* 24.55ff.

more, that surplus, was for him different in nature than it is for me, but this wise counsel of induction has guided and balanced me for almost three decades. And then there was John Kronik, my dissertation advisor. He was an agnostic Jew at the top of the profession who knew well our church, its culture, and BYU. When in 1985 I received my job here, he gave me one line of counsel: keep one foot firmly planted in Zion, and the other foot roaming about the world. Shortly before he died a couple of years ago, he told me he was proud of me, and it was clear to me that his pride had as much to do with the foot in Zion as it did with the other more peripatetic one. That is one of the reasons that each fall I turn to the Education in Zion exhibit, and, with one foot firmly planted there, I begin the process of planning what is to be accomplished during the coming year.



Having completed this brief journey through the JFSB, contemplating the arches, the uses of light, and the centering function of the Education in Zion exhibit, I return to my office and pick up my copy of Fichte's "Lectures on the Vocation of a Scholar," well worn after twenty-five years of use. Fichte determined that he could not ascertain the vocation of a scholar without first understanding the vocation of man as man, and to that problem he turned in the first lecture. Among his conclusions, we find the following statement:

Man's final end is to subordinate to himself all that is irrational, to master it freely and according to his own laws. This is a final end which is completely inachievable and must always remain so—so long, that is, as man is to remain man and is not supposed to become God. It is part of the concept of man that his ultimate goal be unobtainable and that his path thereto be infinitely long. Thus it is not man's vocation to reach this goal. But he can and he should draw nearer to it, and his true vocation *qua man* . . . lies in endless approximation toward this goal. . . . Now if, as we surely can, we call this total harmony with oneself "perfection," in the highest sense of the word, then perfection is man's highest and unattainable goal. His vocation, however, is to perfect himself without end. He exists in order to become constantly better in an ethical sense.⁹

My vocation as a scholar of faith is a journey of endless approximation, on the good days. The twenty years (and counting) of uninterrupted

9. Fichte, "Lectures on the Vocation of a Scholar," 9.



FIGURE 10. Joseph F. Smith Building east façade, viewed from the north. Courtesy Brigham Young University.

administrative assignments—a Grand Tour or a Grand Detour?—feel like a long digression that, like life in E. B. de Vito’s poem, happened while I made other plans. And then learning slipped in and came to stay while I was faced the other way. I have a lifetime left to figure out the nature of that learning, but I suspect, whatever the lesson, it will make sense only to the degree to which the journeys of my students and my colleagues become my own.

In the early 1940s, someone at Mesa High School in Arizona made a wooden scroll for my grandfather with lines from Edwin Markham’s short poem “A Creed.” The poets in the English department will nod their gentle reminders that this is not a great poem, and that Markham was a . . . fair poet. And the scroll’s generous calligrapher didn’t even quote the lines correctly. But the scroll hung in my grandfather’s offices in Mesa and at BYU for nearly forty years, and it has hung in mine for almost thirty. Grandfather’s friend carved the scroll for him because then, in the forties, when Grandfather was about the age I am now, he apparently exemplified the virtues the poem celebrates. It hangs in my office because of the ways it reminds me of the multitude of things Grandfather contributed to my life. It hangs on my wall to prod me to remember the multitude of things colleagues and students, past and



FIGURE 11. "A Creed," Edwin Markham. Courtesy John R. Rosenberg.

present, put into my life, and that remembering those things is the surest antidote for a bad day. And it hangs on my wall as a hopeful invitation to make Markham's Creed my own.

There is a destiny that makes us brothers:
None goes his way alone:
All that we send into the lives of others
Comes back into our own.

For a humanist, the scholar's journey often is understood to be noble and solitary. In fact, for the romantics, the more solitary it was, the more noble. But I have "never gone my way alone," and I have rarely mapped the pilgrim's path or even the road less traveled. Mostly I have been carried

along by words and ideas and deeds and forgiveness in the companionship of colleagues who have taught and corrected and instilled confidence. Because of that, my scholar's journey of faith has been that of a grateful migrant swept up in a miraculous migration toward the unexpected, toward grace.

John R. Rosenberg (who can be reached via email at byustudies@byu.edu) has been Professor of Spanish Literature at Brigham Young University since 1985. He earned his PhD at Cornell University and has taught and written primarily on Spanish letters from 1800 to the present. Current interests include the relationship between verbal and visual arts in Spain and the literature of Equatorial Guinea. For the last twenty years, he has worked with the BYU–Public School Partnership, serving on its management team and receiving in 2005 its Renewal in Practice Award. He has received eight grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities to direct intensive summer seminars for schoolteachers, the last four in Madrid. He chaired the Department of Spanish and Portuguese from 1993 to 1997, was associate dean in the College of Humanities from 1997 to 2005, and since 2005 has served as dean. In 2011, he was decorated with the Officer's Cross of the Order of Civil Merit from Spain.

Integrating BYU's Education in Zion Gallery into Campus Life

Heather M. Seferovich

The Education in Zion Gallery is a unique space on BYU's campus. Located on the east side of the Joseph F. Smith Building (JFSB) and extending from the basement to the third floor, the gallery houses a permanent, multimedia exhibition and contains rotating exhibition space. The expansive windows inside the gallery offer a spectacular view of campus and the Wasatch Mountains.

The Education in Zion Gallery highlights the long tradition of education within the LDS faith, tells of the sacrifices that went into Brigham Young Academy and later Brigham Young University, and inspires students to seek an education of the whole soul—intellectually, spiritually, and physically—through integrating the permanent exhibition into course curricula, hosting programs and activities, developing rotating exhibitions, and forming partnerships with various campus entities.

Brief History of the Gallery

I think of Terry Warner, now an emeritus professor of philosophy, as the gallery's founding curator. He envisioned a place where students could both learn about the rich history of education within the Church and also contemplate their role in God's kingdom. University administrators agreed with Warner that a gallery would be a valuable addition to the campus. As fundraising for the gallery got underway in the 1990s, the old Smith Family Living Center was being demolished to make way for the new JFSB, which was designed with the gallery in mind. (See John Rosenberg's essay on page 113 of this issue.)



Students install a display in the permanent exhibition at the Education in Zion Gallery. Courtesy Brigham Young University.

Warner spent eight years working with a team of talented students and a few recent graduates to research, plan, and install the permanent exhibition. Although Warner consulted with specialists from various disciplines and involved them in a peer review of sorts, the bulk of the work was accomplished by students under Warner's close supervision. Years later, the gallery continues to rely heavily on students who now work as gallery educators. They primarily greet visitors; lead tours for classes, groups, individuals, and campus guests; plan and execute a variety of programs; and assist the curator, who is the only full-time employee, in developing and displaying rotating exhibitions. In many ways, the gallery continues the legacy left by Karl G. Maeser, who trained students to take initiative and serve others.¹

1. Karl G. Maeser, "The Monitorial System," *Juvenile Instructor* 36 (March 1, 1901): 153. In this reference, Maeser stated that although he called his system by the name commonly used among educators, he altered his version of the system to discourage student abuses, such as bullying and tattling, and to encourage "cultivation of a public spirit among the pupils." In James E. Talmage, "The Brigham Young Academy," *Contributor* (June 1881): 272–73, the system is described, though not named.



The Karl G. Maeser section of the gallery, recognizing his leadership in launching the now-worldwide educational program of the Church. Maeser had a desk nearly identical to the one in this display. Courtesy Brigham Young University.

In 2008, shortly before the gallery opened and Warner was preparing to retire, the university administration tasked the Harold B. Lee Library with the responsibility of overseeing the gallery. Currently, it falls under the Promotions and Outreach Unit headed by Cali O'Connell. An advisory committee chaired by Scott Duvall, Assistant University Librarian for Special Collections, brings together key campus partners to expand the gallery's reach.

The goal in creating the Education in Zion Gallery was to present the stories of the BYU educational pioneers—those who initiated and those who now carry on the distinctive BYU tradition of faith and learning. The stories in this permanent exhibition bear witness to the sacrifice and the innovation that characterize the Church's efforts to educate its members from its earliest days to the present. These stories illustrate the Church's tremendous educational legacy and seek to inspire visitors to carry this legacy forward in their own lives. Stories were highlighted as the main feature of the exhibition because they are understandable, interesting, and memorable to people of all ages, cultures, and educational backgrounds.

Faculty Involvement with the Gallery

Since the Education in Zion Gallery opened in August 2008, the two successive curators—Ann Lambson (2008–11) and I (2011–present)—have

worked diligently to get the gallery up and running and to integrate it into campus life.

By winter semester 2013, over fifty professors regularly used the gallery in their classes. The gallery's content makes it naturally suited to augment religion and education classes, but remarkably many more professors outside of these two disciplines use the gallery in their courses. Because the permanent exhibition has content relevant to the four aims of a BYU education,² it is an appropriate way for professors in secular disciplines to integrate a spiritually strengthening component into their curricula.

Many of the professors who use the gallery assign their students to write reflective essays about their experiences touring the exhibitions, while others have them answer specific questions relative to their particular classes. Ann Lambson and I have drawn up a list of potential questions that may be used by various disciplines for such an assignment.

Still other professors come up with a variety of creative assignments related to the gallery and their particular classes. For example, a chemistry professor had his students tour the gallery and answer a handful of questions in a reflective essay, including, Why is education such a priority for the Church and the Lord? What does the Lord expect from me in Chem 351, during my time at BYU, and after I graduate? How will my time in Chem 351 prepare me to help build the kingdom of God? How does my faith inform how I learn and practice science? A geometry class came to examine the spiral staircase and completed an assignment about how it acts like a spring. An upper-division Spanish class was given an assignment to summarize sections of the exhibition, translate those into Spanish, then give an oral presentation on the material. An English as a second language class read Franklin S. Harris's inaugural address in the book *Educating Zion*,³ came for a gallery tour, and then wrote an essay about their experiences. A visual arts professor wanted her students to tour the gallery and then create unique artworks inspired by both their visit and their study of the aims of a BYU education (this culminated in two student exhibitions, *Inheritance* and *Clarity*, which were displayed along the spiral staircase; see EducationInZion.byu.edu

2. The four aims are that a BYU education should be (1) intellectually enlarging, (2) spiritually strengthening, (3) character building, and (4) leading to lifelong learning and service. See aims.byu.edu for more information.

3. Franklin S. Harris, "Inaugural Address," in *Educating Zion*, ed. John W. Welch and Don E. Norton (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 1996), 5–9.

for photos). A biology professor wanted her students to examine the eternal nature of education, so she used the gallery to illustrate this point. An anatomy professor wanted his students to learn to work creatively in teams, so he had them self-select into groups of three to six students to produce a creative project that integrated what they had learned in class with the information from the gallery. There are probably many other creative ways that professors have used the gallery in their courses, but I generally hear only about the larger classes. Although professors' desired learning outcomes for their students necessarily differ, this brief list demonstrates that the gallery contains more than enough material to accommodate a wide variety of tailor-made assignments.

Students' comments about their gallery assignments have been overwhelmingly positive. The vast majority come away saying things such as "I never realized the impact of education in Church history," or "The most important thing I learned was that education is important to the Lord," or "This assignment actually turned out to be one of the best experiences I have had all semester." Other representative student comments include:

- "As I was walking into the Education in Zion exhibit, I was expecting to see some nice displays and read some interesting histories and just obtain facts for this paper, but what I found turned out to be much different and even more valuable."
- "I visited the Education in Zion exhibit my freshman year, but as I visited it again for this assignment I was surprised how much I did not notice the first time around."
- "I am not much of a museum guy, but I actually learned some interesting things and made some connections I hadn't thought of before."



A student affixes a photograph to a display about education in pioneer-era Utah at the Education in Zion Gallery. Courtesy Brigham Young University.

- “I must admit that I was not looking forward to going to the Education in Zion exhibit because I had gone before. . . . However, it was just like the scriptures in that I may read something nine times but on the tenth time I find something different, and that’s exactly what I needed.”
- “Initially I was a little bit skeptical of having to spend an entire hour touring the exhibit. Surprisingly however, the time flew by and I ended up staying beyond the required hour. Every wall of the exhibit was so crowded with so much new information that I absolutely loved taking in!”
- “As I wandered around the different displays, I felt a great appreciation for the opportunity which I have to attend this university. Although they were just exhibits, there is a precious spirit there.”
- “The principal insight I gained during my visit to the exhibit was the importance of inviting the Spirit into the learning process to aid my comprehension and further my knowledge.”
- “As I began my journey through the Education in Zion exhibit, I started to realize that knowledge is something that doesn’t come quickly, and it is something that needs to be worked for in order to receive.”
- “I learned so much while walking through the Education in Zion exhibit that a better question would be, ‘What did I not learn?’”

The opportunity to tour the gallery, whether in or out of class, provides a kinetic learning experience that can impact students positively. And while walking through the exhibition, many undergo a process of self-discovery, learning how important education is to the Lord and gaining new motivation to study harder and take their education seriously.

In addition to being integrated into various course curricula, the gallery also hosts a variety of programs to engage the campus community. For example, each Friday during fall and winter semesters, student musicians perform live at noon. On the second and fourth Mondays of each month from September through April, the gallery has a Family Home Evening program; the content changes each month, with the two most popular programs being Christmas in Nauvoo and Vignettes of Black Saints. Twice during the academic year, the gallery holds a Date Night, which ranges from activities such as scavenger hunts to Old Nauvoo dances. Also twice during the academic year, we hold gallery talks given by professors from across campus. Past speakers were Mikaela Dufur (Sociology), Ron Saltmarsh (Music), Patricia Ravert (Nursing),

and Margaret Blair Young (English). Perhaps the best-attended program is the gallery's New Student Orientation, which takes place each year in January, June, and August. In 2012, nearly 4,500 new students participated.

Rotating Exhibitions and Partnerships

It seems logical that departments would collaborate and work together often. However, professors and administrators are busy fulfilling their individual duties, so collaboration and partnering does not happen frequently. Based on my seventeen years' experience at BYU, I think university employees sometimes take Matthew 6:3, "let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth," too much to heart. Consequently, it is especially noteworthy that the gallery has partnered with so many colleges, departments, and centers on exhibitions and programs in its short five-year history.

Exhibitions. The previous curator, Ann Lambson, partnered with visual arts classes to organize three student exhibitions: *Inheritance*, *Clarity*, and *After Eve*. These were well attended and helped inform the campus community of exhibition opportunities.

Shortly after I arrived in 2011, I hosted another exhibition by upper-division visual arts classes titled *Let Virtue Garnish Your Thoughts*. In winter 2012, I partnered with the College of Nursing to produce *The Healer's Art: A Celebration of the College of Nursing*; this exhibition opened in time for the college's sixtieth anniversary. In fall 2012, I opened *Cosmo: The Credentials of a Cougar*, which had a loose affiliation with athletics because it showed Cosmo, the BYU mascot, exemplifying the four aims of a BYU education. In 2013–14, I will do exhibitions with the Center for Service and Learning as well as the Ballard Center for Economic Self-Reliance in the Marriott School of Management. I am partnering with the Museum of Peoples and Cultures, also known



Students perform at Music Friday, held weekly during fall and winter semesters. Courtesy Education in Zion Gallery.



A section of *The Healer's Art: A Celebration of the College of Nursing*, on display until November 2013. Courtesy Education in Zion Gallery.

as BYU's Teaching Museum, to design and install an exhibition in the fall that will be co-curated by Barbara Morgan (Religion) and Vance Randall (Education) about Benemerito de las Americas, the LDS high school in Mexico City that will become a Missionary Training Center in July 2013. Future exhibitions are also being planned with anatomy and biology professors.

Programs. In fall 2011, the gallery partnered with the Faculty Development Center to cohost an ongoing lecture series titled "My Journey as a Scholar of Faith." Faculty and students have had the opportunity to learn about various individuals' integration of the religious and the secular. Elements from each presenter's life resonate to varying degrees with those in the audience. The gallery also runs a program called Hidden Photo Challenge, and since winter 2012 we have partnered on it with the BYU Bookstore, which has generously donated half of the prizes. In winter 2013, the gallery began a partnership with the student association in the School of Music for the Music Fridays program. And in February 2013, for the gallery's Date Night activity, I invited Colleen West, a dance professor, to teach a few steps from popular dances in the 1830s and 1840s.



The Pioneers of Education room, highlighting notable faculty and administrators during the early to mid-twentieth century, in the Education in Zion Gallery. Courtesy Education in Zion Gallery.

Conclusion

The first five years at the Education in Zion Gallery have been very productive. When it opened in fall 2008, there was a burst of excitement and attendance, which has steadily grown. In the first four months the gallery was open in 2008, it hosted over 4,000 visitors; in 2009 there were just over 18,000 visitors; and in 2012 there were just over 28,000. First visits to the gallery are often casual, but with increased interaction students have deeper and more meaningful experiences. Many more exciting events are on the horizon. Everyone is invited to attend the gallery to experience it personally, and be sure to check out EducationInZion.byu.edu.

Heather M. Seferovich (byustudies@byu.edu) worked on *The Story of Masada* and *The Dead Sea Scrolls* exhibitions at BYU in 1997 and was Senior Executive Editor at BYU Studies for twelve years before becoming the curator at the Education in Zion Gallery in June 2011.



Beehive in a stained-glass window at the Church History Museum, Salt Lake City.
All photos in this photo essay are © Val Brinkerhoff.

The Symbolism of the Beehive in Latter-day Saint Tradition

Val Brinkerhoff

The beehive is one of the most common and enduring symbols within Mormonism, used ubiquitously. For example, it appears in publications, logos, architecture, and as the name of one of the Young Women's classes. It is an official emblem for the state of Utah, where it is used on the state seal, the state flag, highway signs, historic money, police cars, and more. The beehive is used widely in popular culture and names of businesses in Utah. Today the beehive is seen as a symbol of industry, teamwork, and unity. But evidence shows that Church leaders in the late 1840s had a different concept in mind. For them, the beehive represented the kingdom of God. This photo essay presents uses of the beehive in its historical and sacred settings in Mormonism.

Anciently, the beehive was associated with kingdoms: a “king” bee (the dominant bee in a hive is actually female, but that was not known among scientists until the seventeenth century, and much later among the general population¹) governed a productive, cooperative society. Bees and beehives were symbols for royalty, and thus divinity, in ancient Egypt and other societies.² In the Old Testament, bees chase (Deut. 1:44), swarm (Judg. 14:8; Ps. 118:12), and sting (Isa. 7:18)—negative symbolism, but still symbolism of power. The honey they produce is a symbol of bounty and goodness, as in a land of milk and honey. In the New Testament, John the Baptist survives on locusts and wild honey, and honey is a symbol for sweetness (Rev. 10:9, 10). Early Christians carved beehives on tombs as a symbol of the immortality brought by Jesus's Resurrection.³ Christians wrote about the positive attributes of bee society, with Jesus as their leader and themselves as his hive. Ambrose⁴ and Thomas

Aquinas⁵ both equated the colony of bees with the kingdom of God. In 1259, Thomas of Cantimpré compared Christianity with bees and focused on the one king—the pope—who reigns in kindness and does not sting.⁶ Candles used at the Christian altar are made from beeswax, thus linking bees to worship. Louis XII of France (1462–1515) showed his kingly mercy by using bees in his insignia along with the phrase “The king whom we serve does not use his sting.”⁷ In Shakespeare’s *Henry V* (1599), the Archbishop of Canterbury uses bee society as the exemplar of human society, to “teach the art of order to a peopled kingdom,” with a king, soldiers, workers, and drones.⁸ Thus the bee as a symbol of kingship persisted in Western culture throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

In enlightened Europe and even more so in the young United States, the symbolism was transformed to reflect a new democratic ideology. The emphasis on the king bee was dropped, and focus shifted to each worker bee’s contribution to the community. The bee and beehive came to symbolize industry, economic well-being, and civic order. In the United States, the beehive appears in works of art, on currency,⁹ and in social and commercial publications. Michael Hunter has explained how the beehive was Americanized: “Often the American eagle would be perched on or near the beehive, making it clear that the hive represented the new republic.”¹⁰

Bees first appear in a specifically Mormon context in the Book of Mormon, published in 1830. Nephi quotes Isaiah’s use of the bee (2 Ne. 17:18, quoting Isa. 7:18), likely representing the Assyrian army that stings the children of Israel. But more important is Ether 2:3: “And they did also carry with them deseret, which, by interpretation, is a honey bee; and thus they did carry with them swarms of bees, and all manner of that which was upon the face of the land, seeds of every kind.” Here, for Mormons, bee symbolism became associated with migration to a new, promised land—a land of milk and honey.

By summer 1848, Church leaders had decided to call their new home Deseret and use the associated beehive symbol. This name and logo soon referred to not only the Salt Lake Valley but a large territory encompassing what is now all of Utah and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, California, and Arizona. Hunter reports:

On July 24, 1848, Brigham Young was returning to the Salt Lake Valley with a group of Mormons. He stopped the group somewhere in what is now Wyoming to celebrate the first anniversary of the arrival of the Mormons in the Salt Lake Valley. In his journal, Richard Ballantyne described an elaborate celebration in which the group cheered three



A window in the Conference Center in Salt Lake City.



Detail on a chair at the Beehive House, Salt Lake City.

times: “Long Live the governor of the State of Deseret”¹¹ [referring to Brigham Young].

Sometime between the day Brigham Young had first entered the Salt Lake Valley on July 24, 1847, and the day of this celebration a year later, there had apparently been some discussion among the Mormons about the creation of a new state in the Salt Lake Valley to be called the “State of Deseret,” the unique term originating from the Book of Mormon term for “swarms of bees.”¹²

Soon the Saints’ discourse in sermons, newspapers, and diaries began using this name and symbol.

The bee symbolism used in sermons from the 1850s described the godly society the Saints strove to build. For example, Heber C. Kimball said, “We are the Kingdom of God, we are STATE OF DESERET.”¹³ Brigham Young used the beehive to chastise some: “It seems that there are many drones in the hive, who are determined to tie up the hands of those who rule the affairs of this kingdom, and the quicker they are thrown out the better.”¹⁴ Parley P. Pratt spoke on heirship and priesthood in 1853 and said, “All intelligences which exist possess a degree of independence in their own sphere. For instance, the bee can go at will in search of honey, or remain in the hive. It can visit one flower or another, as independent in its own sphere as God is in His.”¹⁵ Orson Pratt in 1852 said, “And what will he do when this [world] is filled up? Why, he will make more worlds, and swarm out like bees from the old hive, and prepare new locations.”¹⁶ Bees continue to have a place in Mormon hymns, literature, and sermons.¹⁷



A note “Good Only For Produce, Live Stock, and Merchandise, at the Tithing Store House of St. George Stake, Utah,” held at the Church History Museum.



Brigham Young's safe, Church History Museum. The beehive on financial items symbolizes the Saints' consecration.

It is uncertain why Church leaders chose Deseret and the beehive over other possible names and symbols and why they came to associate the beehive with the older symbolism of the kingdom of God. Leaders included the American meaning of industry in their discourse on the beehive and Deseret, but the kingdom of God symbolism was greatly favored. Perhaps they chose Deseret because of its association with a promised land, or they liked the uniqueness of the name. They were familiar with the bee's desirable characteristics: its orderly society, the ability to sting enemies, and the contribution of many workers in the hive. Bees as pol-

linators would help the desert to blossom as the rose. The king bee could represent the prophet or a local leader as well as God. Perhaps Brigham Young or another early Saint had an affinity for beehive symbolism because of local New York culture: the beehive serves as part of



Pioneer-era drums, Church History Museum. The blue drum is inscribed “Holiness to the Lord.” On the brown drum is painted “3rd Regmt Infantry Nauvoo Legion.” Both drums feature an eagle holding the shield of the United States perched on a beehive. The brown drum adds a red silhouette of a right hand on the beehive. The combination of American and Mormon iconography evinces the Saints’ desire to have Deseret join the Union.

iconography of the city of Ithaca, New York,¹⁸ which was not far from the cradle of Mormonism. Kirtland converts, especially Isaac Morley, had been associated with the social views of Robert Owen; the Owenites believed in economic cooperation and used the bee as a symbol.¹⁹ Perhaps the Saints’ association with Freemasonry played a role;²⁰ in Nauvoo, many Church leaders, including Brigham Young, were Freemasons, and the beehive is a prominent symbol among the Freemasons. Whatever the reason for the choice, Brigham saw the Church as the kingdom of God on earth, he wanted to prepare his people for the Second Coming of the Lord, and he saw fit to draw upon the beehive and Deseret to help guide his people.

For the Saints in the nineteenth century, there was little division between sacred and secular uses of Deseret and the beehive. The name and logo appeared everywhere: on architectural features, in publications, in songs and poems, on gravestones, and much more. Not surprisingly,



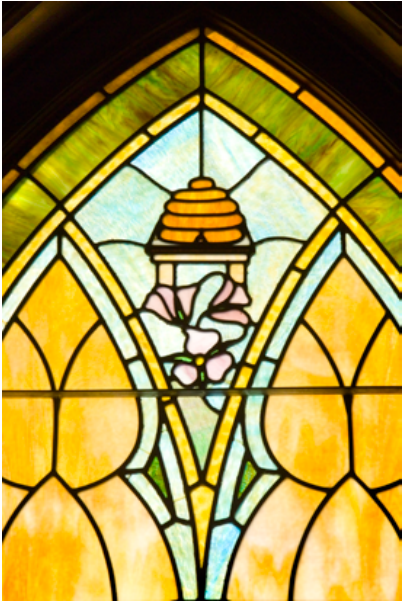
St. George Temple stairway posts. Beehives often decorate entryways and doors, symbolic of entering into the kingdom of God.



Doorknob on the southern door of the east façade of the Salt Lake Temple.



Posts and stair rails at Brigham Young's Beehive House in Salt Lake City.



Beehive emblems at the Provo Tabernacle, before the tabernacle was severely damaged by fire in 2010.

the beehive appears on the Salt Lake, St. George, Manti, and other temples. The beehive logo often appears next to the words “Holiness to the Lord.”²¹

The beehive appears on wooden chests that bishops used to store records, symbolic of the role of consecration in building the kingdom.²² Brigham Young’s Beehive House features extensive usage of beehives throughout its interior, and a large beehive is found on its roof. A white beehive dome also rests atop the Joseph Smith Memorial Building, formerly the Hotel Utah.

It is interesting that by the time the Saints adopted the beehive logo, most beekeepers had stopped using the type of beehive the logo depicts. The iconic beehive made from wicker or straw in a coiled cone shape is called a skep.²³ Sleps were used in Europe for centuries, but by the late eighteenth century, beekeepers had developed better forms, such as the boxes that are still common today. It was difficult to access the honey in a skep, and often the hive was destroyed in the process. A box allowed for easier removal of the honeycomb. Clearly, the Mormon beehive logo was meant to be a symbol and not a practical instruction on how to keep bees.



Chapel in Levan, Utah.



Salt Lake Temple annex entryway.

Brigham hoped that the State of Deseret could join the United States under that name, but even from the Mormons' initial requests for statehood, many American politicians objected to the name because of its religious connotations.²⁴ By the 1870s, the Saints finally gave up the quest and agreed to the name of Utah, mandated by Washington.

The beehive symbol persists in the name of one of the Young Women's classes. It was not until 1915 that the name Beehive was used, and all Mormon young women, age 14 to adulthood, belonged to the Beehive Girls. Young women were encouraged to achieve ranks in the Mutual Improvement Association by performing certain tasks, including beekeeping. In 1950, the class of twelve- and thirteen-year-old young women was given the name Beehives.²⁵

The meaning of the beehive symbol shifted over the decades as Mormons set aside the name of the State of Deseret and entered the American mainstream. By the turn of the twentieth century, discussion and use of the beehive stressed the idea of industry and cooperation. But as members of the Church observe the beehive in their iconography, they need to remember its meaning to Brigham Young and others, that the Saints must be dedicated to building the kingdom of God.²⁶

Val Brinkerhoff (val_brinkerhoff@byu.edu) is Associate Professor of Photography in the Department of Visual Arts at Brigham Young University. He also worked as a commercial photographer for twenty-five years. Professor Brinkerhoff has won many awards for his photography and has published several books, including *The Day Star: Reading Sacred Architecture, Holy unto the Lord: The Nazarite Vow and the Atonement, Pillars of the Priesthood: Teachings and Symbols*

of God's Holy Order, Lost Wisdom: Archetypes of the Atonement, Ascension and At-One-Ment, and Awake and Arise.

1. "In 1609, Charles Butler, an English rector, published in Oxford a book on bees in which he identifies the queen bee as a female. *The Feminine Monarchie* states, 'We must not call the Queen "Rex," the Bee-state is an Amazonian or feminine kingdom.' Yet, coming at the end of Queen Elizabeth's long reign, this did not detract from the monarchical implications of the bee symbol." J. Michael Hunter, "The Mormon Hive: A Study of the Bee and Beehive Symbols in Nineteenth-Century Mormon Culture" (master's thesis, California State University Dominguez Hills, 2004), 29–30, citing Charles Butler, *The Feminine Monarchie* (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1609). [^]

2. Hugh Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 608–31, online at <http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/books/?bookid=48&chapid=297#8>. Early leaders in the Salt Lake Valley may have understood some of these ancient ties to the bee through pure inspiration. See also the discussion in Val Brinkerhoff, *The Day Star: Reading Sacred Architecture* (Honeoye Falls, N.Y.: Digital Legend Press, 2009). [^]

3. Hunter, "Mormon Hive," citing Elizabeth E. Goldsmith, *Sacred Symbols in Art* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1911), 284. [^]

4. "Ambrose compared the Church to a beehive, and the Christian to the bee, 'working ardently and forever true to the hive.' Interestingly, the bee later became a symbol for Saint Ambrose because his eloquence was said to be 'as sweet as honey.'" Hunter, "Mormon Hive," 21–22, quoting George Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 5–6. [^]

5. "Among bees there is one king bee and in the whole universe there is One God, Maker and Ruler of all things. And there is a reason for this. Every multitude is derived from unity. Wherefore, if artificial things are an imitation of natural things, and a work of art is better according as it attains a closer likeness to what is in nature, it follows that it is best for a human multitude to be ruled by one person." Thomas Aquinas, *On Kingship* 3.19, online at <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/DeRegno.htm>. [^]

6. Hunter, "Mormon Hive," 23, citing H. M. Ransome, *The Sacred Bee in Ancient Times and Folklore* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1937), 145–46. [^]

7. Hunter, "Mormon Hive," 28. [^]

8. William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, act 1, scene 2. [^]

9. See the beehive surrounded by thirteen (the number of original states) bees on the bank note issued in Charleston, South Carolina, July 6, 1789, in Hunter, "Mormon Hive," 46, citing Eric P. Newman, *The Early Paper Money of America* (Racine, Wis.: Western Publishing, 1976), 378. [^]

10. Hunter, "Mormon Hive," 45. [^]

11. Hunter, "Mormon Hive," 75, quoting Richard Ballantyne, *Journal*, May–August 1848, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, July 24, 1848. [^]

12. Hunter, "Mormon Hive," 75. Later that year, a Mormon newspaper confirmed the name of Deseret: "We learn by Mr. B. that Major Simonson has

established the Government post at Smith's Fork of the Bear River, about fifty miles from the Salt Lake City. We learn from the same source that the citizens of the Great Basin have organized a provisional Government, called the 'State of Deseret' under which the civil policy of the nation is duly administered, and will so continue until Congress shall otherwise provide by law." *Frontier Guardian*, September 5, 1849, 2, republished on the CD accompanying *The Best of the Frontier Guardian*, ed. Susan Easton Black (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2009). [^]

13. Heber C. Kimball, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 5:164, August 30, 1857. [^]

14. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:6, September 6, 1855. [^]

15. Parley P. Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:256, April 10, 1853. [^]

16. Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:294, July 25, 1852. [^]

17. Examples abound. Here are some prominent ones. Bees are mentioned in the hymn "Joseph Smith's First Prayer." President Gordon B. Hinckley's six goals to "be" quickly became "bees" in lesson posters around the Church (Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Prophet's Counsel and Prayer for Youth," *Ensign* 31 [January 2001]: 4). Annette Murray Wells and Stephen A. Wells, "Bees, Beehives, and You," *New Era* 41 (November 2011): 30–32. M. Russell Ballard, "Be Anxiously Engaged," *Ensign* 42 (November 2012): 29–31. [^]

18. The beehive appears in town insignia and in the Ithaca High School crest. [^]

19. Mark Lyman Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting for Joseph Smith's Ohio Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2009), 39. [^]

20. Hunter, "Mormon Hive," 85. As many who have researched the connection between Mormonism and Freemasonry say, the fact that Mormons used Masonic symbolism does not necessarily indicate that the Mormons obtained their symbols from the Masons. The symbols in question are of ancient and widespread origin. [^]

21. For example, the ceremonial spike driven by Brigham Young at the completion of the Utah Central Railroad in 1870 was inscribed with a beehive and "Holiness to the Lord." John J. Stewart, "The Railroad Builder," in *Lion of the Lord: Essays on the Life and Service of Brigham Young*, ed. Larry C. Porter and Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 284. [^]

22. Hunter, "Mormon Hive," 110. [^]

23. Sinks can also have straight sides, but usually have tiers decreasing in size from bottom to top. Many sinks look like baskets turned upside down. [^]

24. Already by April 1850, the Saints knew that some in the United States government objected to the name Deseret: "This name it would seem, is objectionable to the Government, because it is a Mormon name, and must therefore, with its government, be discarded." *Frontier Guardian*, April 17, 1850, 2. [^]

25. "History of Young Women Achievement Programs," online at <http://www.lds.org/pa/display/0,17884,7713-1,00.html>; "Timeline of General Young Women Presidents," online at <https://www.lds.org/callings/young-women/leader-resources/timeline?lang=eng#4>. [^]

26. One way that the beehive is still connected closely to its sacred LDS roots is through the name of the Church's clothing manufacturer, Beehive Clothing Mills. [^]

Self-Interest, Ethical Egoism, and the Restored Gospel

Darin Crawford Gates

To what degree, if at all, should self-interest influence the lives of those who follow the restored gospel? In some ways, the gospel seems to completely minimize the role of self-interest, since we learn that we must “lose ourselves” in the service of others, “seek not our own,” and strive to be *selfless*.¹ In other ways, however, the gospel advocates a legitimate focus on our own interest, since happiness and joy seem to constitute the very purpose of our existence.² Those who emphasize this latter focus may even come to think that the gospel advocates *ethical egoism*. Indeed, whenever we discuss the moral theory known as ethical egoism in my philosophy courses at Brigham Young University, there are always students who are completely convinced that the gospel is identical to such egoism. The reasoning for this claim might go as follows: ethical egoism holds that we should act *only* in our own interest, where such interest is viewed from an overall and long-term perspective. Furthermore, the gospel teaches that we should act only in harmony with righteousness and that *only* righteousness is in our long-term interest. It follows, therefore, that according to the gospel we should act only in our long-term interest, and so it would seem that the gospel does in fact advocate ethical egoism.³

1. When I speak of “the gospel” in this paper, I am referring to the balance of what is taught in the scriptures and by modern prophets.

2. See 2 Nephi 2:25 and Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 255–56.

3. The argument could be articulated as follows:

(1) We ought to act *only* in our long-term interest. (Ethical Egoism)

I have been interested in the relation between self-interest and the gospel for quite some time. In part, this interest stems from my research on the relation between self-interest and morality in general. I am currently working on a book that examines the relation between self-interest and moral life, with an emphasis on how self-interest functions in relation to various theories of moral obligation. While self-interest cannot serve as the ethical ground of our moral obligations, it can still play an important though limited role in the moral life. Locating that legitimate role takes us to the heart of the most important issues in moral philosophy/ethics: issues concerning the ground, the scope, and the limits of moral obligation.



The first thing to note is that self-interest is not equivalent to selfishness. Selfishness is almost always blameworthy; self-interest, however, is very often not blameworthy in any sense. So, part of my project is to understand the role of morally justified self-interest—or what I call simply *moral self-interest*. Meeting our needs often counts as moral self-interest. An important question is what transforms our actions from moral self-interest to blameworthy selfishness. Furthermore, what is the relation between self-interest and love, or between self-interest and doing what is right because it is right?

My main concern in this essay, however, is to show that while a fairly strong case can be made to say that the gospel involves ethical egoism, in the end the gospel is *not* ethical egoism. As I argue here, they differ in fundamental ways—especially in terms of motivation. While the gospel does teach that attaining joy and happiness is a fundamental purpose of our lives, righteousness requires a type of love that goes beyond self-interest (even broadly conceived). That means that self-interest cannot be our overriding or predominant motive, but it does not mean that all possible awareness of self-interest must be eliminated. Thus, while there is an important role for what we could call righteous self-interest, the gospel cannot be reduced to ethical egoism.

In this paper, I will examine the relationship between ethical egoism and the restored gospel and show that although one can make a fairly strong case for the gospel as ethical egoism, there are overriding reasons that prevent us from equating the two. I will present two main reasons: (1) the gospel and ethical egoism accept different normative *grounds for right actions*, and (2) they contain incompatible accounts of *motivation*. In my analysis as to why the gospel cannot be reduced to ethical egoism, I will also address the closely related claim of *psychological egoism*, since it will be important in my response to the gospel-as-ethical-egoism claim.

Defining Ethical Egoism

At first glance, one might think it obvious that the gospel is incompatible with any kind of egoism. However, once we clarify what is meant by ethical egoism, we find there are actually fairly convincing reasons for viewing the gospel as ethical egoism. Ethical egoism holds that morality is based on self-interest, though it need not advocate selfishness, if by that term we mean taking advantage of or harming others. Nor need it endorse an indifferent and uncaring attitude toward helping others, since such indifference is most likely *not* in our long-term interest, even from a mortal perspective. If we never care about others, we are less likely to receive help we may need; if we harm or take advantage of others, we may end up in prison; and so on. Thus, for an ethical egoist, there are ample reasons to suppose that being good to others *is* in fact in our long-term self-interest, and therefore such an egoist will likely be quite different from the cold, calculating *egotist* who perhaps comes to mind when we hear the term “egoism.” In fact, it turns out that ethical egoism aligns with most of the principles of common-sense morality such as respect, honesty, beneficence, and following the golden rule—all because it is very probable that following such moral principles best promotes our long-term interest.

-
- (2) Only righteousness is in our long-term interest.
 - (3) According to the gospel, we ought to act only in harmony with righteousness.
 - (4) Therefore, according to the gospel, we ought to act only in our long-term interest (from 2 and 3).
 - (5) Any position that holds that we ought to do only what is in our long-term interest advocates ethical egoism.
 - (6) Therefore, the gospel advocates ethical egoism.

It is unusual to find fully developed versions of ethical egoism as a moral theory. Though traces of it may appear in some ancient sources,⁴ we find the clearest cases in more modern times. For example, Thomas Hobbes, the famous seventeenth-century philosopher, held a version of ethical egoism. However, fully elaborated versions show up only in the twentieth century.⁵ In the essay "What Is Ethical Egoism?" Edward Regis Jr. outlines the main principles found in contemporary versions of ethical egoism.⁶ These principles can be summed up by saying that self-interest

4. The roots of the theory can certainly be found in Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, who argues that true self-love coincides with the moral life. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, he tells us: "If a man were to always devote his attention above all else to acting justly himself, to acting with self-control, or to fulfilling whatever other demands virtue makes upon him, . . . such a person [would be] actually [the truest] egoist or self-lover." See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Oswald (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 1168b 24. Aristotle concludes that "a good man should be a self-lover." *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1169a 11. The main essays in the scholarly debate on this issue are Paula Gottlieb, "Aristotle's Ethical Egoism," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 77 (1996): 1–18; Julia Annas, "Self-Love in Aristotle," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 27, special issue (1989); Charles Kahn, "Aristotle and Altruism," *Mind* 90, no. 357 (1981); Julia Annas, "Plato and Aristotle on Friendship and Altruism," *Mind* 86, no. 344 (1977); and Richard Kraut *Aristotle on the Human Good* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). However, it has been a matter of debate whether Aristotle was really an ethical egoist or not, and in the end I don't think he accepted ethical egoism in the full sense, since he did not actually claim that the ethical life was based on self-interest. His central notion of virtue is extolled not simply because it is in one's interest, but because it is noble (*to kalos*). Further evidence that Aristotle was not really an ethical egoist comes from *Nicomachean Ethics*, cited above, where he writes, "Therefore, a good man should be a self-lover, for he will himself profit by performing noble actions and will benefit his fellow man. But a wicked man should not love himself, since he will harm both himself and his neighbors in following his base emotions. What a wicked man does is not in harmony with what he ought to do, whereas a good man does what he ought to do." Nevertheless, we see in some of Aristotle's thinking something close to ethical egoism.

5. See Gregory Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 357–68, for an account of Hobbes as a "rule ethical egoist." One can certainly see a version of ethical egoism in the writings of Nietzsche as well.

6. Edward Regis Jr., "What Is Ethical Egoism?" *Ethics* 91, no. 1 (1980): 50–62. Another excellent account of contemporary ethical egoism can be found in Keith Burgess-Jackson, "Deontological Egoism," *Social Theory and Practice* 29, no. 3 (2003): 357–85. Other essays defending ethical egoism include the following: Jesse Kalin, "In Defense of Ethical Egoism," in *Ethical Theory: Classical and*

is the ground of any morally right action. Therefore, because self-interest constitutes the basis of any moral obligation, ethical egoism holds that we ought to do only what is in our long-term self-interest.⁷ Other moral theories may emphasize the connection between morality and self-interest, but ethical egoism makes self-interest the *entire* basis of morality.

One popular contemporary version of ethical egoism is found in the writings of Ayn Rand, who, in her book *The Virtue of Selfishness*, argues that for a human being “to live for his own sake means that the achievement of his own happiness is his highest moral purpose.”⁸ For Rand, our highest moral purpose, and the basis for any moral action, is our own individual self-interest. She writes, “Objectivist ethics [her name for her moral theory] holds that the actor must always be the beneficiary of his action and that man must act for his own *rational* self-interest.”⁹ This does not mean we can just do anything we want in the name of self-interest. Again, ethical egoism is most often said to require that we do what is in our long-term interest.¹⁰ It therefore need not advocate either foolishness or selfishness, if by that term we mean actions that most would consider morally blameworthy, since such actions are not typically in our long-term interest.¹¹ While Rand herself argues that we

Contemporary Readings, ed. Louis Pojman (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Group, 2002); Mark Mercer, “In Defense of Weak Psychological Egoism,” *Erkenntnis* 55, no. 2 (2001): 228.

7. Another typical aspect of ethical egoism is the claim that we have “no *unchosen* moral obligation or duty to serve the interests of others.” Regis, “What Is Ethical Egoism?” 61.

8. See Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness: A New Concept of Egoism* (New York: Signet, 1964), 30.

9. Ayn Rand, “Why Selfishness,” in *The Ayn Rand Reader* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 82.

10. As Rand puts it, “Neither life nor happiness can be achieved by the pursuit of irrational whims. Just as man is free to attempt to survive by any random means, as a parasite, a moocher or a looter, but not free to succeed at it beyond the range of the moment—so he is free to seek his happiness in any irrational fraud, any whim, any mindless escape from reality, but not free to succeed at it beyond the range of the moment, nor to escape its consequences.” Rand, *Virtue of Selfishness*, 31.

11. Russ Shafer-Landau argues that it is hard to conclusively rule out the idea that ethical egoism may well allow for acts such as murder, because such acts may conceivably be in one’s long-term interest. See his chapter on ethical egoism in Russ Shafer-Landau, *The Fundamentals of Ethics*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). I would simply point out that hardly anyone who espouses ethical egoism would allow for that. So, the argument that ethical

should be selfish and that selfishness is a virtue, she does not advocate harming others in the blameworthy ways often connected with selfishness.¹² In any case, she illustrates well the core principle of ethical egoism: namely, that morality is based completely on our own self-interest.¹³

Philosophical Arguments for and against Ethical Egoism

There are various philosophical arguments that may be presented in support of ethical egoism—though it is true that, as one writer puts it, “the theory is asserted more often than it is argued for.”¹⁴ Some arguments begin with the fact that self-interest is strong in most everyone and conclude with the claim that if everyone takes care of his or her own interests exclusively, then we would all be better off. Of course, as several people have pointed out, such an argument is actually more of an argument for utilitarianism or consequentialism than for ethical egoism, since it argues that we should do what will make everyone better off (and ethical egoism calls that into question).¹⁵

egoism would advocate such things becomes something of a straw-man argument. I think there is enough to argue against ethical egoism without resorting to such arguments.

12. She writes, for example: “The basic principle of Objectivist ethics is: no man may *initiate* the use of physical force against others.” Rand, *Virtue of Selfishness*, 36.

13. Rand also accepts that we have no unchosen obligations to help others. She puts it this way: “As a basic step of self-esteem, learn to treat as a mark of a cannibal any man’s *demand* for your help. To demand it is to claim that your life is *his* property. . . . Do you ask if it is ever proper to help another man? No—if he claims it as his right or as your moral duty that you owe him. Yes—if such is your own desire based on your own selfish pleasure in the value of his person and his struggle.” This quote is from a speech given by John Galt in *Atlas Shrugged*, as quoted in “A Defense of Ethical Egoism,” in *The Moral Life: An Introductory Reader in Ethics and in Literature*, ed. Louis P. Pojman and Lewis Vaughn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 569–78. I should point out here that one could accept Rand’s position on capitalism and the free market and yet reject her moral position. That is, one can hold that we are morally obligated to help others—contrary to Rand’s position—but reject the idea that we have the highly stringent types of legal obligations to help others required by the socialism Rand critiques.

14. See James Rachels’s chapter on ethical egoism in *The Elements of Moral Philosophy* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2003). One of the more interesting contemporary arguments for ethical egoism comes from Burgess-Jackson, “Deontological Egoism.”

15. See Shafer-Landau, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, 104–5. James Rachels makes this same point; see Rachels, *Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 80.

Another argument is presented by Ayn Rand, who claims that unlike what she calls the “ethics of altruism,” ethical egoism is the only moral theory that takes seriously the value of the human individual. The argument says, “If we value the life of the individual—that is, if the individual has moral worth—then we must agree that this life is of supreme importance.” Unlike ethical egoism, “the ethics of altruism regards the life of the individual as something that one must be ready to sacrifice for the good of others. Therefore the ethics of altruism does not take seriously the value of each human individual.”¹⁶

Yet another argument for ethical egoism connects self-interest to the notion of good reasons. As one contemporary moral philosopher points out, ethical egoism claims that advancing our interests is necessary if something is to count as a good reason for us to do something. The argument runs: “If you are morally required to do something, then you have a good reason to do it. If there is a good reason to do something, then doing it must advance your interests. Therefore, if you are morally required to do something, then it must advance your interests.”¹⁷ The first premise here is fairly strong since it does seem plausible to say that if something is our duty, we have a good reason to do it. However, there is a serious problem with the second premise, which simply assumes that all good reasons must be grounded in self-interest. On the contrary, it seems clear that we have good reasons to do (or refrain from doing) certain things even if they do not advance our own interests. Think of encountering someone who is choking, having a heart attack, or who has been severely injured—and no one else is around to help. In such cases, we clearly have a reason to help, and such a reason cannot be reduced to the fact that helping advances our own interest. Can we seriously argue that we have *no* reason to help any of these people if helping them in no way benefits ourselves? Furthermore, can we really say that the only reason (or even the *main* reason) why we should refrain from acts that harm others is that such acts are not in our self-interest? Consider the absurdity of saying that the only reason morally heinous actions (such as murder) are wrong is that such acts are not really in *our* interest. It should be intuitively clear that something is fundamentally wrong with such a position.

16. This is the way James Rachels formulates the argument in *Elements of Moral Philosophy*, 81–82. Also see the *Ayn Rand Reader*, 80–83, and *Virtue of Selfishness*, 27–28

17. Shafer-Landau, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, 107.

Thus, for ethical egoism, the normative ground of right action consists entirely in the self-interest of the individual agent.¹⁸ Again, this would mean that the only reason helping someone in need counts as a right action is that it furthers our own interest, and that the only reason something counts as a wrong action is because it would have an adverse effect on our own interest. Such claims are highly implausible. We can certainly recognize that there are reasons to refrain from harming others, as well as reasons to help others, even when doing so has no apparent influence—against or in favor of—our own interests.

One argument against ethical egoism that develops this line of reasoning comes from the contemporary philosopher Thomas Nagel. In his book *The Possibility of Altruism*, he focuses on the way in which our attitude toward our own needs undermines the claims of ethical egoism. Nagel argues that there is an “objective interest” we attribute to many of our needs and desires and that we are able to recognize an “objective element in the concern we feel for ourselves.”¹⁹ That is, we attribute an objective status to our needs in the sense that we believe such needs give other people reasons not to harm us and, in certain instances, reasons to help us. Such objective interest shows up in the fact that when another person harms us, we not only dislike it, but we resent it. In other words, we think that “our plight [gives the other person] a reason” not to harm us. We, in turn, are able to recognize the legitimacy of extending that

18. In moral philosophy, the term *normative* refers to what a moral theory says we ought to do (or ought not do)—that is, what counts as right actions. The question of “normative grounds” thus refers to what a particular theory considers to be the basis for right actions: what makes actions good and bad, obligatory or forbidden, and so on. Examples of such normative grounds from some of the most prominent moral theories in our tradition would include maximizing individual well-being or happiness (consequentialism), respect for persons (non-consequentialism), or regard for some other intrinsically good thing as a basis for right actions. Immanuel Kant’s ethical theory is an example of a nonconsequentialist theory that takes respect for rational agency or autonomy as the basis of normativity. See Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 79–80. For an analysis of the normative grounds of Kant’s moral theory in comparison with the normative theory of Emmanuel Levinas, see my essay “The Fact of Reason and the Face of the Other: Autonomy, Constraint, and Rational Agency in Kant and Levinas,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 40, no. 4 (2002): 493–522. On the issue of normative ethics in general, see Shelly Kagan, *Normative Ethics* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1998).

19. Thomas Nagel, *The Possibility of Altruism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 83.

“objective interest” to the needs of others. Thus, if there are others with needs and interests similar to ours, then we can see that their needs and interests deserve the similar objective respect that ours do.²⁰ Furthermore, ethical egoism would undercut the most plausible appeal we might make to others either to refrain from harming us or to help us when such help is desperately needed. As Nagel points out, because “egoism holds that each individual’s reasons for acting . . . must arise from his own interests and desires,” one would be unable “to regard one’s own concerns as being of interest to anyone else, except instrumentally.”²¹ Since we can see the absurdity of the situation in which others could not recognize our needs as giving them at least some reason not to harm us (or reason to help us in certain circumstances), there is good reason to believe that the normative claims of ethical egoism are fundamentally wrong.

There are other philosophical arguments against egoism I could give, but I will limit myself to one more that comes from the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant. In *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant articulates one version of his “Categorical Imperative” that is known as the “Formula of Humanity as an End.” It states that we should treat the humanity in ourselves and others always “as an end and never merely as a means.”²² This imperative is based on the value of rational agency, which rational beings can recognize in both themselves and others. While we will not go into the full argument here, Kant argues that we can each recognize (at least after due consideration) that all other people have a value or dignity—as an end in themselves. It is this value—often referred to as rational agency—that is the basis of our moral obligations: both the obligation not to harm others and the obligation to help others. Thus, unlike ethical egoism, Kant argues that we have a duty of beneficence.²³ Kant’s notion of acting from duty is

20. This does not necessarily imply that accepting objective reasons for right actions implies every action must be completely impartial. As some contemporary thinkers have pointed out, though such objective reasons imply universality, such universality does not necessarily imply impartiality. For example, the complete impartiality required by some utilitarian views does not follow from the notion that moral principles must be universal. On this issue, see Samuel Scheffler, *Human Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 107–8.

21. Nagel, *Possibility of Altruism*, 84–85.

22. Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, 80.

23. Concerning duties of beneficence, Kant says it is “the duty of every man to be beneficent, i.e., to be helpful to men in need according to one’s means, for the sake of their happiness, and without hoping for anything thereby.” Kant,

also relevant here, since he argues that we can do what is right because it is right and not simply from a desire for reward or from a fear of punishment. Kant thus presents an important account of why moral obligation cannot be based simply on self-interest.²⁴

The Question of Psychological Egoism

At this point, we need to address the closely related issue of whether it is even possible to care about others for their own sakes in a way that is not based on our own interest. Ethical egoism says that all morality and moral obligation should be based on self-interest. However, an ethical egoist may also accept the further claim of psychological egoism, which holds that all concern for others is really just a concern for oneself.²⁵

Practical Philosophy, 453. Thus, for Kant, we have two “obligatory ends,” self-perfection and the happiness of others. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 517–26, 571–72. Kant limits that duty by saying that, to a large degree, we can decide whom to help, how to help, and so forth. Thus helping others is what Kant calls a “wide” or “imperfect” duty, which contrasts with “narrow” or “perfect” duties. Kant says that “imperfect duties” involve “a playroom (*latitudo*) for free choice in following (complying with) the law, that is, that the law cannot specify precisely in what way one is to act and how much one is to do by the action.” Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, 521.

24. Another philosophical argument against ethical egoism can be found in the work of Emmanuel Levinas, who provides a penetrating critique of ethical egoism—even though he does not make it explicit that he is doing so. His phenomenological analysis of the grounds of moral obligation (in works like *Totality and Infinity*) shows that moral obligation is not based on the interest of the self, but rather on the recognition of what he calls the “otherness” or “infinity” of the Other. While his painstaking analyses defy simple exposition (since they so often take the form of careful phenomenological descriptions and interpretations of our experience), he basically shows that our sense of obligation comes from the way in which our quite commonly egoistic existence is interrupted by what he calls the “face to face” relation, in which our self-interested activity is called into question by the “face” of another person. Such a “face” is present in its refusal to be contained or reduced to the “same” (which refers to the self), and it invites us into a relation with others that does not fall back into the pulsating egoistic tendencies that are so typical of our actions.

25. Psychological egoism is a descriptive claim about human nature, whereas ethical egoism is a prescriptive, normative claim. The former says we cannot but act from motives of self-interest; the latter says that we should only act on self-interest. One can accept both psychological and ethical egoism, but psychological egoism is not entailed by ethical egoism. Ayn Rand, for example, is an ethical egoist but not a psychological egoist.

That is, every act is wholly motivated by self-interest.²⁶ If psychological egoism were true, then true charity would be impossible. Even though the claims of psychological and ethical egoism are distinct, it is important to analyze psychological egoism, because the claim that we can care about others in a way that is not based on our own self-interest will be at the heart of the effort to show that the gospel is not ethical egoism.

One argument for psychological egoism says that all actions aim to produce a sense of pleasure, satisfaction, or peace of mind and are thus actually based on self-interest. A story from the life of Abraham Lincoln illustrates this argument. Supposedly, Lincoln argued in support of such egoism during a carriage ride with another gentleman.²⁷ During the ride, Lincoln told the driver to stop so that he could help some little piglets stuck in the mud. When his companion responded that his act seemed to contradict psychological egoism, Lincoln responded that even that act was for his own self-interest since, if he had not helped, it would have bothered his conscience and ruined his peace of mind all day. To this, one might respond that if failing to help would have bothered him so much, then that shows he actually did care about them.²⁸ While such a response is not foolproof,²⁹ it does certainly show that just because we

26. Psychological egoism is sometimes stated as the claim that every human action is selfish and at other times as the claim that every action is inescapably based on self-interest—though not necessarily selfishness. In either case, psychological egoism implies that it is not possible to care about others for their own sakes. Those who argue for psychological egoism don't usually distinguish between selfishness and self-interest, but it is important to do so. Not all actions done for our self-interest are selfish, if by *selfishness* we mean actions that are considered by most people to be morally blameworthy. Nevertheless, one could still be a psychological egoist who holds that all actions are based on self-interest. So while not all actions would be selfish, this version of psychological egoism would still hold that there are no altruistic acts—that is, no acts of concern for others that are *not* based on concern for self.

27. Quoted from the *Springfield (Illinois) Monitor* by F. C. Sharp in *Ethics* (New York: Appleton Century, 1928), 75. As cited in Joel Feinberg, "Psychological Egoism" *Ethical Theory*, 79–90.

28. Otherwise, it would not have bothered him if he didn't help. This is Joel Feinberg's response. See Feinberg, *Ethical Theory*, 523–24.

29. Perhaps he was conditioned to help animals when he was younger—on pain of being punished, for example. Thus, although there may be other reasons he felt guilty (than because he did have a genuine concern for the pigs), I would say that his response is quite strong compared to many cases in which people feel guilty for not helping.

gain satisfaction from helping others does not necessarily imply we do not genuinely care about them.

One common argument used in support of psychological egoism says that we always do what we value most. As one psychological egoist put it, "We never intentionally follow a course of action that, from the point of view of our self-regarding ends, appears worse than another open to us."³⁰ However, even if it were true that we always choose to do what we value most, this does not prove that psychological egoism is correct. Just because I wouldn't choose some option unless I valued it more than the other options available to me at the time does not imply that I value that option so highly because of what it will do for me. It could just as well be that I value it most because it benefits someone else or because I know it is the right thing to do. Recognition of what is morally right cannot be reduced to self-interest. As Francis Hutcheson, one of the great Scottish "moral sense" philosophers, points out: we can tell that certain actions are right even when they in no way benefit us, and we can tell that certain actions are wrong even when they in no way harm us.³¹ Therefore, the assumption that we value an option only because of what it will do for us begs the question in favor of psychological egoism. Of course, one might ask why we would ever be good, if it were not for the benefit (at least in the sense of satisfaction, peace of mind) that we get when we do what is right. Doesn't that prove psychological egoism? We can respond that we do indeed need some positive, confirmatory sense that what we are doing is right. Why else would we think we are doing what is right? It is true this will usually be an affirmative state of mind or feeling that confirms the rightness of the action, but that does not mean the only reason we did it is because of a perceived sense of benefit that comes from such an awareness.

Nevertheless, we can appreciate the tenacity of similar arguments for psychological egoism. For example, if we think about why we choose to become connected to others in our lives—why we date those we date, why we marry the person we marry, why we seek out certain friends—it can be tempting to accept psychological egoism. Think about the reasons we choose to be with such people. Perhaps they are enjoyable to be around; or we feel at home with them; or they are attractive, interesting,

30. Mark Mercer, "In Defense of Weak Psychological Egoism," 228.

31. Francis Hutcheson, "An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil," in *The British Moralists 1650–1800*, ed. D. D. Raphael (Cambridge: Hackett Press 1991), 261–99.

intelligent, and inspiring; or they simply meet our needs in some way. Does this not show that we care about others only because they meet our needs, desires, and interests? I think the answer is no, and one of the best ways to refute this claim is through a careful introspective analysis of our own experiences.³²

Since it is perhaps impossible to know the motives of others with certainty, introspection is crucial in this matter. Of course we can be mistaken about what our exact motives are in any given instance, and sometimes we engage in self-deception about our motives.³³ Nevertheless, I submit that we cannot be wrong in every case. For instance, would it make sense to say that we know with certainty what anger or hate is like—based on our own experiences of being motivated by such feelings—but that we are not sure if we have ever felt motivated by genuine love or concern for another? If our knowledge of the existence of genuine dislike for others (as well as genuine selfishness) is itself based on our introspection of our own motives, then why can we not know (based on similar introspection) that we can also feel genuine love for others? Why would we be so certain of the existence of such negative emotions but not be certain of the existence of positive emotions that seem equally genuine? Of course, there is no perfect method to determine the precise make-up of our motives, but I think we know enough to tell (at least sometimes) whether we truly care about someone, as opposed to detesting or even being indifferent to him or her. At least some of the time we are correct judges of our own motives.³⁴

32. One thing I should point out here is that love for others that is based on meeting our own needs is not always selfish. C. S. Lewis makes this point when he distinguishes between what he calls “need-love” and “gift-love.” As he writes in *The Four Loves*, “We must be cautious about calling Need-love ‘mere-selfishness.’ *Mere* is always a dangerous word. No doubt Need-love, like all our impulses, can be selfishly indulged. A tyrannous and gluttonous demand for affection can be a horrible thing. But in ordinary life, no one calls a child selfish because it turns for comfort to its mother; nor an adult who turns to his fellow ‘for company.’” What Lewis refers to as “Gift-love” is precisely the type of pure love that is found in charity, which involves loving others not simply because of what they do for us. C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt, 1960, 1988), 2.

33. On this issue, see C. Terry Warner, *Bonds That Make Us Free: Healing Our Relationships, Coming to Ourselves* (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain Press, 2001).

34. For an interesting essay on why we are often biased in favor of psychological egoism, see H. Palmer, “Deeming Everyone Selfish,” *International Journal of Moral and Social Studies* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1988): 113–25.

To take a common example, think of a time when you saw someone who was injured. Perhaps this person fell down the stairs, slipped on the ice, or was involved in a serious traffic accident. Is it not the case that you felt a genuine concern for such a person? It is simply too much of a stretch to say that in such instances we care about that person only because we will benefit from such concern or that such concern is based only on some interest we have. We can tell, if we think about it, that in many such instances we do experience genuine concern and love for others for their own sakes.³⁵

Often we detect the relevant difference between various motives by noticing the transition from those motives based mostly on self-concern to those based predominantly on concern for another person. Let me illustrate with an example from my own experience. One afternoon my wife called me at work to ask if I could check whether my daughter's piano music had been left in my car. At first, I will admit, I was irritated because I had just sat down to do some much-needed work after having taught two separate two-hour courses, and in order to check on the piano music, I would have had to walk a considerable distance to the car. My initial motivation to help was based mostly on not wanting my wife (or daughter) to be upset with me if I did not help. I suppose it was also based on the fact that they had helped me in the past and that I would want them to help me in similar future situations. While these were not the worst motives, neither were they based predominantly on a genuine concern or love for my wife or daughter; the focus was mainly on my own self-interest. However, after going all the way to the car and not finding the music, I called my daughter, who then began to cry because she urgently needed that music for a recital. At that moment, my motivation changed, and I almost instantly felt a genuine concern for her and her situation. No longer was I helping grudgingly or thinking about how my unwillingness to help might get me in trouble with my wife or daughter. My predominant motive changed to one of love and compassion; my whole focus became her happiness. I became, as the scripture says, "filled with love."³⁶ Thus, I believe that if we carefully attend to our

35. Some might say that in such instances we really care only about ourselves—thinking what it would be like if such a thing happened to us. But just because we cannot understand another's suffering unless we have experienced pain ourselves, it does not follow that in being concerned for others we are simply concerned for the possibility of our suffering similarly.

36. See, for example, Alma 38:12; 2 Ne. 4:21; 3 Ne. 17:6; and Alma 36:20. A statement from President Dieter F. Uchtdorf is relevant here. He stated: "The

own experience, we can all find there are times when our predominant motive has been a genuine concern for others.³⁷

Of course, we have more than introspection to rely on. We also have evidence from the behavior and testimony of individuals who seem to act for the sake of others and who often report that they do act for the sake of others without thinking of their own interests. Psychological egoists will have to discount both sorts of evidence. However, as Russ Shafer-Landau points out, while it is true that sometimes people are deceived about their motives, and sometimes we misinterpret behavior, it would be problematic to discount all such evidence.³⁸

Minimal Awareness of Self-Interest

I think one reason people are often persuaded by psychological egoism is that it may be true we rarely act without at least some awareness of our

more we allow the love of God to govern our minds and emotions—the more we allow our love for our Heavenly Father to swell within our hearts—the easier it is to love others with the pure love of Christ. As we open our hearts to the glowing dawn of the love of God, the darkness and cold of animosity and envy will eventually fade.” Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Merciful Obtain Mercy,” *Ensign* 42, no. 5 (2012): 75–76, available at <http://www.lds.org/ensign/2012/05/the-merciful-obtain-mercy?lang=eng>.

37. Some egoists will of course claim that any concern for others is always based on subconscious (or unconscious) self-interested motives that would nullify any claim of genuine concern for others, but such an appeal is highly dubious. Here I would agree with Gregory Kavka, who, when speaking about the serious difficulties of positing such subconscious or unconscious motives, states: “If one’s ground for asserting the existence of such motives or beliefs is that ‘they must be there, or else the agent would not have performed the action,’ one has confused the necessity of having some motivation with the necessity of having a self-interested motive, that is, one has fallen back into Tautological Egoism. Or if one posits the existence of such motives solely because they are needed to save Psychological Egoism, one is treating that doctrine as a dogma, rather than as a genuine empirical hypothesis subject to disconfirmation by evidence.” Gregory S. Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 55. Thus, as Kavka further states, “The psychological egoist, then, if honest, is forced to acknowledge that insofar as agents themselves can tell, some of their actions are motivated by non-self-interested desires.” Kavka, *Hobbesian Moral and Political Theory*, 54. For Kavka’s discussion of what sociobiology contributes to the discussion of altruism, see pp. 56–64. See also Elliott Sober and D. S. Wilson, *Unto Others: The Evolution and Psychology of Unselfish Behavior* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998).

38. Shafer-Landau, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, 101–2.

own interests. This is quite different, however, from the psychological egoistic claim that we care about others only because of what we get out of it. It may be that we rarely act without some self-interested motive.³⁹ But even if this is true, it does not mean that we do not genuinely care about others for their own sake or that we care about people only as a means to our own happiness or self-interest.⁴⁰ The presence of minimal self-concern in such moments does not imply that all other-directed concern is really just self-concern. Furthermore, in order to establish that we can be genuinely concerned for others, we do not need to show that we are completely concerned for others (in the sense that we have absolutely no awareness of any of our own needs). As long as there is some genuine concern, then the claim of psychological egoism cannot be correct. It is true that in our relationships with others there is a fine line between wanting them to be happy for their own sake and wanting them to be happy so that we can be happy, or so that we can get what we need or want out of the relationship. Nevertheless, there is a real distinction. It is the fine line between various degrees of loving another person as a means to some end we desire and loving another person for his or her own sake. The latter is a real possibility borne out by legitimate experiences we have all had. Such genuine concern is not nullified, even if there is a minimal self-awareness constantly at work in our consciousness. Before we return to this question, however, let us turn to the argument for and against the gospel as ethical egoism.

The Scriptural Argument for and against Ethical Egoism

To what degree, then, do ethical egoism and the gospel coincide? From a scriptural perspective, we can find much that would seem to support the claim that the gospel advocates ethical egoism. To begin with, it seems clear that the very purpose and goal of our existence is our eternal happiness. Earlier, I alluded to Lehi's profound statement in 2 Nephi 2:25

39. Perhaps this is not true. Perhaps there are times when we are completely unaware of any possible interest we may have. If this is possible, it is likely that such occurrences are rare. Nevertheless, let us proceed on the assumption that we always act with at least some self-interested motive.

40. Again, think of instances in which someone does something heroic that involves great risk to self. Just because that person is aware—in the moment of heroism—that he or she could sustain injury or great harm does not take away from the very genuine concern he or she may have for the individual being rescued.

that we exist so “that [we] might have joy.”⁴¹ This same idea is echoed in various ways over and over again in the teachings of all modern prophets and apostles. To cite just one of many examples from recent general conference talks, President Dieter F. Uchtdorf stated:

If only we could look beyond the horizon of mortality into what awaits us beyond this life. Is it possible to imagine a more glorious future than the one prepared for us by our Heavenly Father? . . . Those who come unto Christ, repent of their sins, and live in faith will reside forever in peace. Think of the worth of this eternal gift. Surrounded by those we love, we will know the meaning of ultimate joy as we progress in knowledge and in happiness. No matter how bleak the chapter of our lives may look today, because of the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we may hope and be assured that the ending of the book of our lives will exceed our grandest expectations.⁴²

Certainly statements such as this are intended as an appeal to our desire for long-term happiness and interest.

An appeal to our interest can further be found in the way many gospel principles are often presented. Take the principle of forgiveness, for instance. It is often emphasized that one of the main reasons we should forgive others is so that we ourselves may be forgiven, so that we ourselves may find peace—since being unforgiving often harms us more than it harms those we need to forgive. The same could be said for the principle of sacrifice, since we are taught that sacrifice will bring us great blessings. We are further taught—and it is certainly true—that gratitude is essential for our happiness, because without it we will always be unsatisfied and we will fail to appreciate what we have been blessed with. Other examples could be given to support the idea that the goal of gospel principles is our long-term interest. The doctrine of restoration in

41. Joseph Smith also said: “Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God.” Smith, *Teachings*, 255–56; see also Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 5:134–35 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*). Another statement made by the Prophet concerning “self-aggrandizement” is sometimes used to support the idea of the gospel as egoism. We will look at that statement later in the paper.

42. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Infinite Power of Hope,” *Ensign* 38, no. 11 (2008): 22–23, available at <http://www.lds.org/ensign/2008/11/the-infinite-power-of-hope?lang=eng>.

the Book of Mormon illustrates this as well. As Alma states, “That which ye do send out shall be returned unto you again” (Alma 41:15). He elaborates in his sermon to his son Corianton: “Therefore, my son, see that you are merciful unto your brethren; deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually; and if ye do all these things then shall ye receive your reward; yea, ye shall have mercy restored unto you again; ye shall have justice restored unto you again; ye shall have a righteous judgment restored unto you again; and ye shall have good rewarded unto you again” (Alma 41:14). Such gospel principles, and many others, can easily be read as supporting ethical egoism, since they seem to show that we are to follow such principles because it is in our long-term interest.

Certainly, the message of the gospel alerts us to the many ways in which our actions undermine, damage, or (in some extreme cases) destroy our long-term interest and happiness.⁴³ Giving in to pride, selfishness, or self-justifying anger can actually frustrate what we would acknowledge as our long-term interest and happiness. Think, for example, of a quarrel with a loved one in which we cling to some point of dispute out of pride, when in fact the damage done to our relationship—as a result of what is said in anger—is far worse than actually losing the argument, or giving in and swallowing our pride.⁴⁴ Again, there is no question but that doing what is right (striving to live a righteous life) is

43. In this regard, we find an interesting thought expressed by Bishop Joseph Butler, the renowned eighteenth-century Anglican theologian/philosopher, who argues (in his famous *Fifteen Sermons at the Rolls Chapel*) that from the moral point of view, we ought to act in our real self-interest. Butler claims that if “self-love” means doing what is truly in our long-term interest, then we need more self-love, not less. The way in which the principles of the gospel often appeal to our long-term interest certainly resonates with Butler’s point that we need more self-love in the world, because true self-love means acting in our real, long-term interest and prevents “numerous follies,” as Butler would say. However, the type of self-love he is referring to is not selfishness. Furthermore, Butler is not an ethical egoist, because he holds that benevolence is an independent principle that cannot be reduced to self-interest. See Butler, “Fifteen Sermons,” in Raphael, *British Moralists 1650–1800*, 368.

44. This is not to say that every position one takes in some dispute is held due to improper pride. There can of course be righteous disagreement. However, I would guess that a majority of arguments in our relationships are based on improper pride. On this issue, Orson Scott Card had some important insights. See “Analyzing a Quarrel Over ‘Nothing,’” *Mormon Times*, June 2, 2011, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/705373733/In-the-Village-Analyzing-a-quarrel-over-nothing.html>.

in fact in our long-term interest, and in this sense the gospel certainly accords with ethical egoism.

The Normative Grounds Objection to the Gospel as Ethical Egoism

Despite the areas of convergence outlined above, there are several significant problems with attempting to equate the gospel and ethical egoism. The first problem concerns the question of what constitutes the normative grounds of moral obligation; the second concerns the question of what constitutes righteous motives. Let me preface the analysis of these two problems by noting that, from a gospel perspective, any moral imperatives must certainly focus on becoming like God. As Jesus states in 3 Nephi 27:27, “What manner of men [and women] ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am.” Thus, if God is love (1 John 4:8), then we must strive to love like God loves. This recognition that we are to become like God should give pause to anyone tempted to accept the gospel-as-egoism claim.

Let us now look at the question of normativity. In terms of the normative grounds for rightness, egoism’s claim that an action is right only because it contributes to one’s overall self-interest is problematic. The fact that it benefited or blessed another person has no bearing on the rightness of that action—except insofar as his or her happiness is bound up with our happiness.⁴⁵ While it is difficult to say definitively what constitutes the normative grounds of righteous actions, it is quite clear we cannot say the only thing that makes an action right is that it is in our own interest. If that were true, then when we serve others, the rightness of such actions would consist solely in the fact that they serve our own interest. Surely that cannot be correct. The weight of multitudes of scriptures speak against this. As we will see in the next section, for instance, such an idea would undercut the possibility of charity—the pure love of Christ.

Consider each of the gospel principles mentioned above (forgiveness, gratitude, sacrifice, and so on), each of which is often advocated in conjunction with how it will benefit us. There is no question, for example, that gratitude is one of the most important keys to happiness.

45. Several people have made this point that ethical egoism gratuitously bases the rightness of actions only on the self-interest of the agent performing the action. As Samuel Scheffler puts it, such a position “gives the wrong explanation of other regarding norms.” See Samuel Scheffler, *Human Morality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 126. Also, see the chapter on ethical egoism in Rachels, *Elements of Moral Philosophy*.

It is correctly emphasized that being grateful will bring us peace and happiness. However, we have a moral obligation to be grateful that is not simply based on the fact that gratitude will make us happy. We should be grateful because there is something right in responding in such a way when others have done something for us. Our obligation to be grateful also impacts our obligations to serve others. This is illustrated well by King Benjamin's discourse in the Book of Mormon. As John Welch points out in his analysis of the logic of King Benjamin's speech:

Benjamin based moral obligation on the fact that, by serving his people, he has put them in his debt—a debt they ought to repay by serving others and by thanking God. For example, the question of why one should care about others or give freely to another is one of the most basic issues of moral philosophy. It is a question King Benjamin's speech answers like no other. Benjamin's logic of love, service, and charity is cogent, thorough, and persuasive. He offers at least eight answers to this crucial and persistent question of ethics and morality.⁴⁶

The first of these answers is that “we should serve one another because we have received benefits from the service of others.”⁴⁷ Notice that we are not obligated simply because of the fact that showing gratitude is in our interest, since it will bless us—even though that is true. We are obligated to show gratitude regardless of the benefit it brings us. The same could be said for each of the other gospel principles listed; what makes the act right is *not* simply that it is in our interest. Ethical egoism cannot allow for such a possibility, since it bases moral normativity entirely on self-interest.

Righteousness and Love Unfeigned: The Motivational Objection

The most significant problem in considering the gospel as ethical egoism concerns the issue of motivation, since ethical egoism makes self-interest both the normative basis *and* our governing and ultimate motive.⁴⁸ The question is whether self-interest *should* be our ultimate and governing motive, according to the gospel. Does it follow that the main reason we should be righteous is that it is in our long-term interest? It is true the gospel teaches that we should live a righteous life and that only such a life is in our long-term interest. Does it follow, however, that the reason

46. John W. Welch, “A Masterful Oration,” in *King Benjamin's Speech: That Ye May Learn Wisdom*, ed. John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1998), 77–82, quotation on 77.

47. Welch, “Masterful Oration,” 77.

48. See Regis, “What Is Ethical Egoism?” 52.

we should lead a righteous life is that it is in our long-term interest? Would it pose a problem if self-interest served as our main motivation for being righteous?

Some clarification is needed here, since the way we use the term *righteousness* often allows an ambiguity. We sometimes call actions righteous if they do not violate the commandments—whether in the sense of commission or omission.⁴⁹ This sense refers to external compliance or, as we say, the letter of the law. But the meaning of *righteousness* certainly goes beyond this sense of the term, since it implies that certain motives must be present in actions (in cases of doing good) or nonactions (in cases of refraining from doing harm or evil). Think, for example, of how Jesus says our righteousness must “exceed” that of the scribes (Matt. 5:20). It requires that we have (or strive to have) a pure heart. A central feature connected with having a pure heart is the motive of charity.⁵⁰ As we read in 1 Timothy 1:5, “Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart.”⁵¹ Furthermore, as Mormon tells us, we should seek charity—the pure love of Christ—so “that we may be purified even as he is pure” (Moro. 7:48).

Is such motivation compatible with ethical egoism? Ethical egoism certainly advocates caring about other people if such actions are in fact the only way to bring about our long-term interest. This is why ethical egoism may well require us to develop good relations with other people, since such relations are in our long-term interest. But while ethical egoism may proscribe acts that are selfish in the most blameworthy sense, it still allows one’s motivational focus to center entirely on one’s own interests or well-being. It is highly doubtful, however, that caring about others because doing so is in our long-term interest captures what it means to have such a pure heart.

Of course, a proponent of the gospel as egoism might respond that if acting from pure motives will bring about our greatest long-term happiness, then having pure motives is just what we should seek to

49. Furthermore, the notion of a “righteous” action includes both the morally permissible and the morally obligatory, as well as those actions that are good to do but not, strictly speaking, required. Sorting this out would, however, need to be the topic for another essay.

50. Of course, the purity of our hearts is one of the major points of emphasis given by the Savior in both the Sermon on the Mount and the Temple Sermon given to the Nephites.

51. Another relevant scripture is Moroni 7:6–9, where Mormon tells us that righteousness requires “real intent of heart.”

have—because that is in our long-term interest. In this way, a sophisticated egoist might argue that the motive objection fails to refute the gospel-as-ethical-egoism claim because we can simply include having such pure motives as a means to long-term interest and happiness. But this raises two questions: (1) Would such motives actually be *pure* motives? (2) Would such a mind-set actually bring about the desired end? In regard to the first question, there would be something impure about seeking to attain a pure heart only because it is best for us. We are told that righteousness requires “love unfeigned” (D&C 121:41), but there would be something feigned about loving others only because—or even predominantly because—that is in our best interest. This does not mean that the gospel precludes all self-interest from our motives, but it does mean that long-term self-interest cannot be our predominant motive.⁵² Thus, what is involved in becoming righteous and having a pure heart goes beyond the governing self-referential structure of ethical egoism.

The second question points to a related problem: if self-interest remains our predominant motive, this may well block the very possibility we are trying to attain—namely acquiring a pure heart. If that is the case, our effort would fall prey to an analogue of the paradox of hedonism, the idea that the “single-minded pursuit of happiness is necessarily self-defeating” and that we need to somehow not think about the fact that we want to be happy if we truly want to be happy.⁵³ Thus, trying to have a pure heart *because* it is in our long-term interest will likely *not* bring about such a pure heart. Truly having a pure heart requires a limitation on the self-referential mind-set of ethical egoism. It requires that we genuinely let go of thinking that we should care about others *because* doing so would be in our long-term interest. Attaining a pure heart means we will not always be the center of our world in the way ethical egoism prescribes. It requires that we forget ourselves—not in the sense that we have absolutely no awareness of our needs and interests, but in

52. There are certainly righteous motives that focus on our own needs and in which our predominant concern is ourselves. Not all righteous acts must be focused on others.

53. Joel Feinberg writes: “An exclusive desire for happiness is the surest way to prevent happiness from coming into being. . . . The single-minded pursuit of happiness is necessarily self-defeating, for *the way to get to happiness is to forget it*; then perhaps it will come to you.” Joel Feinberg, “Psychological Egoism,” in *Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy*, ed. Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth/Thomson, 2008), 520–32.

the sense that the interests of others are (often) more important to us than our own needs and interests. Then other people will really matter to us in a way that disrupts the governing grip of self-interest.

Of course, developing this love for others may not always be an easy thing to do. This is why we need divine power to influence our motives. It is why we are told to pray “with all the energy of heart, that [we] may be filled with this love” (Moro. 7:48). This is not to say there is nothing we can do to initiate such a change in our motives. We can focus our minds on others’ needs or desires; we can think about the worth of other people;⁵⁴ we can try to change our motives when we realize we are acting more out of a concern for our interests than out of a genuine concern for others. And we can pray “with all the energy of heart.” Ultimately, though, our hearts are purified by the Spirit of God and the redeeming power of the Atonement of Christ. So, acting from our long-term interest as our predominant motive may actually prevent us from attaining the object of our long-term interest, if such a result can come about only through divine instrumentality. The love that righteousness requires cannot be reduced either to a desire for our self-interest or to a desire to have a pure heart because that is in our long-term interest.

Again, it may be that we almost always act with some awareness of self-interest,⁵⁵ but that is very different from saying either that everything we do is based entirely on self-interest or that such awareness prevents us from having a genuine concern for others. Since genuine concern for others is compatible with some self-concern, it follows that righteous motives—let us say, for example, the pure love of Christ—would not require the complete absence of any possible awareness of self-interest. Furthermore, we may certainly have righteous desires for our own long-term happiness (the object and design of existence). It is just that all our actions cannot be entirely governed by or based on that desire for

54. Terry Warner provides some important insights on what we can and cannot do (by our own initiative) to bring about a change of heart. See *Bonds That Make Us Free*, ch. 11, especially pp. 222–25.

55. Something about this sort of claim does seem persuasive. Even in those cases where people choose a course of action that they recognize is not in their long-term interest, it does seem plausible to say that the action does not appear worse than another option open to them. Perhaps they know (in some sense) that the action is not really in their long-term interest, but their minds are so clouded with anger or some other passion that the action does indeed “appear” as the best option at the time—though if they considered the long-term effect, it would be clear the action is really worse than another open to them.

happiness. That is the problem with ethical egoism. Thus, while it is true that only righteousness is in our long-term interest and that we ought to act only in harmony with a righteous life, it does not follow that the main reason why we ought to perform righteous actions is because they are in our long-term self-interest. The gospel clearly does not teach that everything we do should be done from the predominant thought of how it will bless ourselves. That is why the gospel and ethical egoism diverge. Righteousness thus involves more than doing what is right from motives of self-interest. On the other hand, the gospel does not require that we eliminate any possible thought of our own interest. In fact, it both permits and encourages us to hope for our own glorious future.⁵⁶

Because righteous motives are compatible with some awareness of self-interest, Truman Madsen can say that “we are to be egoists in the sense of the Divine”:

A religion which makes central the concept of love, as does the religion of Christ and therefore of Joseph Smith, we might assume, would not be egoistic. But in one important sense it is. The Prophet speaks on this issue as follows: . . . Some people denounce the principle of self-aggrandizement as wrong. It is a correct principle that may be indulged upon only one rule or plan—and that is to elevate, benefit and bless others first. If you elevate others, the very work itself will exalt you. Upon no other plan can a man justly and permanently aggrandize himself.⁵⁷

While this statement supports the idea that we can legitimately call the gospel *egoist* in some sense, I do not think it supports the claim that the gospel is ethical egoism. First, the Prophet does not say that our primary motive in attempting to elevate others can be our own exaltation. In this context, self-aggrandizement certainly does not endorse caring about others only because doing so will exalt us. It does not imply that when we are in the service of others, we are (or should be) only in the service of ourselves (to rephrase Mosiah 2:17). The quote on permissible self-aggrandizement does, I think, imply there is nothing wrong with having some sense that serving

56. As President Uchtdorf says, “The things we hope *in* sustain us during our daily walk. They uphold us through trials, temptations, and sorrow. Everyone has experienced discouragement and difficulty. Indeed, there are times when the darkness may seem unbearable. It is in these times that the divine principles of the restored gospel we hope *in* can uphold us and carry us until, once again, we walk in the light.” Uchtdorf, “Infinite Power of Hope,” 23, italics in original.

57. Truman G. Madsen, “Joseph Smith and the Problem of Ethics,” in *Perspectives on Mormon Ethics: Personal, Social, Legal, and Medical*, ed. Donald G. Hill Jr. (Salt Lake City: Publisher’s Press, 1983), 36–37.

others will bless us. Thus, it is one thing to elevate others when our own exaltation is our predominant motive, but quite another thing to elevate others because genuine love for them is our predominant motive. If we look at what the Prophet Joseph said about charity and love, it is not really plausible to claim that he advocated ethical egoism in the sense defined in this paper.⁵⁸

Conclusion

We have seen that, in the end, the gospel cannot be equated with ethical egoism. While it is true that we should live only in harmony with righteousness and that only a righteous life is in our long-term interest, it does not follow that the complete reason we should live such a life is because it is in our long-term interest. If ethical egoism were limited simply to the claim that we should do only what is in our long-term interest, this moral theory might be compatible with the gospel. However, as ethical egoism is understood in contemporary moral philosophy, it includes several other claims that are not compatible with the gospel.⁵⁹ The gospel does say we ought to do only what is in our long-term

58. For example, he taught, “Until we have perfect love we are liable to fall; and when we have a testimony that our names are sealed in the Lamb’s book of life, we have perfect love, and then it is impossible for false Christs to deceive us.” Smith, *Teachings*, 9. For other excellent statements by the prophet on charity and love, see *History of the Church*, 3:304; 4:165, 227.

59. One other problem with equating ethical egoism and the gospel concerns the ethical egoist claim that we have no unchosen obligations to serve the interests of others. See Regis, “What Is Ethical Egoism?” 50–62. While the gospel certainly focuses on the importance of agency in our obligations, this view does not seem entirely compatible with the gospel. For ethical egoism, we would have no obligation to help someone whose life was in peril, even when helping that person would pose no serious threat to ourselves. An ethical egoist might agree that we should help in such a case *if that is what we value doing*. However, the rightness of such an act would not be based simply on the fact that we might value it. It would be right because it is worthy of valuing. The question of helping in cases other than such easy rescue scenarios is more controversial. However, it is still in perfect harmony with the gospel to speak of an unchosen obligation to serve others. As Elder Dallin H. Oaks put it, “Service is an imperative.” Elder Oaks made this statement in a 2010 address at the Women’s Conference at BYU. See Marianne Holman, “Elder Oaks: Service Is an Imperative for True Followers of Jesus Christ,” *Church News*, May 1, 2010, available at <http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/59292/Elder-Dallin-H-Oaks-Service-is-an-imperative-for-true-followers-of-Jesus-Christ.html>. While it is doubtful the gospel would

interest—if we define that interest as living a righteous life. However, as we have seen, ethical egoism differs in important ways from the principles of the restored gospel.⁶⁰ It differs in terms of what it proposes as the normative basis of right actions, and it especially differs from the gospel's emphasis on righteous motives. The necessity of having a pure heart accentuates the distinction between the gospel and ethical egoism. Genuine righteousness requires a type of love that is not reducible to acting from the primary motive of self-interest. However, it is important to note that this does *not* mean there cannot be righteous self-interest. Part of the reason we should do what is right is because it makes us happy. Self-interest simply cannot be the complete and governing principle in the gospel as it is in ethical egoism. Thus, allowing self-interest to exert such an unconditional force in our motivational life would likely prevent us from living a genuinely righteous life.⁶¹

Darin Crawford Gates (who can be reached via email at byustudies@byu.edu) teaches philosophy at Brigham Young University. He and his wife, Heather Spencer Gates, have eight children. He is originally from Ogden, Utah, and his wife is from San Marino, California. After serving a mission in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, he received a BA in philosophy at Brigham Young University and then a PhD in Philosophy from Villanova University in Philadelphia. He specializes in moral philosophy/ethics and is currently working on a book that examines the relation between self-interest and moral obligation. He also is currently a visiting fellow with the Wheatley Institution as part of a team trying to rethink how ethics is taught. His publications include "The 'Fact of Reason' and the Face of the Other: Kant and Levinas on Autonomy, Constraint, and Rational Agency," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 40 (Winter 2002), and "Ontological Disclosure and Ethical Exposure: Heidegger and Levinas on Meaning, Subjectivity, and Non-Indifference," *Philosophy Today* 45, no. 4 (2001).

support the view that others can demand our help (in such nonemergency, non-easy-rescue cases), there are times when our actions would be blameworthy if we failed to help, even if we had made no prior commitment to do so.

60. Going back to the argument outlined in note 3, the problem is in premise (5) since, as we have shown, the claim "Any position that holds that we ought to do only what is in our long-term interest advocates ethical egoism" turns out to be false.

61. A related (and complicated) issue would, of course, be just what the relation is between meeting our needs and meeting others' needs. How, that is, within a gospel framework, do we adjudicate our needs and the needs of others?

The New Mormon Ecumenicism

Thoughts on *Mormonism at the Crossroads of Philosophy and Theology: Essays in Honor of David L. Paulsen*

Stephen H. Webb

There is no doubt that a “Mormon Moment” swept through the publishing industry in the wake of Mitt Romney’s presidential ambitions. If a lasting and productive time of reflection on Mormonism’s relationship to traditional and creedal Christianity comes from this moment, David Paulsen will deserve much of the credit. I have to admit my biases about his writings up front. While working on a book about a heretical option in ancient Christology that I call “heavenly flesh metaphysics,” I came across several of his essays defending the notion of a corporeal God.¹ I had been inching my way in that theological direction, but reading Paulsen was like being pulled out from a lazy beach by a rip current into new philosophical seas. It wasn’t just the clarity of his prose or the carefulness of his scholarship; Paulsen writes with a generous voice that is nonetheless firm in its articulation of theological themes that have been nearly lost in the development of Western intellectual history. His ideas are like a rip current, but the destination where he wants to take you is a sea of startling splendor and serenity. He brings common theological sense to topics that are intellectually fantastic and spiritually revolutionary. I have had the pleasure of getting to know David as a colleague and brother in Christ. I have also enjoyed getting to know his Christian character. He brims with a quiet, confident joy that overflows in an easy, natural manner. There are fountains of wisdom in his work that will need to be appreciated for many years to come. Although I have never had a class with him, I am honored to consider myself one of his “untimely born” students.

Following Joseph Smith’s lead, early Mormon thinkers—men like the Pratt brothers and Brigham Young—were drawn to the epistemological rewards and speculative prospects of ideas like divinization, materialism, and ongoing prophecy. Their eagerness to explore newly

recovered, full-bodied conceptualizations of the divine strengthened them in the struggles they underwent for their faith. Yet their ideas hardly had any life outside of LDS circles. Early Mormon thinkers yelled and roared about their discoveries, but their supplications fell, in terms of America's class of trained theologians, on deaf ears. Paulsen's voice is a new tone for a new day.

Clearly, giving God a body, imagining salvation as a journey of divinization, and being open to the fullest reception of the gifts of the Spirit are all staging dramatic comebacks in contemporary theological circles. It is almost as if Smith was born too early, or perhaps we are witnessing a turn in the life of the universal church that he saw long before the rest of us. The rise of a truly global Christianity is breaking down not only geographical barriers but also intellectual walls that kept certain ideas quarantined for centuries. The possibility that God has a body has been so relegated to the dump heap of supposedly falsified propositions that even today, when new versions of embodiment are all the theological rage, it cannot be taken too literally. The assumption is that such ideas are remnants of a childish stage of Christian intellectual development. Yet visions of an embodied God gave the early Latter-day Saints such measures of spiritual intimacy, exuberance, and assurance that their testimonies demand the most careful examination.

At the very least, Mormon history is a reminder that the coming of the kingdom of God progresses according to switchbacks, reversals, and all manner of twists and turns rather than traveling along a nice and neat linear pathway. Characterizing the current point of time in religious history as a "Mormon Moment" seems to me to be a purely descriptive fact, but what are we to make of this moment in terms of a wider view of divine providence? Is it a fleeting, media-driven moment occasioned by a lost presidential election, or is the time now ripe for the rest of America to discover America's most American version of Christianity? Mormonism was born in America and preaches a gospel that puts America at the center of salvation history. Latter-day Saints embody the great biblical themes of prophecy, exodus, martyrdom, and entry into a promised land, but they also exemplify the great American themes of settling the frontier, trying to create a utopian community, democratizing religious authority, harnessing the power of capitalism, and making the family the foundation of religion. Whatever else his accomplishments, Romney helped introduce Mormonism to the very country that Latter-day Saints have endowed with all of their highest hopes and ambitions.

Paulsen's accomplishments hold out the hope that the Mormon Moment might become the occasion for a new Mormon ecumenism. There is much talk these days of global Christianity, and it is exciting to see Christians interested in various versions of their faith scattered across the planet. Christianity is truly a universal religion not only in size (it is the largest of all religions) but also in the breadth of its ideas and the passion of its adherents. Americans today can read books about strands of their faith that they did not know even existed, from underground churches in China to eclectic blends of the Bible with primordial traditions in Africa to the survival of ancient forms of the faith in Ethiopia. Perhaps the most exotic but also the most provocative form of Christianity, however, can be found in America's own backyard. Discovering Mormonism is like stumbling upon a rich stew of new flavors and unusual ingredients that nonetheless tastes familiar and soothing.

Mormonism, however, is not just another case study in the classroom of religious pluralism and civic tolerance. What sets Mormonism apart is its claim to restore the gospel to a fullness that has never before been imagined. Christianity today, for all of its success and growth, remains a divided and fragmented faith. What if Mormonism could help Christians find the unity that is so central to our faith?

Paulsen's work goes beyond the earnest and helpful but ultimately limited exercises in apologetic debates that often pass for theological dialogue. His work challenges conventional ideas without being the least bit polemical. He is not alone in this approach, of course. His many students and others influenced by him have followed the course he has set toward reflecting on Mormon religious claims in the largest possible contexts. The result is the possibility, I think, that Mormons can help lead Christianity forward into a true universality of faith.

As Christianity fulfills the great commission to go to all the nations of the earth, baptizing and making disciples of Jesus, the church needs to be united more than ever before. Yet how can the church have a global mission without having an inclusive message? It is doubtful that one size of theology can ever fit all of God's people, so Christian leaders need to expound a generous orthodoxy, moving beyond the old divisions that marked some theological options as heretical and others as beyond criticism. An expanding Christianity calls for an equally expansive theological imagination. This does not mean that anything goes. Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior of the world, is the highest affirmation and most personal passion of any faith that is worthy of the Christian name.

There is no limit to the greatness, power, or love of Jesus. Every theology that sincerely tries to fathom and honor him should be welcome at the Christian table.

Paulsen and company invite their readers to try on old ideas in new ways, and that is what I think makes for a great ecumenical project. Ecumenical means “of worldwide scope or application,” and Mormonism is certainly becoming a global religion of its own. But ecumenical also means the attempt to demonstrate how the various branches of Christianity are all nourished from (and contribute to) the same trunk and root. The ecumenical movement, unfortunately, has fallen on hard times. Old battles have not been won or lost, so stalemate seems the order of the day. A fresh start is needed. What better way to revisit Christianity’s past and re-envision Christianity’s future than to examine one of the youngest branches on the Christian tree?

The Mormon branch of Christianity is young, but it is also gnarled with the wisdom of the past. Scholars categorize Mormonism as an example of nineteenth-century restorationism. Many of the early leaders of and converts to Mormonism were inspired by Joseph Smith because they did not find what they were looking for in any other church. Lots of people on America’s frontiers shared this general dissatisfaction with the state of Christianity. I grew up in a restorationist church that is part of the Campbellite–Stone tradition. For us, restoration meant Biblicism. It also meant trying to carve out a space in American culture for a religious community that makes a real difference. We thought the only way we could withdraw from the world was by returning to the most narrowly defined vision of the New Testament church.

Mormon restoration is unlike this or any other version. It goes forward rather than backward, with both metaphysical ambition and biblical roots. Consequently, it is expansive rather than contractive. For Mormons, restoration means picking up all the pieces of Christianity that were discarded or destroyed in the church’s long march to becoming a stable and lasting institution. Mormonism is a smaller church than Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, or the largest of the Protestant denominations, but the Mormons just might have their eyes on Christianity’s biggest ideas.

In Paulsen’s reading of church history, if I understand him correctly, there is no need to blame or shame anyone for Christianity’s falling away from some of its early richness and variety. Paulsen offers a philosophical and sociological, not a moral or psychological, account of the “Great Apostasy.”² Philosophically speaking, the key turning point in church

history occurred when theologians began adopting Greek philosophy, especially the thought of Plato. The idea that God, the soul, and all heavenly realities are immaterial became the touchstone of Christian philosophy. This same idea, however, pushed God beyond the reach of most people's imagination. The drive toward clarity of thought left God utterly removed from the world and nearly unknowable for anyone who longed for a direct experience of the divine. This process was gradual, not sudden, occurring first in technical theological treatises, but its long-term impact was felt most keenly in the separation of the institutional expression of the church from its revelatory ground. Sociologically speaking, the removal of God from the realm of what can be known and experienced in this world resulted in a crisis of religious authority. The systematic ambition of creedal formulations took the place of testimony and prophecy.

The problem that plagues church history for Paulsen is not institutionalization itself. After all, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has an elaborate institutional structure designed to preserve, shepherd, and transmit the gospel as it has been envisioned by Joseph Smith. The Saints, unlike radical reformation groups, are not wide-eyed decriers of the impulse to organize religious sentiment into hierarchical structures. Unlike churches in the Radical Reformation tradition, the Saints are not nostalgic for a form of primitive Christianity that preceded Christendom, the period in which Christianity united culture and political authority in Western Europe. The Saints are thus not tempted to privatize Christianity by denying credibility to any and every political authority and withdrawing from the world of social responsibility and civic engagement. The Saints are not even absolutely anticreedal, since they have their own Articles of Faith, written by Smith in 1842. The problem with creeds, from Paulsen's perspective, is that dogmatic consensus grounded in philosophical abstractions can never take the place of personal and charismatic proclamations of the reality and power of Jesus Christ. Religious authority, for Mormons, must be located ultimately in personal and charismatic rather than textual and academic sources.

Grounding religious authority in prophetic voices is risky, of course, since many are those who claim to speak on behalf of Christ and contradictory are some of their messages. That is precisely why Paulsen's ecumenical project is so important. Whatever you believe about Joseph Smith, he was an amazing man who had his finger on the pulse of ancient traditions that most Christians thought were long dead. He had an almost supernatural ability to gather wreckage from Christian

history to construct new vehicles for faith in Christ. The test of his prophetic insights is their utility in healing Christianity of its many divisions. The idea of a fall in church history is thus correlated, for Paulsen, in the possibility of genuine theological unity in Christianity's future.

Whatever else it is, Mormonism is a reminder that the past is never completely over and forgotten. Roads not taken can appear out of nowhere as possibilities for future exploration. Options and alternatives that once seemed closed can open up in surprising ways. As a Roman Catholic, I believe that the early church was guided by divine providence toward the creeds and hierarchies that were necessary for its institutional survival and expansion. Christianity had to set itself apart from the violent world of pagan mythologies and gnostic fantasies, where gods fought each other in a cosmos governed by neither law nor mercy. Most of the alternatives to Christianity portrayed the material world as evil, a proposition that struck most people as common sense, given how short and painful life can be. Those few gods on the side of the good existed in a state far and away from all the cruelty and carnage here below. Even the good gods, however, could hardly be bothered to take notice of human souls entrapped in heavy, decaying flesh, with its fleeting pleasures. In this cosmic drama, humans were nothing more than a sideshow with no one to save them and no guarantee of a happy ending.

The church, universal and apostolic, took a variety of measures to turn back the tide of these monstrous metaphysical implications. Theologians posited that God created the world out of nothing in order to show that matter was under God's complete authority and thus not mired in evil. The immortality (or preexistence) of the soul was denied in order to make sure that everyone understood that God has no competitors or even allies in his status as the only eternal being. The doctrine of providence began eclipsing the belief in human free will in order to assure the faithful that God is in control of the universe. All of these arguments were good and needful in their day, and they were affirmed by devout followers of Jesus Christ for the best of reasons. There might be reasons today to give the alternatives to these beliefs another look.

If there are such reasons, then this book, edited by Jacob Baker, is a good place to start. He provides the scholarly world with a long, hard look at the work of David Paulsen, and for that Christians of all convictions should be grateful. There are too many essays here to analyze in detail, but the collection is remarkably even in quality, and I learned something from each of the essays. Daniel Barron and Jacob Baker

begin with a reflection on Paulsen's life and work. They go right to the heart of their subject by describing how Paulsen balances a "conciliatory attitude" with an "analytical ability to evaluate philosophical propositions and truth claims" (xl). Evidence of Paulsen's generosity of spirit can be found in the fact that four contributors to this volume were authors of a book that was highly critical of Mormonism. Indeed, it was a book that Paulsen courteously criticized by asking for dialogue rather than polemic, and this volume shows the fruits of his own calm, irenic approach to theological differences.

Carl Mosser contributes a reflection on the difficulty of squeezing Mormonism into traditional categorical schemes. He points out that "counting gods cannot establish whether a theological tradition qualifies as atheistic, monotheistic, or polytheistic" (4). Scholars today debate whether ancient Judaism was monotheistic and whether that category is something of a modern invention. In a careful analysis of Mormon texts, Mosser concludes that Mormonism is not monotheistic but that it is also not polytheistic in any clear and obvious way. (See page 27 for his list of differences between Mormonism and polytheism.) Mormonism is a variant of theistic finitism, a term that Paulsen used early in his career but stopped using because it can be easily misunderstood. Whether the category of "finite theism" can emerge as the best way of locating Mormon belief, when so many other categories have proven unsuitable, remains to be seen.

In inviting Mormons and mainline Christians to enter into honest and faithful dialogue, Donald Musser admits that "Protestants have either officially, or unofficially, considered Mormons theologically perverse" (40). He uses the work of Paul Tillich to call for a mutually enriching and personally humbling conversation between diverse Christian traditions.

Brian Birch offers a fascinating examination of the "atheological" contours of Mormon theology. Mormon thinkers often use theology as a sign of the kind of reflection that is not a part of their tradition. "In a living gospel," he observes, "regulated by continuing revelation, theology has become a metaphor for a rootless Christianity in desperate search for truth" (51). Nevertheless, an incomplete body of revelation still has universal truths, even if they need to be indexed to a particular moment in time. It is ironic, to an outside observer like myself, that, as Birch puts it, "The earlier and more daring works in Mormon thought have given way to compendia, expositions, and commentaries, a persistent theme of which has been the conscientious effort to avoid any hint

of theological adventurism” (55). Mormon theology today is given the task of sorting out the connections, implications, and scriptural warrants for the extravagant claims of its first generation of leaders. Yet as Birch helpfully reminds us, “From the absence of theoretical language it does not follow that substantive theological claims are not being made” (55). Ongoing revelation is itself a theological category and as such it cannot be used to put an end to theological debate.

Those who want to see Mormonism move closer to evangelicalism are sometimes frustrated by the fact that Mormons do not appear to be fluent in the use of born-again language. Douglas Davies shows how testimony, with its evocation of external visions and historical events, takes the place of the more subjective and inward language of rebirth. Mormon metaphysics points in a more objective direction than typical Protestant calls for conversion. “Practically speaking, Christ’s most significant coming was not to individual hearts but in his presence at Joseph Smith’s first vision” (75). Mormons testify to the discovery of the true church, not a true self. Davies suggests that this makes them closer to Roman Catholics than Protestants.

Francis Beckwith, who continues to grow in his appreciation of Mormon thought, defends Mormonism from the charge that it does not have the resources to make a case for natural law ethics, while Paul Owen is evidence of how non-Mormon theologians, once they examine Mormon history, often end up in deep admiration of Joseph Smith. “For my own part, while I do not view the Book of Mormon as a literal historical record, nor do I accept its canonical authority, I do view Smith’s ministry as having a sort of prophetic character—a valid testimony from heaven to the people of God, albeit one outside the boundaries of the Catholic Church” (112). Craig Bloomberg, meanwhile, points out that “prior to Vatican II in the mid-1960s, it was virtually unheard of to call someone an Evangelical Catholic” (171). He asks if that development in Catholic circles can provide a useful analogy for what is happening in Mormonism today. He helpfully characterizes Mormon thought on grace as “salvation by grace but exaltation by works” (185). He also speculates that had Christianity not turned its back on spiritual gifts (by adopting theological cessationism), Joseph Smith might have been content “to put forward his revelations in the Pauline category of the results of the spiritual gift of prophecy—true words from the living God but not to be elevated to the level of the Bible in accuracy or authority” (189).

There are two essays on divine embodiment, one skeptical (Stephen Davis) and one supportive (Clark Pinnock). The most powerful

theological essays in this volume, in my opinion, are by James Faulconer, Robert Millet, and Blake Oster, all of whom have worked closely with Paulsen at Brigham Young University. These essays especially demand more attention than I can give them here. Their work lies close to my own interests, and their essays are thick with argument and insight, so I simply cannot even begin to describe them. I hope to return to this trio of essays in my own future work.

In sum, this book demonstrates the lasting value of Paulsen's career. Paulsen asks his readers to put aside the categories of heresy and orthodoxy and instead to try to imagine what a church equipped with the fullest range of its ancient but still living theological ammunition might look like. Why face the secular world with anything less? If a Mormon Moment can usher in a period of Mormon Ecumenicism that will endure, then I welcome it wholeheartedly as a providential ripening of Smith's prophetic vocation. No other branch of the Christian tree is so entangled in complex and fascinating ways with the earliest and most neglected doctrines of the church, and no other branch extends so optimistically and brazenly upward as it stretches toward a cosmic horizon. May God bless David Paulsen and all of his students, past, present, and future, in their endeavors to draw together the people of God.

Stephen H. Webb (who can be contacted via email at byustudies@byu.edu) has taught philosophy and religion for twenty-five years. His recent publications include *The Dome of Eden: A New Solution to the Problem of Creation and Evolution* (Cascade Books, 2010), *The Divine Voice: Christian Proclamation and the Theology of Sound* (Brazos, 2004), and *American Providence: A Nation with a Mission* (Continuum, 2004). His newest book is *Mormon Christianity: What Other Christians Can Learn from the Latter-day Saints* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

1. My book was subsequently published as Stephen H. Webb, *Jesus Christ, Eternal God: Heavenly Flesh and the Metaphysics of Matter* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). For one of Paulsen's essays that had the most impact on me, see David L. Paulsen, "The Doctrine of Divine Embodiment: Restoration, Judeo-Christian, and Philosophical Perspectives," *BYU Studies* 35, no. 4 (1995-96): 6-94. [^]

2. I base my analysis of Paulsen's view of church history on his review of Roger Olson's book, *The Story of Christian Theology*, published in *BYU Studies* 39, no. 4 (2000): 185-94. [^]

Marjorie Newton. *Tiki and Temple:
The Mormon Mission in New Zealand, 1854–1958.*

Draper, Utah: Greg Kofford Books, 2012.

Reviewed by A. Keith Thompson

Writing Church history is an art form that has developed significantly in the last twenty years. Historical facts recited without reference to the spirit of revelation that guides the work of God in the last days can be spiritually sterile. However, a fearful focus on how certain materials might affect the faith of readers can damage the color and texture of any historiographical account. Often, the personal failings of the players in LDS religious history serve to underscore the Lord's hand in his work—as readers infer that it could not have worked out as it did but for divine influence.

Marjorie Newton's book *Southern Cross Saints: The Mormons in Australia* was the subject of criticism because some felt that it did not adequately address the faith of the members or the spirit of revelation that guided the work. But if that criticism was ever true of Newton's history of the Church in Australia, it would be unfair where this new work is concerned. Not only does she preface her work with the hope that this "simple yet inspiring story of the growth of Mormonism in New Zealand" will "convey a sense of the faith, courage and dedication of the North American missionaries, and . . . of their converts" (xiii), but she is direct in identifying examples that might not have been readily inferred by readers from her narrative. The unlikely assignment of Lieutenant Robert L. Simpson to Egypt during the Second World War is a case in point. She notes that despite an expectation that he might be assigned to the Pacific, he was assigned to Egypt at the exact time when the Maori Battalion that included many Latter-day Saints was stationed there. Newton concludes, "Truly, the Lord moves in mysterious ways, and one of His servants found himself able to serve both his country and his church in time of war" (215–16).

Newton similarly suggests that President McKay's change in President Simpson's 1951 assignment to preside over New Zealand's new northern mission (rather than the south mission to which he was originally called) was inspired, since the majority of the Maori members lived in the northern mission and loved President Simpson, which helped them accept "some difficult changes¹ from him which they might not have taken well from anyone else" (265–66). Though it is doubtful that most of the Maori members lived within the geography of the north mission in 1951,² few would question that the call of Robert L. Simpson to preside in New Zealand during such a formative period was inspired.

Marjorie Newton's work is always a pleasure to read. Her abundant research from all manner of primary sources is testament to her resourcefulness and her relentless quest for accuracy and reliable corroboration of all details. If there is a price to pay, it is that her thoroughness inevitably leads her to gently query some time-honored, faith-promoting rumors. She notes, for example, that there is "no contemporary record" for the story that there was a "mass gift of interpretation of tongues" at the *hui tau* at Puketapu near Huntly during Elder David O. McKay's first visit in 1921, though he did promise that "the spirit of the Lord will bear witness . . . of the words that I give to you under the inspiration of the Lord" (164). And Newton is unequivocal in her statement that the Maori Agricultural College "never became a registered secondary school . . . despite assertions to the contrary" (187).

What I find most enlightening, having been born in New Zealand just one year before Newton's account ends, is that some of the difficult issues Church leadership in New Zealand deals with today have been problems from the beginning. What is the appropriate place of indigenous culture in a Church that aspires to create a fellowship of Saints where there are

1. For example, President Simpson discontinued the practice of annual *hui tau* New Zealand-wide conferences during his term as president of the New Zealand North Mission.

2. In 1951, as Newton concedes, the New Zealand South Mission included within its geography the East Coast of the North Island, including Gisborne and South. While the writer does not have any precise demographic breakdown of Church membership in 1951, the heavy concentration of Maori membership in the east parts of the North Island within the New Zealand South Mission suggest that Maori Church membership was fairly evenly distributed between the two missions when the mission was first divided.

“no manner of ites” (62, 241)? Is the haka dance an acceptable cultural practice or is it discourteous or even contentious (259–61)? And what of the desire of indigenous and immigrant peoples who would prefer to worship in their native tongue? Does the gospel require that they all be assimilated into Church units that worship in the commercial language of the nation so that these members are not consigned to second-class economic status?

The story of the Rangitoto Maori Branch in Auckland in the 1940s (224, 237 and 239) seems like a prophecy of the difficulties to come after 1980 as various Polynesian immigrant groups struggled to assimilate into the wider New Zealand culture. Though these groups have at times been accommodated by Church leaders with new language units, no Maori language unit has been reestablished since the Auckland and Rangitoto branches were amalgamated in January 1951 (237). Similarly, the concern of Church leaders in 1928 that the Maori Agricultural College was a drain on precious Church resources (180) was also prescient of more recent concerns leading to the closure of the Church College of New Zealand (CCNZ). But Newton confirms that Elder McKay, as a professional educator, considered that “the establishment of [the Maori Agricultural] College . . . was inspired of the Lord” (168). When he became President of the Church, he expanded the construction of CCNZ announced previously under President George Albert Smith (249) despite “disquiet in Church offices in Salt Lake City over the escalating costs of the project” (248). However, Newton does not connect that disquiet about cost with Elder Harold B. Lee as Gregory A. Prince and W. Robert Wright have done in their biography on David O. McKay.³

Newton is authoritative when she explains the attractiveness of LDS missionary and leadership teaching about the Lehiite origins of the Maori and other Polynesian peoples in the Pacific. Though some “early Church of England missionaries such as Samuel Marsden” had taught that the Polynesian people “were descended from the Israelites,” President Joseph F. Smith had also told prominent Maori visitors to Utah in 1913 that they were “some of Hagoth’s people.” This, he said, was very probably because “Hagoth’s ship . . . may have followed the [same] currents

3. *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005).

to the Pacific Islands” that had driven “great saw[n] timbers . . . from the mouth of the Columbia River . . . directly to the shores of Hawaii” when he was in Hawaii as a young missionary in the 1850s (129). Brigham Young had also “taught as early as 1858 that the Polynesians were of Israelitish origin” (130). But it was not just genealogy or “whakapapa” that attracted the Maori people of New Zealand to the restored gospel. They had a prophetic tradition of their own. In 1881, Paora Potangaroa, a Maori prophet and *rangatira* (chief) had prophesied that “the church for the Maori people . . . would come from the east, brought by emissaries who would travel among them in twos, live in their homes, and learn their language” (42). “The significant point is that the Maori people were accustomed to revelation from living prophets,” so the “story of Joseph Smith was not something incredible to them; to believe that God had spoken to Joseph was not . . . a leap of faith . . . but instead was a confirmation of a vital part of Maori indigenous religion” (43).

There are, however, a couple of unnecessary lapses in Newton’s wish to convey “the devotion and dedication” of the early New Zealand missionaries (64–65). While it might be fair to comment that President Gordon C. Young “was not a popular mission president” (241), it seems more than a little unfair to accuse him of “a combination of persuasion and bribery” (236) when he secured for the Church the lease of sea-facing land at Avarua in the Cook Islands in 1950 for ten pounds a year. Not only is this statement made without context of land valuation, but it is compounded with innuendo when Newton states that “he also had qualms of conscience about the low price Bert Meldrum had received for the [CCNZ] land” (236).

In these matters, Newton may have been expressing her honest opinion, but she does not appreciate the artificial suppression of land values in New Zealand and Australia after World War II, which were brought about by compulsory government regulation in both countries. The truth is, there was probably very little either Meldrum or the Church could have done within the law about the price of the CCNZ land. Similarly, while President Young may have felt that he got a very good deal on the Cook Island land purchase, even today, the going price of land in third world countries is often shockingly small in the eyes of first world purchasers—meaning it is highly unlikely that the Church defrauded either vendor as is Newton’s inference. It seems similarly unnecessary to describe President Halversen’s June 1947 report identifying a need for many more Church buildings in New Zealand as “concocted with

Elder Cowley's help, to be used as ammunition for Elder Cowley to fire in leadership councils in Utah" (223).⁴ Not only is this emotive language disrespectful, but it sullies the otherwise impeccable reputations of both Elder Cowley and President Halverson.

These small lapses in editorial concentration aside, this book is a very scholarly and informative read that is a must-have in any LDS library that focuses on international Church history.

A. Keith Thompson (who can be reached via email at byustudies@byu.edu) is a former president of the New Zealand Wellington Mission. He also served as international legal counsel for the Church for twenty years, first in the Pacific and then throughout the African continent. He currently works in private legal practice and teaches Australian constitutional law at the University of Notre Dame Australia–Sydney.

4. Newton's point here is that Elder Cowley very much wanted the Church to reestablish an LDS Church high school in New Zealand that would replace the Maori Agricultural College, which had not been rebuilt after it was destroyed in the 1931 Napier earthquake.

Historical Context of the Doctrine and Covenants and Other Modern Scriptures, Volume 1, by Kurt Elieson (Dallas, Texas: Kurt Elieson, 2011).

Kurt Elieson's *Historical Context of the Doctrine and Covenants and Other Modern Scriptures* is a nice self-published surprise. Elieson, a Texas attorney, saw a hole in the corpus of Doctrine and Covenants commentaries and study guides, and he aimed to fill it. He has succeeded on several fronts.

Elieson's contention is that most published commentaries on the Doctrine and Covenants "often discuss the historical background of each section," but frequently "in chopped-up little pieces that are themselves separated from the larger context." And, Elieson asserts, narrative histories of the Church "rarely mention even half [of the D&C's] sections." His book seeks to be a bridge over that gap by "providing an uninterrupted narrative focused specifically on the Doctrine and Covenants" (viii). That approach gives Elieson's book real value. It is essentially a chronological reporting of events connected with the Restoration's first decade (1820–1831), with special attention to each section of the Doctrine and Covenants as it appears in that chronology. The term "narrative" might be a little misleading, since the book does not attempt a smooth and continuous story. It is, in that sense, more journalistic than anything; Elieson has given each sequential episode its own heading, he has written in the present tense, and he has quoted liberally from other sources.

But that is what makes this book's contribution unique. It brings together a commendable number of sources—primary and secondary—such that interested readers can find, in one place, a wealth of information about how and where each of Joseph Smith's

revelations fits into the history of the Church. Elieson has overcome the penchant for "chopped-up" snippets of historical background. He has also interspersed among the many Mormon vignettes a number of American and world history sections that illustrate the larger cultural and political landscape in which Joseph Smith and his associates lived and thought.

Elieson's book incorporates much of the latest scholarship coming out of the Joseph Smith Papers Project. Because this field is currently a hotbed of discovery, it is understandable that some of the most recent works might be missed in Elieson's bibliography—like Mark Staker's important *Hearken, O Ye People*, or Steven Harper's *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants*. And since Elieson's book has been published, there have been developments that readers will want to keep in mind, like the new edition of the scriptures with updated Doctrine and Covenants section headings. The forthcoming first volume of the Documents series of the *Joseph Smith Papers* also promises to add important detail to the work Elieson tackles, since that series places all of the revelations (and other Joseph Smith documents) into a chronological, heavily annotated framework.

One other minor drawback of Elieson's book is that the citation format in the notes is a little difficult to follow because of abbreviations and italics, but the notes can be sorted through with a little effort (and recourse to the bibliography). A more standardized citation system would have solved that issue. Still, in most respects Elieson has woven together in one helpful book an up-to-date and remarkably thorough collection of diary accounts and documentary evidence to give depth and context to the story of the receipt (and, importantly, the early circulation) of

Joseph Smith's revelations. Because of that, Elieson's book should earn a place on many desks as a ready reference for readers interested in both the Doctrine and Covenants and the history of the Latter-day Saints.

—J. B. Haws

Pansy's History: The Autobiography of Margaret E. P. Gordon, 1866–1966, transcribed and edited by Claudia L. Bushman (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2011).

With *Pansy's History*, Claudia L. Bushman, renowned scholar of Latter-day Saint women's history, adds to the published corpus of frontier women's writings. Bushman's subject is both personal and academic: Margaret "Pansy" Gordon was her maternal grandmother. The daughter of an Anglican missionary, Gordon spent her girlhood in England and in remote Indian villages in British Columbia and Ontario, Canada. In 1885, her family converted to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and emigrated to Utah, where they made a home first in Salt Lake City and then on the shores of Bear Lake. At the dawn of the twentieth century,

Margaret and her husband, James Gordon, settled other frontiers, struggling to establish themselves in the Mormon towns in Alberta, Canada. Later in life, the Gordons moved to the growing LDS community in Los Angeles, where Margaret found purpose and energy in directing genealogical efforts in the Church's California Mission.

Margaret Gordon's memoir, composed over several decades, is notable for the author's clear voice and independent spirit, as well as her detailed accounts of frontier life, financial and family hardships, church service, and transcontinental travel. This book will provide new sources of study for historians of frontier life in northern Utah and Alberta and especially of the experience of Mormon women in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Bushman has annotated her grandmother's manuscript and provides family correspondence and excerpts from Gordon's diaries to supplement the main narrative, enriching it as a potential source for scholarly inquiry and expanding a unique portrait of one woman's life journey across three nations and two centuries.

—Maggie Gallup Kopp