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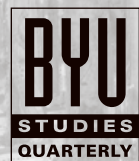
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From the Editor

John W. Welch



With the publication of this issue of *BYU Studies Quarterly*, I find myself looking back to the end of 1991, when Macmillan's *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* was released, exactly twenty-five years ago. That monumental publication, to which over 750 authors contributed articles on more than 1,200 subjects, is still maintained by BYU Studies and is available online at eom.byu.edu. While some of its articles are obviously out of date (such as the entries on the Church in Africa or Temples,



where the Church has seen dramatic growth in recent decades), much of the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* is still an excellent place to look for initial articles on the doctrine, scriptures, biographies, history, organization, and culture of the Church. In many ways, the breadth of coverage and precision of details in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* are echoed in the ongoing publication of articles in *BYU Studies Quarterly* that have steadily supplemented, updated, and added to the encyclopedia.

Continuing in that long-standing tradition, this issue is filled with an excellent variety of very interesting and useful information. We are privileged to have all of these outstanding items in this journal.

Pertinent to the modern worldwide Church, Khumbulani Mdletshe shares his personal history of conversion in South Africa and his call in 1985 to serve as a missionary in London, where he first learned about the 1978 revelation on the priesthood and its difficult history. Now a member of the Third Quorum of the Seventy serving in Africa, he tells

here his personal tale of growth through searching for answers and learning to trust in God and his prophets.

Making an important contribution to Church history, Richard Dilworth Rust introduces historians and readers everywhere to the journals of President George Q. Cannon now being released online. As one of the key developers of this massive database, Rust shares his enthusiasm for these journals and explains their importance as a resource filled with information about the Church in the late nineteenth century.

For readers interested in sports and statistics, Nelson Chung writes about the BYU football program and the “analytics revolution.” This article gives an overview of the growing field of sports analytics and then analyzes BYU football in that light, examining ideas about positions, recruiting, and how BYU has used this technology in recruiting players for three of the most important positions on any football team. It then tries to divine the new coaching staff’s likelihood of using these tools.

In the realm of theology and interfaith dialogue, Alonzo Gaskill writes in memory of the Christian scholar Stephen H. Webb, who died earlier this year. Published several times in recent issues of *BYU Studies Quarterly*, Stephen possessed, and generously shared, one of the most brilliantly articulate minds ever to engage with Mormon thought. For all, his loss is tragic.

For a new scriptural insight, David Larsen examines closely the semantic range of meanings behind the Hebrew word that is translated as “victory” in Isaiah 25:8, “He will swallow up death in victory.” Similar statements in the Book of Mormon appear to be dependent variations on this hopeful and eternal theme.

Returning to the age-old question of the problem of pain and suffering, Tyler Johnson’s essay searches in Mormon theology for answers. Johnson sees empathy as God’s answer to human suffering, pointing out that in many ways we are God’s hands in extending that empathy.

Philosophy professor Daniel Graham argues that Socrates, the paragon of intellectual inquisitiveness, was not only devoted to rationality but also to spirituality. As such, the famous Greek wise man shows that Athens and Jerusalem may not be as completely alien to each other as some have thought.

Reveling in wonderful English literature, three essays in this issue express meaningful lessons learned by an unsuspecting organist, by a sensitive observer of the aging process, and by a conscientious person striving to transmit religion through generations. And poets gather for

us beautiful images of those who “dangle cherries” for earrings and heron’s wings that “crescendo the air.”

As always, the book reviews in this issue strive to keep discerning readers current on recent publications. In this issue, they spotlight new studies about the Civil War in Utah, the surprising appearance of Semitic and Egyptian roots in Uto-Aztec languages, an unusual volume presenting Hopi phonetics in the Deseret Alphabet, the challenges of being Chicano while Mormon, the determined life of Amy Brown Lyman, a collection of writings by Mormon feminists, an elegant collection of early Mormon poems, the story of a pioneering missionary to Switzerland and Palestine, and interesting interconnections between the fourth Article of Faith and the temple.

Because this year also marks the completion of my twenty-fifth year as editor in chief of this amazingly rich and beautiful publication, let me take this opportunity to thank all of the editors, staff members, web designers, student interns, advisors, and supporters for their contributions to all that this quarterly accomplishes. Few academic journals even dream of trying to cover such a wide diversity of topics as does *BYU Studies Quarterly*. The vibrant diversity of types of materials brought out four times a year through this publication stretches us and epitomizes for readers everywhere the Latter-day Saint axiom that all truth can be drawn together and encompassed in one great whole.

As has been stated on the inside back cover of every issue of *BYU Studies* in the last twenty-five years, this periodical continues to explore scholarly perspectives on all kinds of Latter-day Saint topics. This publication remains committed to seeking truth “by study and also by faith” (D&C 88:118) and recognizes that all knowledge without charity is nothing (1 Cor. 13:2).

Because *BYU Studies Quarterly* can print only what it receives, I also thank authors from all around the world who voluntarily submit their fruitful research on productive questions that have captivated their sustained interests and endless hours of careful research and writing.

Please enjoy every page in this issue of *BYU Studies Quarterly*, and by all means feel free to let us hear from you.

A Reflection from an African Convert on Official Declaration 2

Khumbulani D. Mdletshe

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will commemorate in June 2018 the fortieth anniversary of the coming forth of Official Declaration 2. This anniversary is an opportunity to reflect on the legacy of the priesthood ban and the 1978 revelation. The revelation came through the prophet of the Lord, Spencer W. Kimball, and has had critics and supporters. As a convert to the Church and especially as a black African convert, I have experienced a long journey but a worthwhile one. This essay will focus on this personal journey and how I came to understand the background history of the ban and the impact of this revelation for the Church, especially for those of African descent, and how the revelation has increased my belief in modern-day prophets.

My Early Life in KwaMashu, South Africa

I was born under the dark cloud of apartheid hanging over South Africa.¹ It was 1964, when political leaders including Nelson Mandela had been

1. Apartheid was a political, economic, and social system in **South Africa** during the years when the country was under the **white** minority rule from 1948 to 1994. Racial discrimination has been a part of how some human beings treat others, but within the South African context it took a different form in 1948, mainly because it was strict and more systematic. South Africans were divided by their race (blacks, coloureds [mixed race], Indians, and whites), and these various races were forced to live apart from each other. Laws were put in place to make sure that this happened. The system of apartheid in South Africa was banned in 1994.

sentenced to life imprisonment for planning to overthrow the apartheid regime. Apartheid laws were being introduced that were meant to suppress black people and make them pariahs in the country of their birth.

My mother did not know that she was pregnant with twins. The birth of twins shocked everyone, and there was no celebration. Two days after coming to this earth, my brother was killed. According to an African tradition, giving birth to twins is not normal and is considered a curse. The one who comes second is removed. I bet it was a difficult situation for my mother, but according to tradition it had to be done.

I was very weak from birth. I was in and out of hospital often. Witnessing the state of my health, my mother nicknamed me “Khehla,” which means “an old man.” This was the name I grew up with amongst my siblings and friends, even though my formal name is Khumbulani. I remember my mother reminding me when I entered school that my school name is Khumbulani. As I grew older, my dad completely dropped the name Khehla and called me Khumbulani. Later, as I was preparing to register for my first school external examination, the teacher minding the register refused to register me because I did not have a Christian name, as required by the apartheid regime. With quick thinking, I told him to add Desmond as my middle (and Christian) name. I returned home from school and told my parents what had happened. My dad congratulated me on choosing this name and added that it was a good one because it belonged to one of our great leaders, Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

My first twenty years of life were spent in the township of KwaMashu, which lies fifteen kilometres northwest of the city of Durban in South Africa. I had three older brothers who all died in their forties from HIV-related diseases. I also have three younger sisters, who all still live in KwaMashu.

Neither of my parents attended school. As a result, Dad did manual labour his entire working life. Daily he left home at 5 a.m. and returned at 6 p.m. On days when Mom found employment, she mostly worked as a domestic servant. In our home, food was scarce and precious. I remember that we ate bread for breakfast and lunch daily. Butter or jam or anything like that was made available only on some weekends or special days like Christmas. My oldest brother was the chief bread cutter. When it was time to eat, we would all stand around the table and watch with a critical eye as he cut the bread to make sure that the pieces were the same size. If there was any deviation, screams and shouts could be heard a kilometre away.

Sugar was a rare commodity and a luxury in our home. We put sugar in the water and drank it with bread or poured it on the leftover



Khumbulani as a teen in KwaMashu, circa 1980. Courtesy Khumbulani Mdletshe.

corn meal. I remember clearly that on Fridays we waited to do cooking until Dad returned from work because that was the day he was paid. Our meals were simple. It was in these conditions that Dad emphasised the importance of education. He told us that he was prepared to provide us with enough education to ensure us better jobs than he had. He wanted his sons to be clerks, and his daughters to be teachers or nurses. These were the only professions available to blacks in those days. He reminded us daily that education was the great

equalizer. He was very angry when my older brothers dropped out of school. My sisters and I kept Dad's dream alive.

My parents never attended a church. The first real introduction I had to any religion was when I was in first grade. Every school assembly included a prayer. As bad as apartheid was, one good thing it did was ensure that religious education was fully implemented in all schools, hence my introduction that year. Despite inferior education for blacks under apartheid, fear of God was emphasised. When I was about eight years old, my brother and I started to visit a local African church. It was a one-man show, but we enjoyed singing, clapping hands, and beating drums. One core tenet was the belief in visions (the ability to see things before and after they happen). At the age of thirteen, I stopped going to that church. One reason for leaving was that one of their pastors had prophesied that the Mdletshe brothers stole a pair of shoes that belonged to one of the congregants. Yes, we were poor and at times we were without shoes. However, it made no sense for two young teens to steal an older woman's shoes. We were put in a circle and beaten in order to cast out the evil spirit that led us to steal the shoes. That was the last time I set my foot in that church. What I did not know when I left was that this departure would prepare me to meet the LDS missionaries. When I first met the missionaries, I wasn't really looking for religion, though I was drawn to God. I prayed often, and I tried hard to do what I understood to be right before God.

Conversion: A New Church and New Opinions of White People

In the hot summer of 1980, my friends and I were enjoying a game of soccer on the street as usual when an orange-brown Mazda 323 pulled up. Inside were two Caucasian men wearing white shirts and ties. We were about to take off running, assuming they were from the Special Branch² of the South African police. This branch was notorious for using violence to break up any gathering of black people. At that time, the relationship between blacks and whites was one of mistrust and hate, brought about by apartheid policies. Influx control³ and group areas acts⁴ were fully in

2. The Special Branch, also known as the Security Branch, of the South African police “had a high profile and operated with cold-blooded efficiency. In the 1960s, after the Soweto massacre, Minister of Justice B. J. Vorster granted the Security Branch wide powers to track down, detain and torture suspected activists and opponents of apartheid. Police spies infiltrated underground organizations (such as the ANC [African National Congress] and PAC [Pan Africanist Congress of Azania] that had been banned, as well as the re-formed SACP [South African Communist Party]). For the decades from 1960 to the mid-1980s, many political activists were detained without trial and subjected to strong-arm questioning. Many, notably Steve Biko in 1977, died while in police custody. Others were abducted and assassinated, or simply disappeared without trace. Spying activity also provided the Security Branch with useful information.” Padraig O’Malley, “Security Branch,” *O’Malley: The Heart of Hope*, <https://www.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv03445/04lv03446/05lv03497.htm>.

3. In South Africa during the apartheid era, influx control was practiced. This consisted of a rigid limitation and control imposed upon black people, limiting their movement into urban areas. “First introduced by [Jan Smut’s government], the *Native (Black) Urban Areas Act No 21 of 1923* imposed a system of segregation which allowed black Africans access to towns only to serve white labour needs. Domestic workers were allowed to live in town [but only in the back rooms or servant quarters], while the rest of the black labour force would be restricted to finding housing in townships on the outskirts.” Mario Scerri, “Provincial Systems of Innovation and Globalization in South Africa,” in *Local Economies and Global Competitiveness*, ed. Bruno Dallago and Chiara Guglielmetti (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 81.

4. As noted, apartheid stressed racial separation. This was done primarily to foster a belief of white superiority. “On 27 April 1950, the Apartheid government passed the Group Areas Act. This Act enforced the segregation of different races to specific areas within the urban locale. It also restricted ownership and the occupation of land to a specific statutory group. This meant that Blacks could not own or occupy land in White areas.” “The South African Government Passes the Group Areas Act,” March 16, 2011, *South African History Online*, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/south-african-government-passes-group-areas-act>.

place and served to increase the distrust and animosity which existed between the races. These policies ensured minimum contact between different racial groups. When I was young, the only white people I saw in my community were policemen, soldiers, and work supervisors. So when the two white men got out of their car and called to us to stop, we obeyed. The tone of the voices we heard from the two men that day was different from any we had previously heard from white men. They introduced themselves as missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and politely asked if they could join in our game of soccer. We soon learned that they were lousy at soccer, and, frankly, we enjoyed easily dribbling past these white men. At least that was one thing we could defeat them at. In those days, it was generally assumed that blacks were better than whites when it came to soccer. Of course, that was a lie perpetuated by the apartheid government in their goal to keep people divided according to race. Soccer was for black people, rugby for white people who spoke Afrikaans, and cricket for English-speaking whites.

At the end of our soccer match, the two white men told us they had a message to share about Jesus Christ. Reluctantly, we agreed to listen. I remember one of my friends trying to discourage the rest of the group from talking with the missionaries, reminding us that “when these white people came to our ancestors, they introduced a Bible; and while holding the Bible, they took our land. Now, their children have come here to take what little we have.” (He said this in isiZulu to prevent the missionaries from understanding what he was saying.) That comment from my friend demonstrated the kind of politically charged environment that we were living in and that the first LDS missionaries coming to the townships faced. In those days, the black youth were at the forefront in the battle for freedom.⁵ Four years earlier, in 1976, many black youth had taken centre stage in the fight against apartheid as they

5. Townships are residential areas which were reserved for blacks. Blacks were permitted to live in urban areas, but they could not reside in the same neighbourhoods with whites. Whites needed labour from blacks, hence townships were built to make sure labour provided by blacks was available. Each city in South Africa is surrounded by a number of these townships. They were poorly resourced in terms of the availability of such things as clean water, electricity, road systems, schools, and clinics. Since the end of apartheid in 1994, a number of improvements have been made, but it will take a lifetime to make them as good as former white suburbs.



Khumbulani (*centre front*) with his seminary class in KwaMashu, circa 1983. Courtesy Khumbulani Mdletshe.

led the famous Soweto Uprising.⁶ These missionaries were visiting our township for the first time, and not many years after one of the most significant and racially charged events in modern South African history. They were about to introduce me to the restored gospel, bringing to pass one of the most significant events in my life. Two years earlier, Official Declaration 2 had been issued by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, extending the priesthood to all worthy males regardless of race or nationality. The priesthood ban was why missionaries from the LDS Church had never before visited my township of KwaMashu, but they did not tell me so.

At first, I was the only member of the Church in my family; two of my sisters later joined. My family, especially my parents, were very supportive of my choice to join.

6. The 1976 Soweto Uprising was an event in which protesting students held a meeting in the township of Orlando in Soweto on Sunday, June 13, 1976. During that meeting, student leaders called for a mass demonstration against the use of Afrikaans language. This was to take place on Wednesday, June 16, 1976. On that day, students assembled at different points throughout Soweto then set off to meet at Orlando West Secondary School. Police arrived to break up the illegal demonstration, and when students refused because they felt their message had not been heard, police responded with live ammunition. At least 176 students (but estimates range to 700) of the 20,000 students marching in their school uniforms were gunned down that day, their lifeless bodies lying in the streets of Soweto.



Family members surround Khumbulani Mdletshe (*centre*) as he prepares to depart for his mission, 1985. Courtesy Khumbulani Mdletshe.

Mission to London: Challenges and Blessings

Five years after my baptism, in June 1985, I reported to the mission field, called to serve in the England London South Mission. There I did as all converts must do: I prayed to receive revelation about truth. My testimony of the restored gospel was anchored as I knelt on a cold bathroom floor in England and received a confirmation that what I was teaching was true. I began to understand what it means to be a Latter-day Saint.

The first area where I served was the little town of Havant, located in southeast Hampshire. This town was very different from my township of KwaMashu. KwaMashu was 100 percent black, and Havant was 100 percent white. I remember getting on the bus and hearing an English boy of about five years old saying, “Mom, there is a chocolate man on the bus.” I had only been in England about two months at that point. I was quite shocked by his comment. I found myself having to interact with white people twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. My companions were white, my investigators were white, and the bus driver and the garbage collectors were white. As these interactions with white people became normal, my negative opinions of white people began to change.

Shortly thereafter I was transferred to the city of London, where I spent the remainder of my mission working primarily in the nearly all-black suburbs, including Brixton. Our primary means of finding people to teach was the traditional knocking on doors. One day, not too far into my mission, my companion and I approached a door, and it was my turn

to give the door approach. When the door opened, a tall black man stood there. I said, "I am Elder Mdletshe and this is my companion." I told him that we were missionaries from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sometimes referred to as Mormons. As soon as I said that, his countenance changed and he rhetorically asked, "You are a Mormon?" Before I could say a word, he continued, "And you are black!" I looked at my hand to see if I was still black, and indeed I was. I was shocked as to why this man was saying this. Finally, I said to him, "Yes, I am black, and I am a Mormon." He continued, "You are lost, Brother! How can you be a member of a racist church? Mormons do not accept blacks in their church." I was shocked and alarmed by those words, as he continued, "Mormons are racists!" I was stunned and alarmed by those words. I did not know what to say, but I wondered how he had arrived at such a distorted view of my religion. I asked him why he was accusing our church of racism. Of course, I was trying my best to defend the church that I loved. He responded, "Mormons do not give blacks the priesthood because they believe black people are cursed." The man then slammed the door. My companion had been standing there quietly during the exchange, and so I asked if the things the man had been saying were true. I was quite shocked when he responded, without hesitation, "Yes, it is true." He was surprised that I was not aware that black people had been extended the opportunity to be ordained to the priesthood only in 1978. I asked him to elaborate because this was something I had *never* heard before. He began to open the scriptures and explain what he understood to be the reasons why the Church had denied the priesthood to the blacks. He tried hard to explain what he referred to as "the curse" that blacks had "inherited from Cain and Ham." The more I listened to his explanation, the more frustrated I became, and the more he used the scriptures to support his views, the angrier I became. I have always loved and respected the scriptures as the word of God, but I refused to believe that they could be used to perpetuate racism and inequality. Something was wrong with my companion's explanation. Something didn't ring true!

After stewing over this for some time, I eventually decided that if what I had been told was true, I had no business representing a racist church. I had been raised in a very racist country, and now, it appeared, I was a member of a racist church. What added more to my anger was that my companion believed the things he was telling me. I knew that he was not a racist, but somewhere at some point he had been taught these racist ideas and he had come to believe them.

As I noted, this was absolutely the first time I had ever heard that blacks had been denied the priesthood by the Church. It would seem that my religious education, consisting of Sunday School and seminary classes, had completely avoided the issue. I must admit, when I entered the mission field, my knowledge of the restored gospel was limited, even though I had been a member of the Church for five years. Of course, being the only member of my family to join the Church did not help the situation. I simply was not taught things in the home. So what I did know about LDS Church history and doctrine I gleaned from various classes here and there.

Listening to my companion give his explanation, I felt that something was very wrong. Despite my fledgling background in the Church, I was beginning to understand and appreciate the role of the infinite Atonement of Jesus Christ and the reality that it covers *all people* (see D&C 18:11; D&C 19:16; 3 Ne. 27:15 and John 12:32). So I wondered why there was an implication that the sins of black Africans and of their forebears were apparently not covered by the Atonement of Jesus Christ. I felt that the practice of denying blacks the priesthood seemed to go contrary to Moses 6:54: “The Son of God hath atoned for original guilt, wherein the sins of the parents cannot be answered upon the heads of the children, for they are whole from the foundation of the world.” In addition to my thoughts on the infinite Atonement of Jesus Christ, I was also reminded of one of the prophecies of Joseph Smith, wherein he stated, “Brothering [brethren] we are laying the foundation of a great work and you know it not, you comprehend it not. The work we are engaged in will grow, spread, and increas[e] untill it will fill the land: it will go from sea to sea it will fill the Rocky Mountains: *all nations* will hear it: it will fill its destiny; It is the work of Almighty God, and he will maintain and defend it.”⁷ The Prophet spoke of “all nations” which, to my mind, implied “all races.” Another comment attributed to the Prophet Joseph Smith (by Wilford Woodruff) states, “It is only a little handful of Priesthood you see here tonight, but this Church will fill North and South America—it

7. Wilford Woodruff, Diary, April 27, 1834, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, cited in Alexander L. Baugh, “1834: Joseph Smith and the Redemption of Zion,” in *Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Kent P. Jackson (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2010), 161; italics added.

will fill the world.”⁸ Did the world that Joseph Smith saw exclude Africa and its people?

Again I asked, why had I not known about this? I had attended church faithfully and participated in seminary. Why had the white members of the Church in South Africa kept this information from me? Was it intentionally not discussed, or was this simply a fact that was inadvertently forgotten? The white members had been good to me. They had helped prepare me to come on a mission. How in the world had I arrived in the mission field a member of the Church for five years at that point and without an awareness of this piece of Church history?

Part of me wondered if the politics of South Africa at that time had discouraged Church leaders and teachers from openly discussing this issue in classrooms and from the pulpit. In the early 1980s, the revolt against apartheid had intensified. International pressure was mounting against the white minority government to change its policy of racial discrimination. The internal revolt was not only a black struggle, but some white people also disagreed with the racial policies of the government. It is quite possible that some white members of the Church in South Africa simply made an individual decision not to discuss this issue with their new black converts. While I do not know their thinking, it is possible that they may have taken a position of silence on the matter simply to ensure that the Church was not perceived as having been in agreement with the country’s discriminatory laws.

Looking back, I realize that, had this policy of denying the priesthood to blacks been brought to my attention when the missionaries were teaching me, I most likely would not have accepted the invitation to be baptised. Perhaps the Lord, knowing my heart at that time, delayed the coming forth of this knowledge because I would not have been able to accept it then. Ultimately, it came at a time when I could resolve it without jeopardising my membership in his church.

Well, when the man at the door first “revealed” this bit of new knowledge to me and when my companion confirmed it, I decided I needed to see my mission president, Ed J. Pinegar. I trusted him, and I was sure that he would help me get back home to South Africa. By the time I decided to reach out to President Pinegar, I had already decided that I was going home. I could not represent a racist church. I called the mission president on the phone and, realising the depth of my concern, he invited my companion and me to the mission office. When we arrived, President

8. Baugh, “1834: Joseph Smith and the Redemption of Zion,” 162; italics added.



President Pinegar, Elder Mdletshe, Sister Pinegar, and Elder Kevin G. Fenn, 1987. Courtesy Khumbulani Mdletshe.

Pinegar had me come to his office. I rehearsed what had happened that day and voiced my decision to return home to South Africa. I frankly told him that I could not be a member of a racist church. I had been raised with racism. As a young boy, I fought it by marching in the streets and, at times, throwing stones at everything we considered to be apartheid structures. Going back home, I had decided, was the best way to show how I felt about racism.

After listening patiently to me, my mission president said, “Elder Mdletshe, it is true that black people were once denied the priesthood by the Church. No one knows the reasons. All I know right now is that all worthy men can be ordained to the priesthood.” I trusted my mission president. He always treated me like his own son. I believed him. Somehow, the Spirit bade me to accept his explanation, and I decided to stay on my mission. That decision was life changing. The answer I received from my mission president that day has sustained for more than three decades. I will ever be grateful to that man of God for his inspired words that day.

That being said, the discussion with my mission president did not completely put an end to the issue of blacks and the priesthood. While I was still on my mission, the topic was raised with some frequency in Church meetings and by my fellow missionaries. After my mission, I heard about it again as a student at BYU–Hawaii and also during my time at BYU in Provo. Whenever the subject was raised, I felt a great deal of anger because on each of these occasions, erroneous reasons

were given as to why blacks were denied the priesthood. No one gave the response of my mission president. Rather, I had to listen to fallacious explanations, ideas ranging from black people having been neutral in the pre-earth life to blacks having inherited a curse from Ham and Cain. I dreaded classes on the Pearl of Great Price and Old Testament because the story of Cain and Ham is contained in those books, and I knew someone would make a comment as to why blacks had been cursed.

Doors Opened for My Education

The importance of education and the possibility of achieving a diploma was a major aspect of my life. In those days, black African missionaries were few in number. I remember that all the North American missionaries spoke about going to college following their mission. The more I heard those plans of going to college after the mission, the more I started to say the same thing. I also started to believe that following my mission, the next step would be college. This belief grew despite my family background. A high school education was all the education my parents could afford; further education was very costly and an impossible wish. But my companions encouraged me and made me believe that I could achieve this lofty goal.

Two months before the end of my mission, I was seated at the back of a chapel waiting for a member missionary fireside to start when Dr. Wayne Shute, a BYU professor and a visiting professor in London, sat down next to me. We talked about a number of things, including my life after the mission. He asked me what kind of a life I was returning to, with South Africa at the brink of civil war. In the mid-1980s the apartheid state had declared a state of emergency, and South Africa was in the news daily for the wrong reasons.

School youths who had taken upon themselves to continue with the struggle for freedom in South Africa were shown being taken to prison or lying dead on the street. It was with this background that Dr. Shute asked a question that was to change my life: "What if you were given an opportunity to attend BYU in America?" I did not have words to respond. Just before the fireside started, he said, "Let me talk to a few people and see what we can do." The following day I received a call from my mission president, Ed J. Pinegar, with information confirming his discussion with Dr. Shute. Shortly thereafter I began to make preparations to attend BYU–Hawaii.

I knew my parents would be in total agreement with this plan, even though the decision meant I was going to be away from them for another

five years after the two-year mission. Seven years later, I returned home with a bachelor's degree from BYU–H and a master's degree from BYU in Provo. Thus I became the first person in the family to graduate from high school and college. Five years later, I completed a PhD at the University of Johannesburg.

Obtaining higher education blessed my life directly, but that blessing has spread to my extended family. My sisters, who had already completed high school but were staying at home because there were no funds to get a post-high school education, were the first people to benefit from education. Once I was settled back in South Africa, I assisted them in getting their qualifications.

Marriage and Employment

Coming home meant that I could continue to move to different stages of life. At that stage, the next big step was marriage. I returned home at the age of twenty-eight and single. To be that age and not married was very old by Latter-day Saint standards. I fell in love while at BYU, but my commitment to return to South Africa proved to be stronger than love. I felt a sense of responsibility to the Church in Africa. Knowing the status of my family, I knew that both the family and the Church needed me to contribute. I could have helped them living abroad, but I felt that my physical presence was important as a future leader of the clan and the family. These feelings made it easy for me to decide to return to South Africa.

On my first Sunday back home, I was at Church when I first laid eyes on the woman that would be my future wife. For me it was love at first sight. Whether it was the same for her, she can speak for herself. I quickly learned that she was investigating the Church with her family. She was the first one to be baptised in her family. Her exemplary life as a Latter-day Saint had such an impact on her family that one by one all her siblings joined the Church. We were both in love, and the Church and its activities provided a base for our relationship to grow and mature. A year later we were ready for marriage. Shortly after our marriage, we started a family and now have four children.

I had returned home after a seven-year absence armed with a quality education, and I was ready to make a contribution. It would appear that at first South Africa was not as ready for me. I found it difficult to re-enter my culture and workplace. For example, I struggled to find employment that matched my qualifications. I resorted to teaching at a private high school. I found our four-room house to be too small, and it did not have electricity and indoor plumbing. With the little money I

had saved while a student at BYU, I installed electricity and built a two-room structure next to our four-room family home.

At the end of 1993, I found employment in Johannesburg at a non-governmental organization as a researcher and program evaluator. This position gave me a lot of satisfaction because I could put to use the skills learned at BYU. In two years, I found myself working for the department of education. It was then that I felt at home. I was deeply involved with educational issues, which meant I was making a contribution towards the advancement of our people. Everything was exciting in government. The country had just held its first democratic elections. Nelson Mandela had been elected as the first black president. Black people were now full citizens in the country of their birth. Government employment was giving us as black people a new sense of hope. A new black middle class was created, and I was in the middle of it. I found myself a beneficiary of this new hope. Opportunities for qualified black people were everywhere. Government employment was not the ultimate career, but it was a good start.

In 1997, while I participated in a stake high council, a fellow council member put a note in front of me which read, "We have an employment opportunity for you in CES." At first I was very reluctant to consider this offer. I was working in government, and I enjoyed participating in the reconstruction of South Africa. I felt that my skills were needed there, and I did not fully understand what the Church Educational System is and does. How could Church employment create excitement and help me to utilise my skills and make the contribution I felt compelled to make? With all these questions presenting a "stupor of thought" in my mind, I turned to my spiritually attuned wife. As we were discussing this opportunity, she recommended that we make this decision a matter of prayer, which we did, and we went to the temple. We were quickly reminded that our talents and skills have been given to us to assist in building of the kingdom of God on earth. Following that temple visit and without hesitation, we accepted the offer to join Church employment. Over the years, that proved to be the best decision we have ever made.

Struggling with Views of the Restrictions on Blacks

When I returned to South Africa in 1992, the LDS Church there was still very much a white church. From time to time, the issue of blacks and the priesthood would come up, and the same reasons would always be given. On one such occasion, a very close friend of mine got up during a Sunday School class and never returned to church. Thankfully, as the 1990s came to an end, the narrative regarding blacks and the priesthood

started to change in South Africa. The numbers of those who continued to hold these outdated and erroneous ideas began to decrease. Also, the political dialog in South Africa was shifting. As blacks began to take leadership roles in public and private institutions as well as in the Church, they were seen as being intelligent and capable. Thus many of the old views began to be perceived as antiquated and naïve.

Unfortunately, the “I do not know why” answer, as helpful as it was coming from my mission president and a few senior Church leaders, did not completely end the question in my mind and heart. That answer seemed insufficient because the restriction seemed to go contrary to the Church’s core teachings on forgiveness and taking the gospel to all nations. If the practice of limiting the blessing of the priesthood and temple did not come to us a revelation, what are some of the factors that may have influenced how it started and lingered for 125 years?⁹

It would appear that the Church, as a social structure, found itself being influenced by folklore and traditions of the day. Practices and policies do not take place in a vacuum. Indeed, the 2013 introduction of the Official Declaration 2 informs us, “Early in its history, Church leaders stopped conferring the priesthood on black males of African descent. Church records offer no clear insights into the origins of this practice.” The fact that there are “no clear insights” has led many Saints to look at social, economic, and political issues of the day to find the origin of the practice. As J. Spencer Fluhman, a BYU assistant professor of Church history and doctrine, noted, “We should expect the processes that brought us the modern Church to be more dynamic, more rooted in human agency, and more drawn out than we sometimes imagine.”¹⁰ As the new Seminary and Institute of Religion Doctrinal Mastery document put it, “It may also help to examine historical questions in the proper historical context by considering the culture and norms of the time period.”¹¹ “The rhetoric of Church leaders was lamentably within the mainstream

9. My 125-year calculation is based on the time between 1852, when Brigham Young first issued the ban, and 1978, when Official Declaration 2 was issued. I am aware that Elijah Abel’s son and grandson were ordained to the priesthood even after Brigham Young had made the statement in 1852. I am also aware that David O. MacKay lifted the ban on Fijians in the 1950s.

10. J. Spencer Fluhman, “1835: Authority, Power, and the ‘Government of the Church of Christ,’” in Holzapfel and Jackson, *Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer*, 205.

11. “Acquiring Spiritual Knowledge,” in *Doctrinal Mastery: Core Document* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2016), 2.

of white American opinion [of the day],” explained John Turner.¹² The policy of denying blacks the priesthood and the temple was instituted in an era when blacks in the United States and South Africa did not enjoy the same economic, social, and political status as their white counterparts. In the U.S., blacks had been enslaved for centuries. Terms such as “nigger” (in the U.S.) and “kaffir” (in South Africa) were commonly used when referring to black people.¹³ Steven C. Harper, a historian in the LDS Church History Department, noted, “As in American culture generally, early Latter-day Saints possessed a variety of opinions, assumptions, and prejudices. Then, as now, these did not always align with the Lord’s view.”¹⁴

The variety of LDS opinions seems to have been influenced by how non-LDS clergy of the day interpreted the Old Testament stories of Ham and Cain (see Gen. 9). Societies that enslaved, discriminated against, and mistreated black Africans willingly embraced “the Biblical Hamitic hypothesis, which viewed blacks as the descendants of Ham who were cursed for life.”¹⁵ Also, any achievement by black Africans was viewed as a result of their interaction with whites. Harper explained, “Enslaving Africans required an explanation, and on both sides of the Atlantic whites searched for and found in the Bible a justification.”¹⁶ Another researcher, Edith R. Sanders, observed, “The Western world, which was growing increasingly rich on the institution of slavery, grew increasingly reluctant to look at the Negro slave and see him as a brother under the skin.”¹⁷ Blacks were thus viewed

12. John G. Turner, “Why Race Is Still a Problem for Mormons,” *New York Times*, August 18, 2012, <http://nyti.ms/NMQZ6G>.

13. Today such terms are considered by many as crass and inappropriate, and if used while committing an act of violence, such terms can constitute a hate crime and add stiffer penalties to the punishment.

14. Steven C. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants: A Guided Tour through Modern Revelation* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008), 521–22.

15. “White Supremacy,” in *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (Farmington Hills, Mich.: Macmillan Reference USA, 2008), 9:85, available online at Encyclopaedia.com, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/united-states-and-canada/us-history/white-supremacy>; Stirling Adams, review of *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, by David M. Goldenberg, and *Noah’s Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery*, by Stephen R. Haynes, *BYU Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 157–69.

16. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants*, 521.

17. Edith R. Sanders, “The Hamitic Hypothesis: Its Origin and Functions in Time Perspective,” *Journal of African History* 10, no. 4 (1969): 524.

as commodities, rather than as human beings. This common nineteenth-century view influenced Christian exegesis of people of various races and certainly made its way into the thinking of some Latter-day Saints; the Church was restored in the very era in which such beliefs were commonplace. The nagging question is, then, to what extent did these prevailing ideas contribute to the priesthood ban on the people of African descent?

The interpretation that Ham and Cain were cursed may have influenced how some Latter-day Saints have understood passages of LDS scripture such as Moses 7:7–22 and Abraham 1:21. “LDS scriptures were used to justify race-based slavery” and other racist attitudes, noted Harper.¹⁸ He observed that “the book of Abraham does not mention the race of the Canaanites, but readers have assumed a link between Enoch’s prophecy in the book of Moses about Canaanites acquiring black skin and Abraham’s description that Pharaoh could not have the priesthood as ‘a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth.’”¹⁹

In the middle of the twentieth century, the Hamitic hypothesis began to lose its appeal; the philosophes of the Enlightenment were not satisfied with biblical explanations of differences between races and called for a scientific explanation for the origin of the race. What was puzzling to many scholars of the day was that nowhere in Genesis is the curse on Ham and his descendants associated with race. In the opinion of one scholar, this myth was kept alive by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century clergy because they “tried to keep their hold on the laity by discrediting the savants [men of the Enlightenment] as infidels.”²⁰

The ban on priesthood for blacks continued in the Church. In 1940, the First Presidency appointed a subcommittee to investigate “whether or not one drop of negro blood deprives a man of the right to receive the priesthood.”²¹ For the next couple of decades in South Africa, whites were expected to “trace their genealogies outside Africa before they

18. Harper, *Making Sense of Doctrine and Covenants*, 521.

19. Harper, *Making Sense of Doctrine and Covenants*, 523.

20. Sanders, “Hamitic Hypothesis,” 524.

21. Minutes, January 25, 1940, in Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, Excerpts from the Weekly Council Meetings Dealing with the Rights of African Americans in the Church, 1849–1940, p. 1, George Albert Smith Papers, George A. Smith Family Papers, Special Collections, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

could be ordained.”²² Many theories arose implying that blacks were less valiant in the premortal life as justification for the restriction.

It was at this time that the “We do not know” explanation began to be the only plausible one being used by those who were questioning this practice in the Church. President David O. McKay began to question this practice. One consideration was that as far back as 1946, blacks in West Africa were requesting baptism into the Church. David O. McKay and his counsellors in the First Presidency were concerned for the would-be Latter-day Saints in Africa but were uncertain how they should proceed. Richard Turley, an LDS Church Historian, reported that their discussion “lasted years as they considered the universality of the gospel message and the constraints placed upon them by the restrictions regarding priesthood and temple ordinances for the people of black African descent.”²³ In 1949, the First Presidency issued a statement that quoted Wilford Woodruff as having said, “The day will come when all that race will be redeemed and possess all the blessings which we now have.”²⁴ One cannot ignore Woodruff’s statement or the statement issued by the 1954 special committee of the Twelve, which concluded that “the priesthood ban had no clear basis in scripture but that Church members were not prepared for change.”²⁵ In 1969, the First Presidency wrote to priesthood leaders all over the world, expressing their belief that the reasons for the ban were “known to God, but which He has not made fully known to man.”²⁶ These developments paved the way for the Lord to reveal to President Spencer W. Kimball the change

22. Evan P. Wright, *A History of the South African Mission, Period III, 1944–1970* (n.p., ca. 1987) 419–20, copy at Church History Library, cited in Richard E. Turley Jr. and Jeffrey G. Cannon, “A Faithful Band: Moses Mahlangu and the First Soweto Saints,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* vol. 55, no. 1 (2016): 16.

23. Turley and Cannon, “Faithful Band,” 22.

24. Wilford Woodruff, cited in Statement of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August 17, 1949, Church History Library; and in *Neither White nor Black: Mormon Scholars Confront the Race Issue in a Universal Church*, ed. Lester E. Bush Jr. and Armand L. Mauss (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1984), 221, available online at <http://signaturebookslibrary.org/neither-white-nor-black-appendix/>.

25. Terryl L. Givens and Phillip L. Barlow, *The Oxford Handbook of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 373.

26. Statement of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, August 17, 1949.

that was reported as Official Declaration 2 in June 1978.²⁷ It extended the opportunity for the ordination to the priesthood to all worthy male members of the Church and extended an invitation for all worthy men and women to receive temple endowments and participate in sealings.

It should be pointed out that there is ample evidence to suggest that the LDS Church in the early 1800s did not support slavery, racism, and inequality as then practiced by a significant segment of the Christian population in the United States. For example, as W. Paul Reeve, a Mormon historian at the University of Utah, observed, “Black Saints were among the first to arrive in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 and have been a part of the Mormon experience from its beginnings. The first documented black person to join this American-born faith was Black Pete, a former slave who was baptized in 1830, when the fledgling movement was less than a year old. Other blacks trickled in over the course of the nineteenth century and are woven into the Mormon story. At least two men were ordained to the faith’s highest priesthood in its first two decades.”²⁸ Mormons recognised the precarious status of blacks in the U.S.; articles published in 1833 in the *Evening and the Morning Star* cautioned “free people of color” about the danger of immigrating to Missouri, and the articles ignited a powder keg between the Saints and slave-holding Missourians. Missourians “interpreted the passage as clear evidence that the Mormons were encouraging and facilitating the settling of free blacks in Jackson County; Phelps [the author] immediately protested that his intent was actually to discourage that very thing.”²⁹ But a few blacks were already a part of the LDS population and enjoyed freedom in their midst. Harper confirmed this when he noted that the few free blacks in the Church were well received. Elijah Abel, a black priesthood holder in the early days of Church, served multiple missions and remained faithful until his death.³⁰

27. See Edward L. Kimball, “Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on Priesthood,” *BYU Studies* 47, no. 2 (2008): 4–78.

28. W. Paul Reeve, “Are There Black Mormons?” Oxford University Press blog, July 14, 2012, <http://blog.oup.com/2015/07/history-black-mormonism/>.

29. T. Ward Frampton, “‘Some Savage Tribe’: Race, Legal Violence, and the Mormon War of 1838,” *Journal of Mormon History* 40, no. 1 (2014): 184; “Free People of Color,” and “The Elders Stationed in Zion to the Churches Abroad, in Love, Greeting,” *Evening and the Morning Star*, 2 (July 1833): 109, 110–11; Grant Underwood, “1833: Expulsion from Zion,” in Holzapfel and Jackson, *Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer*, 139.

30. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants*, 522.

In summary, historians warn that one cannot tell the Mormon racial story outside of the American racial story. The American story is “a chronicle fraught with cautionary tales regarding whiteness, religious freedom, and racial genesis.”³¹ While it was certainly not the practice of members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to abuse blacks as others had done, nevertheless the Church continued to state that the time had not yet come to extend priesthood to all worthy male members and they needed to wait on the Lord to reveal his will. Eventually, questions started to emerge within the Church as to why Africans were being denied priesthood and why the Lord was treating Africans differently from his other children. Theories about blacks having been fence-sitters or lukewarm in the pre-earth life were being questioned by some inside the Church. It appeared that “‘a contradictory and confusing legacy of racist religious folklore’ had grown up among the Saints to explain banning blacks from the priesthood.”³²

On December 6, 2013, the Church issued a landmark document titled “Race and the Priesthood.”³³ The history of the priesthood ban is discussed in this document, and the Church confirmed that it “disavows the theories advanced in the past” and it further declared that “Church leaders today unequivocally condemn all racism, past and present, in any form.”

Finding My Way despite Struggles

As a young man, I had received my patriarchal blessing. It states that there are many souls in my home country who are seeking for the truth and that I had been chosen by the Lord to bear his name. I looked forward to a day when this blessing was to come to pass. With the CES position, I have seen the fulfilment of this prophetic blessing. Six years after joining CES, I was asked to be the area director. In that assignment, I found myself standing in many congregations in those thirty countries over which I supervised the Church educational program and testifying of the message of the restored gospel. I found myself standing beside

31. W. Paul Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color: Race and the Mormon Struggle for Whiteness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 3.

32. Harper, *Making Sense of the Doctrine and Covenants*, 523–24. For a more detailed discussion of the development of this religious folklore, see Reeve, *Religion of a Different Color*, 140–214.

33. “Race and the Priesthood,” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng>.

priesthood leaders and General Authorities as new countries were opened for the preaching of the gospel. For eleven years, I served two stake presidents as a counsellor. We built a new stake in a predominantly black location. I also served two mission presidents as counsellor, and again I found myself in the middle of assisting in the building of the kingdom. Slowly the prophetic words of a patriarch were being fulfilled before my very own eyes.

To have been born in South Africa in the 1960s and to have lived the first thirty years of my life under the yoke of apartheid taught me to have little tolerance

for white people. As a young man, I participated in many discussions on how to drive the whites to the ocean. Joining the Church changed that hatred. As a member of the Church, I met white people who acted differently than those I met in larger South African society. The white Church members were not perfect, but they were different. Clearly the Holy Ghost played its role in teaching me the truth.

It is unfortunate that I first learned that blacks had been denied the priesthood when I was a missionary on the streets of London, rather than in an official church or a family setting. However, my children have been blessed to be taught about this issue in the safe atmosphere of our home. I recall that one day, one of our children asked, “Why was a revelation needed when there was no revelation that started the practice of denying the priesthood to blacks?” That was a fair question when we consider plural marriage in the Church. It was practiced because God revealed it to Joseph Smith (see D&C 132). It was discontinued through another revelation (see Official Declaration 1). Many of my LDS Institute students have asked a similar question about the restrictions on blacks. The answer I have always given is that a revelation was needed to enlighten Church members regarding this doctrine and to assist local Church leaders who needed a doctrinal tool to teach those who would



Elder Mdlletshe as a member of the Third Quorum of the Seventy, 2014. Courtesy Khumbulani Mdlletshe.

question or reject the change in policy. We know that some members left the Church when this revelation was received. Yet this revelation was needed as the Church matured in order that it might reach out to all people of the world, offering them the restored gospel.

Apartheid South Africa didn't open opportunities for me to have the education that was going to bless my future family and my siblings. The Church did. There were no resources in my family to provide those opportunities. Joining the Church and being around high-achieving individuals raised my sights to realise my potential. Later, as a highly qualified black person, I could have walked into any job, but Church employment gave me more satisfaction and proved to be the only way I could fulfil the prophesy of my patriarchal blessing. I learned to move forward despite my struggles with the history of restrictions on blacks in the Church.

Confirmation: My Experience with President Monson

In April 2014, I attended my first general leadership conference for General Authorities and Area Seventies. I was sustained at that time as a member of the Third Quorum of the Seventy. As new members of the Seventies quorums, our seats were reserved in the second row of the auditorium. I was seated on the aisle, and next to me were Elders Makasi and Chatora, who were also newly called Area Seventies from Africa. President Thomas S. Monson spoke to us. He concluded his remarks and immediately started to walk towards the exit. As a sign of respect to our President, we all stood and watched as he walked away. Just as he was about to leave the room, it appeared that he had forgotten something. He turned and started to walk back to where we were standing. The room remained quiet. We could tell that what was happening had not been planned. There was great anticipation in the room. He came straight to where we were standing. President Monson is not a small man. He towered over us. He came and stood where we were and then rested his arms on all three of us, like a coach giving some last instructions to his team. The room remained dead quiet. Of course everyone wanted to hear what the prophet would tell these new members of the Seventy. But the message was for us. He whispered, "Brethren, I would like to tell you that I worked with the man who gave the priesthood to all men." He paused for a moment and then looked at our heads and said, "I love your haircuts." As he walked away, you could hear a pin drop. Many came up to us later and wanted to know what the Prophet had whispered in our ears.

As President Monson walked away, we looked at each other and nodded in approval. I was very impressed! A prophet of the Lord had taken time to come and whisper a profound message in our ears. As Seventies, we are called and set apart to be witnesses (see D&C 124:34). Now we would be even stronger witnesses of the coming forth of Official Declaration 2. Any concerns or questions that any one of us might have had regarding race and the priesthood were no longer relevant. They were now resolved.

In 2018, the Church will celebrate the forty-year anniversary of Official Declaration 2. At that time, the Church in Africa will have close to half a million members, three African General Authorities,³⁴ many African Area Seventies and mission presidents, seven temples (operating or announced), and almost thirty missions. Great and sacred things have happened on the continent of Africa since and because of the 1978 revelation on the priesthood.

No doubt, not every member or truth seeker will be as fortunate as I was to have had a mission president, in my hour of need, who could give me a reason to believe when no clear answers were readily apparent. Additionally, most will not have an opportunity as I did to have a modern-day prophet whisper words of assurance in their ears regarding the reality of what happened in June 1978. Perhaps President Dieter F. Uchtdorf was speaking to those who struggled with this issue when he said in his October 2013 General Conference talk:

Some struggle with unanswered questions about things that have been done or said in the past. We openly acknowledge that in nearly 200 years of Church history—along with an uninterrupted line of inspired, honourable, and divine events—there have been some things said and done that could cause people to question.

Sometimes questions arise because we simply don't have all the information and we just need a bit more patience. When the entire truth is eventually known, things that didn't make sense to us before will be resolved to our satisfaction.³⁵

I am a living witness of this.

Sometimes there are those who wonder why it took 125 years for the priesthood ban to be removed. The uncovering of truth sometimes is like peeling an onion; it has many layers. Those seeking truth might

34. Edward Dube, Christoffel Golden, and Joseph W. Sitati.

35. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Come, Join with Us," *Ensign* 43 (November 2013): 22.

feel that they are running through a maze that twists and turns with no end. Again, President Utchdorf provided an answer as to how we can each uncover the truth when he said, “But eventually all of our questions will be answered. All of our doubts will be replaced by certainty. And that is because there is one source of truth that is complete, correct, and incorruptible. That source is our infinitely wise and all-knowing Heavenly Father. He knows truth as it was, as it is, and as it yet will be. ‘He comprehended all things, . . . and he is above all things, . . . and all things are by him, and of him.’”³⁶ My journey in trying to understand the truth behind the priesthood ban and the eventual coming forth of Official Declaration 2 took too many turns and twists. But I did finally find the truth. It came through God’s earthly representatives, first while I sat across the desk from my mission president and then later when the modern-day prophet whispered in my ear. Elder Neal A. Maxwell summarized well the principle I long sought to uncover when he said, “The answers to the *why* questions are obtainable only by revelations given by God the Creator.”³⁷

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36. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “What Is Truth?” Broadcast (PD50045368 000), 2013, citing Doctrine and Covenants 88:6, 41, available online at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, <https://www.lds.org/broadcasts/article/ces-devotionals/2013/01/what-is-truth?lang=eng>.

37. Neal A. Maxwell, “Our Creator’s Cosmos,” *Religious Educator* 3, no. 2 (2002): 1–17.

The Online Journal of George Q. Cannon

Richard Dilworth Rust

A long-anticipated project is coming to completion. Much of the journal of George Q. Cannon, covering the last half of the nineteenth century, is now freely available online at www.churchhistorianspress.org/george-q-cannon/, and the remainder of the journal will soon be available. As with other Church Historian's Press publications, meticulous attention has been paid to produce an accurate and reliable transcript.¹ It has been prepared largely according to the editorial procedures developed by the Joseph Smith Papers Project.

Next to Brigham Young, George Q. Cannon was arguably the best-known Latter-day Saint in the last half of the nineteenth century. His remarkable journal, contained in fifty-one physical volumes, is one of the most insightful and detailed records in Mormon history. His record spans five decades, a period in which he served as an editor and publisher, a businessman, an educator, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, a territorial delegate in Congress, and a counselor in the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The vast majority of Cannon's journal has never been publicly available before.² The online publication of Cannon's journal includes

1. The Church History Department has long-standing policies that govern the release or publication of sacred, private, or confidential information. In publishing Cannon's journal, directors of The Church Historian's Press have sought to honor these principles while also making as much information as possible available to the public and indicating clearly any omissions.

2. Exceptions are Cannon excerpts from his Hawaiian mission journals published in George Q. Cannon, *My First Mission* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile

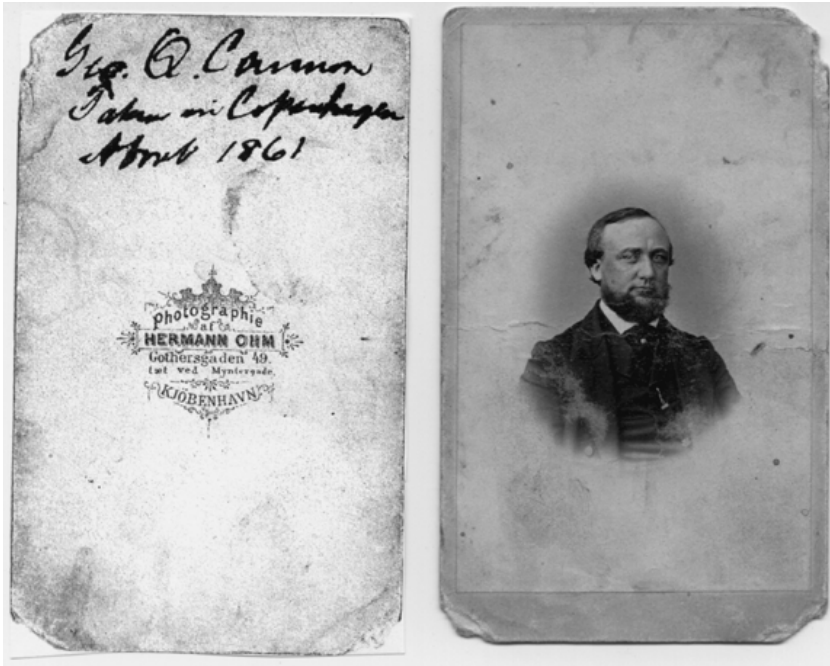
roughly 2.5 million words and allows for new insight and understanding into the Mormon past. Cannon's biographer, Davis Bitton, avers that Cannon's journals are "a magnificent personal record that, in my estimation, ranks alongside Samuel Pepys's diary or, in the context of Mormon diary-keeping, Wilford Woodruff's."³

Cannon's broad interests, extensive connections with people both inside and outside of the Latter-day Saint faith, and cogent observations will also make his journal of particular interest to scholars and students of western U.S. history and U.S. political history. With journal entries covering the mundane to the miraculous, the interactions of his large family to the dynamics of Congress, and his private religious practices to his leadership in a variety of ecclesiastical settings, Cannon's record deserves deep study.

Born in Liverpool, England, in 1827, Cannon was baptized a Latter-day Saint in 1840 and then emigrated with his family to the United States, arriving in Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1843. Until his death in 1901, Cannon remained a dedicated Latter-day Saint, traveling widely as a missionary, including as a "gold missionary" in Gold Rush California, where his earnings went to the Church, as a proselytizing missionary in the Sandwich Islands for four years, and as president of the European Mission for an additional four. Following his calling as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 1860, Cannon was a member of the Church's highest councils for the next four decades, most of that time as a counselor to Church presidents Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, and Lorenzo Snow. He was deeply involved in writing and publishing throughout his adult life, composing books, editing newspapers and magazines, and running a publishing company and bookstore.

Instructor Office, 1879); the Joseph J. Cannon series in the *Instructor* from June 1944 to September 1945; and, more recently, Michael N. Landon, ed., *The Journals of George Q. Cannon: To California in '49* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999); and Chad M. Orton, ed., *The Journals of George Q. Cannon: Hawaiian Mission, 1850–1854* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2014). In addition, the First Presidency has granted permission to cite the Cannon journal in rare instances: the BYU centennial history, Ernest L. Wilkinson, ed., *Brigham Young University: The First One Hundred Years*, 4 vols. (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1975–76); and Davis Bitton, *George Q. Cannon: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), which relied on a family transcript and was proofread against the originals in the possession of the First Presidency.

3. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, xii.



George Q. Cannon. This portrait is in a frame on which is handwritten “Geo. Q. Cannon Taken in Copenhagen About 1861,” with the stamp of the photographer as “Photographie af Hermann Ohm Gøthersgade 49. tæt ved Myntergade. Kjøbenhavn.” Courtesy Cannon Family.

Orphaned as a teenager, Cannon apprenticed in a print shop and was largely self-taught. He had a gift of working with words and considered writing and record keeping to be part of his divine calling. Writing initially in a beautiful longhand, Cannon later employed secretaries to help him keep the journal, and extensive portions of it were typed rather than written by hand. The journal entries became much more detailed over time as Cannon increasingly dictated entries to secretaries.

The period from 1849 to 1901 covered in the journal allows readers to see wide-sweeping change not only in the Church but also in politics, technology, travel, and other areas. For instance, the journal mentions arduous travel by team or horseback in the early period and ends at the turn of the century with rapid travel by rail. Topics found in the journal include Cannon’s many travels in the United States and Europe; his counsel to and relationships with his family, which consisted of six wives and forty-three children; his meetings with political leaders, including

U.S. president Abraham Lincoln, congressmen, and senators promoting Utah statehood and battling anti-Mormon legislation; his participation in founding and leading schools and universities; his involvement with temple construction; his close relationships with Church leaders and his counsel to Church members; his financial dealings; his life in prison after being arrested for practicing plural marriage; and his deep faith and defense of the Church to which he was determinedly devoted. George Q. Cannon's journal continues until April 7, 1901, just five days before his death on April 12, 1901.

George Q. Cannon kept his journal during a period when The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was establishing itself in the western United States and beginning to expand in other areas of the world. Now that the journal is available online, readers have unprecedented access to the thoughts and insights of this key figure as well as a window into how senior Church leaders governed the Church and led its growth.

Purposes and Value of George Q. Cannon's Journal

As far as is known, George Q. Cannon began keeping a journal during the last three months of 1849 while he was on a gold mission to California, and then he resumed writing it in September 1850 just prior to his leaving for a mission to Hawaii. Cannon later selected from the Hawaiian portion some faith-promoting experiences to share with the youth of the Church in the small book *My First Mission*.

On May 20, 1855, prior to going to California on assignment, George Q. Cannon was blessed by President Brigham Young that, in Cannon's words, "I should be blessed in writing and publishing, and when I should take up the pen to write I should be blessed with wisdom and the Lord would inspire me with thoughts and ideas that what I should write and publish should be acceptable to the people of God. To open my mouth and lift up my voice and not fear for I should be borne off victorious" (May 20, 1855).

This remarkable blessing proved true throughout the rest of Cannon's life as an editor, a publisher, a writer of columns for *The Juvenile Instructor*, a writer of letters to editors of newspapers in major cities, and an indispensable aid in helping write Church documents.

In time, Cannon saw his ongoing journal as serving various purposes, one of which was allowing him to be prepared to confirm to others specific details of what his actions were and when they occurred. Brigham Young's counsel illustrates this: "President Young . . . said that I

ought to be careful about my movements in Washington—that I would be watched and everything I did scrutinized and I ought to keep a journal of my movements that I could prove where I was at any time. If any thing should occur to Gen. Grant he (the President) would be accused of having prompted its commission, and I would probably be charged with having had it done” (January 4, 1873).

In a crucial conflict of understanding between James S. Clarkson and George Q. Cannon, Cannon “pulled out his secret weapon—his journal,” as Davis Bitton put it, and “demonstrated that Clarkson had been fully informed” about a certain contract.⁴

Referring to the value of preserving his journal, Cannon wrote: “I make this record in my journal, so that it will refresh my memory in case the question ever comes up” (August 12, 1898). Again on September 18, 1898, he noted: “I mention this in my journal, because it may be referred to some time in the future, and a little record of this will not do any harm.”

By George Q. Cannon’s careful preservation of his various physical journals and his recognition that what he called “my journal” “may be referred to some time in the future,” it is evident that Cannon expected others, especially his posterity, to have access to his journal.

While Cannon’s life story has been told well by Davis Bitton in *George Q. Cannon: A Biography*, carefully prepared online transcriptions of Cannon’s journal give readers a window into Cannon’s immediate world. They allow us unfiltered access to Cannon’s thoughts and actions recorded essentially when they occurred. They give us insight into the life of a remarkable man. As Richard E. Turley Jr. put it:

George Q. Cannon was a very literate man, and he wrote an excellent journal. In my opinion, the George Q. Cannon journals are one of the best sets of journals that we have for the latter part of the nineteenth century. He was in a position to know a great deal about the history of

4. Bitton, *George Q. Cannon*, 350–51. In his journal for September 25, 1894, Cannon wrote, “I then read an interview I had with General Clarkson in the presence of my son Frank and Bishop Clawson, at which I had stated that we were going into a contract with this firm and the fee that was asked for himself and his engineers and the amount for his expenses. I read also the proceedings of the next day, showing that they had been fully informed of our intention to contract with Purbeck. . . . After the reading of my journal we resumed conversation, and I endeavored to set forth our conduct in a light to show that we had not intended in any manner to withhold from himself and Col. Trumbo all that they were entitled to.”

the church during that time period; he lived much of it; and he wrote in elegant detail about his experiences. I believe the journal will appeal to scholars because it has information about important events in the Church's history, but it will also appeal to individual members because of the subjects that he discusses.⁵

As revealed in his journal, George Q. Cannon was a man of faith. In his journal for May 20, 1855, Cannon said that Brigham Young blessed him and his wife Elizabeth that “we should receive all that were in reserve for the most faithful.” His journal shows him also to have been a devoted husband and father, a loyal Latter-day Saint, a totally honest person, an obedient servant, a patriot, an entrepreneur, a witness of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and a committed follower of Joseph Smith and his successors.

Provenance and Publication History

In the general introduction to the first printed volume, *The Journals of George Q. Cannon: To California in '49*, Richard E. Turley Jr. recounts this about the provenance of the Cannon journals:

George Q. Cannon's journals came into Church possession through at least three unrelated accessions. On an unknown date, the Church Historian's Office, predecessor of the current Church Historical Department, obtained the three earliest volumes, which cover parts of 1849 through 1854. In October 1932, George's son Sylvester Q. Cannon, himself a prominent Church leader, gave thirty-seven volumes of his father's journals to the First Presidency of the Church. In the summer of 1978, the Church Historical Department acquired eight volumes covering parts of 1861 through 1870 from Roger Willard Cannon, son of Willard Telle Cannon, another of George's sons.⁶

The First Presidency transferred the journals in their possession to the Church History Department in late 2008. One journal covering Cannon's return to Hawaii in 1900 is at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and Cannon's daybook which he kept while in the penitentiary from September to December 1888 is at Colorado College in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

5. Richard E. Turley Jr., video-recorded conversation, October 16, 2015, AV 4320, George Q. Cannon Journals project footage, 2015, Church History Library.

6. Richard E. Turley Jr., “General Introduction,” in *The Journals of George Q. Cannon: To California in '49*, ed. Michael N. Landon (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999), xiv–xv.

The transcription of George Q. Cannon's journal had its beginnings in the mid-twentieth century when Adrian W. Cannon, a grandson of George Q. Cannon, began research for a biography of his ancestor. First gaining permission from President George Albert Smith to access the journals, Adrian worked for decades, taking extensive notes and eventually transcribing most of the volumes, sometimes with the help of other family members. Adrian's transcript was incomplete, both because he sometimes summarized and paraphrased rather than taking down an exact transcription, and because he omitted portions as a conscious editorial decision.

Before he died in 1991, Adrian agreed to donate his transcripts to the Historical Department (now called the Church History Department) of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which would continue the project and eventually publish George Q. Cannon's journal.

In fulfillment of the agreement with Adrian Cannon, staff members of the Church History Department transcribed and annotated two volumes of Cannon's journal: *The Journals of George Q. Cannon: To California in '49* and *The Journals of George Q. Cannon: Hawaiian Mission, 1850-1854* with Adrian W. Cannon and Richard E. Turley Jr. as general editors of the first volume and Richard E. Turley Jr. as general editor of the second and Michael N. Landon and Chad M. Orton as the respective volume editors. The texts of these journals along with their annotations are now available at The Church Historian's Press website as part of the online George Q. Cannon journal.

In 2010, a decision was reached to publish the journals more rapidly and efficiently by creating accurate transcripts without extensive annotations. As a full-time missionary in the Church History Department, I was engaged beginning in September 2012 to do the final verification of transcriptions and to edit the overall Cannon journal according to accepted editorial standards. Prior to my retiring from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, I edited Washington Irving's *Astoria* and James Fenimore Cooper's *The Pathfinder* from the available original manuscripts, was a general editor of the thirty-volume Complete Works of Washington Irving, and was a consultant for the National Endowment for the Humanities on several major editorial projects.

Value of the Cannon Journal Being Online

There are some remarkable advantages in having the George Q. Cannon journal published online. For instance, it can be searched by word or phrase. Detailed lists of events can be found at the beginning of the first month of each year, with each item linked directly to the specific journal entries.

It is intended that The Journal of George Q. Cannon website will be open to enhancement. While the journal entries starting in 1855 are not annotated, this annotation may be done in the future. Subsequent articles, photographs, and the like regarding Cannon and his world can also be linked to the main journal website.

Various Topics Treated by George Q. Cannon in His Journal

While the knowledge and faith of George Q. Cannon are evident in his published works and discourses, his journal more intimately reveals meaningful characteristics of his life, thoughts, and accomplishments. Some of these are evidenced in the following selections from his journal.

George Q. Cannon acknowledged that the Lord brought him out of obscurity to be an instrument in the Lord's hands to accomplish great things.

When I look back at my life it seems very marvelous what the Lord has done for me. From the deepest obscurity, from the midst of a population which teems in my native place, I have been brought forward until to-day I am the most widely-advertised man in many respects in the United States. (January 11, 1882)

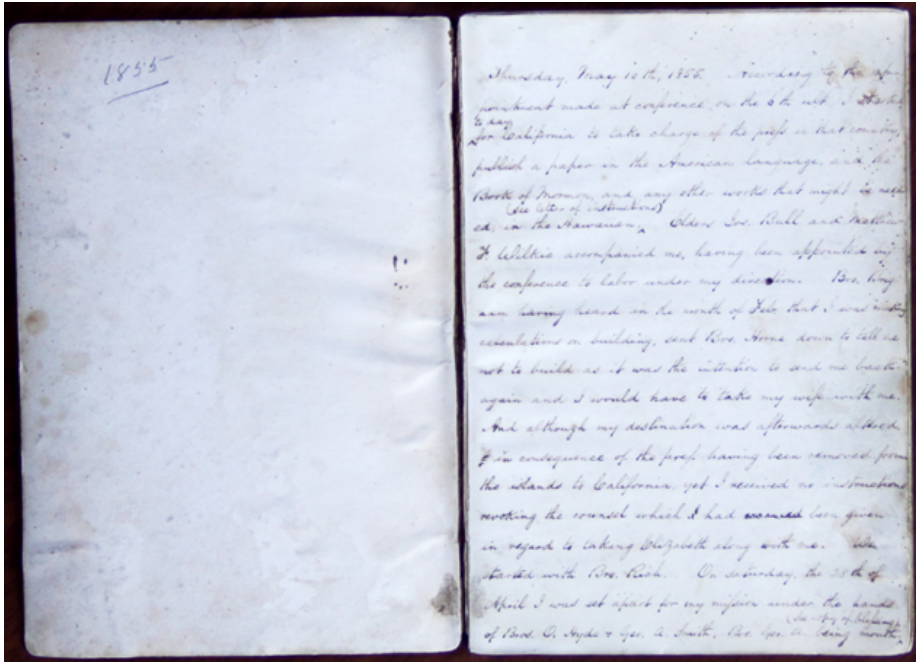
My life, I feel, has been a very remarkable one; and in looking back, I can visibly perceive the hand of God and His overruling providence in my preservation, in my guidance and in the shaping of my destiny. I feel to dedicate myself anew to Him and to His service. (January 11, 1887)

I had never seen anything on the stage that appeared to me more interesting than my own life, and it had been, notwithstanding my trials and sorrows, a singularly happy one. The Lord has brought me out of obscurity and my father's house, and I wonder at his goodness. (January 11, 1894)

The Lord's hand has been over my father's family in a remarkable manner. We were left orphans in a strange land, foreigners by birth, and in some respects almost friendless, and the property that my father had soon passed away through mobocracy, etc; yet the Lord has brought us forth and given us a name and a place among the people of God, that to me appears very wonderful. (September 18, 1892)

Cannon willingly and obediently served in the Church and in government. In respect to missionary service, he recorded:

I was the first to preach the Gospel in that [the Hawaiian] language and was the means of bringing many thousands of people to the knowledge



A spread from George Q. Cannon's journal, May 10, 1855. Courtesy Church History Library.

of the truth. I also translated the Book of Mormon into the Hawaiian language. I have always felt very thankful to the Lord for impressing me to do what I did. (November 22, 1900)

All my life I have gone on missions and returned from them just as directed by my brethren, and I can truthfully say I have always been willing. I feel the same about my mission on the earth. I wish to remain and do a good work; but whenever the Lord shall be satisfied, I hope to be willing and content to go hence. (October 31, 1886)

From an early age, George Q. Cannon knew he would sometime serve in government.

He informed me that I had been elected . . . U. S. Senator for the State of Deseret. . . . When a boy, blessings have been pronounced upon my head that have led me to look forward to a time when, if faithful to the Truth, I should occupy responsible positions in connection with government and have wisdom in that direction. (May 31, 1862)

As a representative from the Territory of Utah striving to bring about Utah statehood, Cannon courageously and calmly faced opposition. He observed:

The modern politician is a moral coward. He has not the courage to defend a weak, unpopular side, especially if the question of "Mormonism" be involved. They are as afraid of being suspected of having any sympathy with that, as they would be of the contagion of small-pox. (January 28, 1873)

Cannon's feelings toward enemies were not of anger but rather of pity.

My feelings . . . were those of profound pity for these people who were fighting against us. A few years more and they would disappear from the scene and their mortal careers would be ended, and in view of the punishment that awaited them for fighting against the work of God we could afford to pity them. I had no feelings of revenge or anger or vindictiveness towards any in my heart. (September 20, 1882)

In time, though, George Q. Cannon was honored by many senators and representatives.

What a change has taken place! Senators and Representatives esteeming it an honor, according to their own statements, to be in the company of a delegation from Utah headed by a "Mormon" Apostle! I could contrast the present with the past, for my history was closely identified with the past. (May 10, 1897)

Cannon's life was marked by dedication and faithfulness.

My determination is, by the help of the Lord, to go forth and magnify my calling and be a faithful shepherd and watchman in the midst of the Saints and on the walls of Zion, regardless of consequences to myself. (April 10, 1863)

It is only a few days ago that, in communing with the Lord, his Spirit rested down upon me, and I was led to dedicate myself, my wives, my sons and my daughters and my substance with great fervor to Him and his service, and I desired him to use me as he thought best. It is a great honor to work in any capacity for the Lord. (August 10, 1885)

I desire most earnestly to know the will of the Lord and to do it. If it be to go to prison, I feel quite resigned and desire to have the same pleasure in doing so that I have always had in taking missions. If it should not be His will for me to go to prison I cry unto Him from the depths of my soul that it may not endanger any of His servants, or throw any discredit upon His work. (March 4, 1886)

George Q. Cannon's trust in the Lord can be a significant example for readers of his journal today.

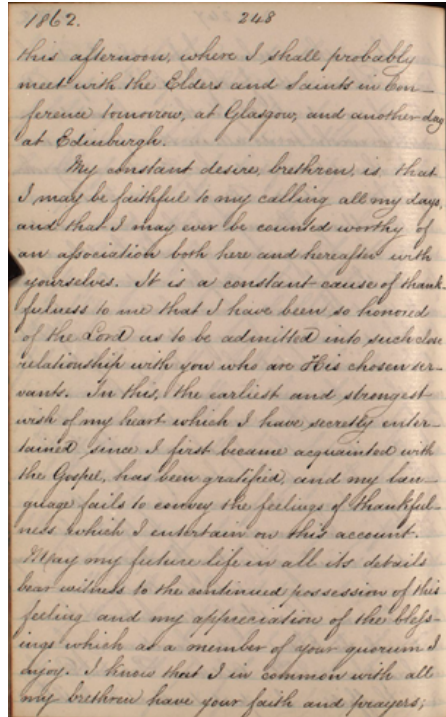
It is a constant cause of thankfulness to me that I have been so honored of the Lord as to be admitted into such close relationship with you [members of the Quorum of the Twelve] who are His chosen servants. . . . In and of myself I feel very weak, but if I am faithful and humble I know that the Lord can increase my strength and my power to do good. (December 13, 1862)

I called upon him [God] mightily in prayer to help me. This is a great comfort to me. I am here [in Washington as a representative of the Territory of Utah] without a man who is in sympathy with me; but I have a Friend more powerful than they all. In this I rejoice.

I feel there are angels with me, and as one of old said they that are for us are more than they who are against us. When I pray I feel comforted and filled with joy. Of myself I feel very weak; but in my Lord I feel strong. (December 1, 1873)

It is a blessed thing to know that the Lord hears and answers prayer when offered aright. This has been my comfort and support here. I have never applied to him in vain. No matter how thick the clouds of darkness have been, or how much Satan and his servants have raged, the Lord has been my rock of refuge. He has given me peace, joy and happiness and my life has been a great pleasure to me. (June 16, 1880)

O, Lord, is my cry, help me to bear all things which thou seest proper to require me to pass through; that I may never tremble or shrink; but that in patience and long-suffering I may submit to the abuse and wrath of the wicked. May all this be overruled for my salvation and thy glory. I know that it is thee against whom the shafts are leveled, it



A page from George Q. Cannon's journal, December 13, 1862. Courtesy Church History Library.



George Q. Cannon, circa 1860. Courtesy Cannon Family.

is against thy work the anger of the wicked is directed. Thou hast sustained and delivered me in times past; thou hast provided a way of escape for me and hast given me victory over my enemies. The pits they have dug for my destruction, the snares they have spread for my feet, thou hast not permitted me to fall or be led into. And I will trust thee now, for I know thou wilt save me. I am thankful that I am accounted worthy to be thy servant and to be called to go through these trials. (January 10, 1882)

Of interest are George Q. Cannon's assessments of leaders such as Brigham Young and Abraham Lincoln.

[Brigham Young] was in my eyes as perfect a man as I ever knew. I never desired to see his faults; I closed my eyes to them. To me he was a prophet of God, the head of the dispensation on the earth, holding the keys under the prophet Joseph, and in my mind there clustered about him, holding this position, everything holy and sacred and to be revered. (January 17, 1878)

On Friday, 13th went in company with Hon. John M. Bernhisel and Senator Hooper and Elders C. W. West and Brigham Young, Jun^r, to pay our respects to President Lincoln. The President has a plain, but shrewd and rather pleasant face. He is very tall, probably 6 feet 4 inches high, and is rather awkwardly built, heightened by his want of flesh. He looks much better than I expected he would do from my knowledge of the cares and labors of his position, and is quite humorous, scarcely permitting a visit to pass without uttering some joke. He received us very kindly and without formality. (June 13, 1862)

George Q. Cannon cared deeply about his family and about children in general.

If I could have my wish, nothing would please me better than to have my brothers and sisters live near to myself. But in all these matters I

[k]now that the Lord overruleth for the best, and if we could be in his hands as clay in the hands of the potter, he will fashion us into vessels of honor for his glory. I am learning very rapidly to make my happiness consist in doing the will of God our Father. (January 10, 1863)

No longer ago than to-day, while at Derby waiting for a train, I was much drawn out in prayer to the Lord for the strength and grace necessary to enable me to bear up under every trial. I think of Job; he lost all his children at a blow, and his flocks and his herds also; but I still have three—half of mine—and I pray that they may be spared unto me. (February 9, 1864)

I do not wish to spend means on my selfish gratification, or on that of my family, but I desire my children to grow up and accustom themselves to plain living and inured to labor, so that if they have to face poverty, it will not be a hardship for them, and especially that they may not be lifted up in pride, because of position, and because their father occupies the position which I do. (November 17, 1881)

I feel greatly drawn out to impart instructions to my family. I am very anxious that my children should be instructed in the principles of righteousness. (July 19, 1885)

That winter 1864–5 I organized a Sunday school in the 14th ward, where I lived. There was no school in the city at that time. The next winter 1865–6 I commenced the publication of the *Juvenile Instructor*, a little periodical published semi-monthly in the interests of the children. (October 8, 1899)

Cannon frequently mentioned his use of priesthood power. Here is an instance of it:

Last night when I reached home, word was sent me that my son Joseph was very sick and had fainted. He had been in the sun on Tuesday and it was feared he was sunstruck. Bro. Wilcken and I administered to him and he experienced immediate relief and fell asleep, and his mother took him with her this morning. (June 30, 1887)

As a practical man, Cannon was interested in experiments of various sorts such as this one about building a silo:

I am trying to build a Silo in which to preserve my feed for cattle. I find that I have to make a change in my method of feeding, and having heard so much about ensilage being good for stock and having seen such excellent reports respecting it, that I have concluded to build a Silo in which to keep fodder as an experiment. (May 9, 1883)

Readers of Cannon's journal may find humorous his account of spotting a creature in Bear Lake:

I saw in the lake, which I had been observing, quite closely, an object moving with considerable swiftness. . . . It was travelling with very great swiftness, as fast, I should judge, if not faster, as a railroad train would travel on land. The object was, as near as we could judge, about thirty feet long, and might have taken it to be, if it had not moved, for a large saw log, its appearance being somewhat of that shape, and its color that of a log stripped of its bark. . . . What this was I do not pretend to say, whether a monster in the shape of a large serpent or not I cannot decide. (August 3, 1881)

Lastly, George Q. Cannon's lifetime commitment to the Savior is inspiring.

I testified that the Lord Jesus lived, for I had seen Him and heard His voice, and I had heard the voice of the Spirit, speaking to me as one man speaketh to another. I had been led to my present position by the revelations of the Lord, for He had pointed out to me the path to pursue. (November 4, 1889)

George Q. Cannon's Last Publication Project

As a prolific writer and publisher, George Q. Cannon was—and continues to be—a trusted voice of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to both Church members and outsiders. Thanks to the dedicated work of employees, missionaries, and descendants, George Q. Cannon speaks again through his journal—his last, great publication project.

Cannon constantly strove by aid of the Spirit to communicate with others in his writings, sermons, and letters. He cared about his inspired thoughts being put into print, and was dismayed at times when a sermon he gave was not recorded. He especially cared for the education of the rising generation and saw the value his experiences could have for them. This is evidenced in part by his longstanding publication of the *Juvenile Instructor*, his selecting excerpts from his Hawaiian journal to put into *My First Mission*, and his publication of *The Life of Nephi* and *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet*.⁷

7. George Q. Cannon, *The Life of Nephi, the Son of Lehi*, Faith-Promoting Series, vol. 9 (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883), available online at *Book of Mormon Central*, <https://archive.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/life-nephi-son-lehi>. George Q. Cannon, *The Life of Joseph Smith, the Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888), available online at *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/lifeofjosephsmiitoocann>.

Since George Q. Cannon reveals in his journals how he exhibited faith, hope, and courage during tumultuous times, his story can encourage Latter-day Saints and others to have those same qualities during our own increasingly perilous times. As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland affirmed in his April 2016 general conference address, “President George Q. Cannon once taught: ‘No matter how serious the trial, how deep the distress, how great the affliction, [God] will never desert us. He never has, and He never will. He cannot do it. It is not His character [to do so]. . . . He will [always] stand by us. We may pass through the fiery furnace; we may pass through deep waters; but we shall not be consumed nor overwhelmed. We shall emerge from all these trials and difficulties the better and purer for them.’”⁸

President Cannon’s journal, now being published online, will continue to teach us faith, courage, determination, and trust in God—“no matter how serious the trial.”

Richard Dilworth Rust is a Professor Emeritus of English and an Adjunct Professor Emeritus of American Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was also a visiting professor at Indiana University, Brigham Young University, the University of Heidelberg, and Berne University. His Ph.D. (1966) is from the University of Wisconsin.

Dr. Rust was a general editor of the thirty-volume Complete Works of Washington Irving and has published mainly on nineteenth-century American authors such as Irving, Cooper, Hawthorne, Poe, Melville, Longfellow, Mark Twain, and Henry James as well as on the American Civil War and the Revolutionary War. He is the author of *Feasting on the Word: The Literary Testimony of the Book of Mormon* and has published in the *Ensign*, *New Era*, *BYU Studies*, *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, *Literature of Belief: Sacred Scripture and Religious Experience*, *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, *Colloquium: Essays in Literature and Belief*, *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*, and two FARMS collections, *Warfare in the Book of Mormon* and *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*.

8. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “Tomorrow the Lord Will Do Wonders among You,” *Ensign* 46 (May 2016): 127, quoting George Q. Cannon, “Remarks,” *Deseret Evening News*, March 7, 1891, 4.

Heron Song

Mornings, the heron descends to shore.
His silver wings crescendo the air,
fermata—then fold, seeking the sleek
curve of his body. He comes to stand

by the shore and wet his feet. To watch
the waves. Once, he snaps an eel
with his beak, its shoestring body
twisting like a pendulum.

He grips it like a surgeon, sure
and still, patient, waiting while
it undulates, waiting while
it loosens, finally going limp.

Then—he flicks his head, snaps
his jaws to slide it down in one,
two, three slow beats.
But mostly, he stands, gazing out

over the bay. He is still,
contemplative. I wonder what
reflections swirl in his walnut brain:
watching the clouds for certain wings.

Wondering why the water turns
from calm chartreuse to cinnamon.
Marks that water, the collective,
isn't quite the word for

a million facets of light and shadow.
Or, listening to the rhythm
of the waves, if he's counting
out the measure of his creation.

—Elizabeth Garcia

This poem won an honorable mention in
the 2016 Clinton F. Larson Poetry Contest.

The Brigham Young University Football Program and the Analytics Revolution

Nelson Chung

The Brigham Young University football program is the most visible component of the LDS Church's flagship school. In 2010, it contracted to ESPN the broadcast of a majority of its games for a reported \$800,000 to \$1.2 million per home game through 2018.¹ During the 2015 season, its eight games on the ESPN-ABC family of networks reached 14.8 million televisions, an average of 1.9 million each game.² In terms of missionary value, the program rivals the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Along with publicity, the Choir has also invited a fair amount of scholarly attention, most notably a study of how its contract with Columbia Records led to a secularization of part of its repertoire,³ a chapter in the University of Illinois Press's *Mormonism and Music* volume,⁴ an entire volume of its history in the same publisher's *Music in America* series that

1. Ed Szczepanski, "Marriage between BYU and ESPN Still Going Strong," *Fox Sports*, May 19, 2015, <http://www.foxsports.com/college-football/story/marriage-between-byu-and-espn-still-going-strong-051915>.

2. "College Football TV Ratings," *Sports Media Watch*, <http://www.sportsmediawatch.com/college-football-tv-ratings/>.

3. Mark Porcaro, "We Have Something Really Going on Between Us Now: Columbia Records' Influence on the Repertoire of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, 1949-92," *Choral Scholar* 1, no. 1 (2009): 41-115.

4. Michael D. Hicks, *Mormonism and Music: A History* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2003).

Nelson Chung

I have always been inspired by world leaders who believed scientific leadership to be critical to national competitiveness. And I became interested in BYU football when I was ten years old upon listening to Ty Detmer lead the Cougars to upset first-ranked Miami in 1990. That event was also the genesis of my aspirations to attend BYU, which I did during the era of Brandon Doman and Luke Staley, also when Erin Thorn elevated the women's basketball team to national prominence.



Through reading a spate of sports analytics works, I accumulated ideas for BYU football that became the impetus for this article. However, as the writing process unfolded, the article evolved into more a work of intellectual history, a contextualization of the BYU football program within the growth of analytics, and less an instruction manual. My main hope for this piece is that it will inspire other quantitatively adept yet passionate BYU fans to contribute their own work that will benefit the program. Let a thousand regressions bloom.

linked the Choir to Mormon theology on angelic music,⁵ a review of that volume,⁶ and accounts of its European and Pacific tours.⁷

In contrast, scholarship on BYU sports is scant. A search for peer-reviewed sources on lib.byu.edu yielded just three results. Current

5. Michael D. Hicks, *The Mormon Tabernacle Choir: A Biography* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2015), 35–61.

6. Jake Johnson, “*The Mormon Tabernacle Choir: A Biography*, by Michael Hicks,” *Notes* 72, no. 3 (2016): 522–24.

7. Cynthia Doxey, “The Mormon Tabernacle Choir’s European Tours,” in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Europe*, ed. Donald Q. Cannon and Brent L. Top (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2003), 185–99; Cynthia Doxey and Lloyd D. Newell, “The Mormon Tabernacle Choir’s Pacific Tour, 1988,” in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: The Pacific Isles*, ed. Reid L. Neilson and others (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2008), 127–92.

BYU president Kevin J. Worthen, when serving as advancement vice president, held BYU's successful lobbying of the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) to revoke waivers to their rules accommodating Sunday nonplay to be a case of how internal pressure can affect nongovernmental bodies.⁸ The two other works treated past and residual racial issues surrounding the football program.⁹ This article provides a new angle by examining BYU football in light of the proliferation of "analytics," or advanced statistics, in sports and finds that analytics illuminate the program's condition across time, predict its future, and have made their way into the program's decision-making process.¹⁰

The core of this article comprises two parts. In the first part, I demonstrate what the sports analytics revolution's new ideas about evaluating teams, positions, and recruiting say about the program's past, present, and future. I find that after adjusting for schedule difficulty, the coaching performance of the legendary LaVell Edwards (1972–2000) resulted in 3.8 more points in margin of victory than that of Bronco Mendenhall (2005–2015), and 10.8 more points than that of Gary Crowton (2001–2004). I also find that the best of the LDS talent pool is concentrated at the most important positions; that BYU is currently operating near its optimum in acquiring players at the most important position (quarterback), but suboptimally at the second and third most important positions (left tackle and right defensive end/outside linebacker); that the recent hiring of a coach with well-known recruiting ability is expected to empower BYU to shift closer to the optimum; and, finally, that entering a "Power" football conference would affect the program's recruiting ability.

The second part details the program's response to the analytics revolution. I gauge the extent to which BYU football has adopted analytics and conclude that the outgoing staff has done so to a substantial though nonexhaustive degree, while the incoming staff's receptiveness

8. Kevin J. Worthen, "The NCAA and Religion: Insights about Non-State Governance from Sunday Play and End Zone Celebrations," *Utah Law Review* 2010, no. 1 (2010): 123–40.

9. Lane Demas, *Integrating the Gridiron: Black Civil Rights and American College Football* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 102–33; Darron T. Smith, *When Race, Religion, and Sport Collide: Black Athletes at BYU and Beyond* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016).

10. This article will not argue for the merits of analytics. The premise of this paper is that analytics can confer competitive advantages; but it in most cases, it should supplement, not replace, experiential football knowledge, and success without analytics is possible.

to analytics varies among its top-level coaches, from warm to unknown. Results of this study hold implications for how Church-affiliated institutions respond to changes in the intellectual climate.

OVERVIEW OF THE SPORTS ANALYTICS REVOLUTION

Before discussing my investigation, I provide a brief overview of the analytics revolution. As shown in Michael Lewis's popular book *Moneyball*, intellectual underpinnings for the growth of sports analytics originated with Bill James, a University of Kansas graduate in economics and literature and a factory night-watchman.¹¹ James keenly observed how traditionally regarded baseball statistics like fielding percentage inadequately captured player abilities. He self-published this and other findings in 1977 as *Baseball Abstracts*, with a readership of seventy-five.¹² The advent of computer databases expedited data collection and enabled James to draw contributions from other technically competent people in creating a body of data and analysis. He systematized those ideas, which overturned much conventional wisdom, by founding the field of Sabermetrics, named after the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR).

As Baumer and Zimbalist documented,¹³ free agency and collective-bargaining agreements in Major League Baseball drove up player salaries and enabled wealthy teams to acquire players unaffordable to small-market teams. This forced the latter to scramble for ways to compete with limited budgets. Consequently, the ideas of James and his followers, especially in player evaluation, were then funneled into baseball via Oakland A's general manager (GM) Billy Beane as part of Beane's quest to find undervalued players. The first to apply those ideas extensively, Beane created division-winning teams with payrolls among the lowest in baseball. Similarly poor teams like the Tampa Bay Rays and Pittsburgh Pirates followed, enabling themselves to boost competitiveness vis-à-vis wealthier clubs. But, as the *Economist* notes, nothing would stop the wealthy from also acquiring analytics-oriented GMs: "After years of sticking with traditionalists in their front offices, big-market clubs are increasingly acquiring brand-name GMs to assemble

11. Michael Lewis, *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013).

12. Lewis, *Moneyball*, 65–66.

13. Benjamin Baumer and Andrew Zimbalist, *The Sabermetric Revolution: Assessing the Growth of Analytics in Baseball* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 21–22.

their star-studded rosters.”¹⁴ Seeing the advantage analytics conveyed, basketball and football teams joined in.¹⁵

The revolution met resistance from traditionalists. Highly successful Atlanta Braves GM John Schuerholz disparaged statisticians as people “with green visors and rubber bands around their sleeves and pocket guards with pens and calculators in their shirt pockets.”¹⁶ More recently, basketball Hall-of-Famer Charles Barkley quipped, “All these guys who run these organizations who talk about analytics, they have one thing in common. They’re a bunch of guys who ain’t never played the game, and they never got the girls in high school, and they just want to get in the game.”¹⁷ Schuerholz’s and Barkley’s remarks reflected the sports establishment’s angst over statistical analysis possibly supplanting traditional scouting methods. Fortunately, this tension was diffused somewhat; the latest book from the leading sabermetrics website BaseballProspectus.com contained two chapters on scouting, suggesting that analytics could improve scouting, not supplant it.¹⁸

THE REVOLUTION SHINES LIGHT ON BYU FOOTBALL

I begin the investigation by exploring three of the analytics revolution’s prominent ideas and their relevance to the BYU football program. The first is the idea of evaluating teams using “computer polls.” The NCAA used them to qualify teams for postseason games. Popular discontent led the association to phase out their influence, but the strength of their logic endures. The second idea involves the importance of the player tasked with protecting the passer’s blind side, made popular in book and film. The third idea, unique to college sports, is predicting where high school players will choose to attend college.

14. D. R., “The Cult of the Genius GM,” *Economist*, October 15, 2014, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/gametheory/2014/10/brains-v-brawn-baseball>.

15. Baumer and Zimbalist, *Sabermetric Revolution*, 87–101.

16. John Schuerholz, *Built to Win: Inside Stories and Leadership Strategies from Baseball’s Winningest General Manager* (New York: Warner, 2006), 29.

17. Matt Moore, “VIDEO: Charles Barkley Declares War on Math with Rant against ‘Analytics,’” *CBS Sports*, February 11, 2015, <http://www.cbssports.com/nba/eye-on-basketball/25065619/video-charles-barkley-declares-war-on-math-with-rant-against-analytics>.

18. Jason Parks, “How Are Players Scouted, Acquired, and Developed?” in *Extra Innings: More Baseball between the Numbers*, ed. Steve Goldman (New York: Basic, 2012), 133–54; Jason Parks, “From the Buscone to the Big Leagues: How Is Latin-American Talent Acquired and Developed?” in Goldman, *Extra Innings: More Baseball between the Numbers*, 175–97.

Computer Polls

The analytics revolution produced new ideas for evaluating teams that illuminate BYU football's historical performance. Among the earliest exposures fans had to advanced statistics was through computer polls like Sagarin, Pomeroy, and Massey, which were used to choose contestants in the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) early in its inception.¹⁹ College teams play a minuscule fraction of the 118 other teams each season. This lack of round-robin format means that opponent strength for each team varies wildly. Consequently, simple win-loss records insufficiently describe a team's abilities, so sportswriters and coaches, respectively, must rank teams in the Associated Press (AP) and Coaches polls. But humans are subject to biases.²⁰

When computer polls rate each school's performance, they treat each game as a single observation and factor in the margin of victory and whether the game was played at home or on the road. They also control for opponent strength because midway through the season, each team has played another team, which has played another, to the point that all teams are interconnected by games—with plenty of redundancy. They use a statistical method called regression analysis that allows them to incorporate those variables simultaneously. Though imperfect, computer polls correct human biases. Their formulas are kept confidential to avoid manipulation, but their results have invited peer review. Fair and Oster have found that while averaging the rankings of six computer polls used by the BCS created powerful predictive ability, they fared no better than Las Vegas betting markets.²¹

The logic of the computer polls enables us to examine BYU's historical performance. At this point, readers should be alerted that the remainder of this subsection is the most technical portion of the article. I follow the structure of computer polls by constructing a model with each game as the unit of analysis, and use a HOME variable, with high (1),

19. The BCS was formed to match the best teams in games at the end of the season.

20. Sportswriters tend to vote more favorably toward, among other things, teams in their own states, and teams that won in games televised nationally. See B. Jay Coleman, Andres Gallos, Paul M. Mason, and Jeffrey W. Steagall, "Voter Bias in the Associated Press College Football Poll," *Journal of Sports Economics* 11, no. 4 (2010): 397–417, doi:10.1177/1527002509346823.

21. Ray C. Fair and John F. Oster, "College Football Rankings and Market Efficiency," *Journal of Sports Economics* 8, no. 1 (2007): 3–18, doi:10.1177/1527002505276724.

medium (0), and low (-1) to denote home, neutral, and road games, respectively. The model differs from computer polls in that instead of including all college football games in one season, I use only BYU games across different seasons.

This difference creates two problems that need modifications to maintain the same power of computer polls. First, because I include only BYU games, its opponents are not interconnected by games to control for opponent difficulty. Thus, I control for opponent strength by incorporating the opponent's final Massey ranking, available from masseyratings.com. Second, because I include only BYU games across seasons, the data are a time series instead of a cross-section like the computer polls. To yield correct test statistics, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS), the bread and butter of regression modeling, requires the error terms to be homoscedastic, and normally and independently distributed. Time-series data often violate this third requirement. If that is the case, a different regression technique is required.

Using computer poll methodology, I construct an OLS model on the 552 games in which BYU has played from 1972, the year LaVell Edwards became head coach, to the end of the 2015–16 season. The game results are also available from masseyratings.com. I set margin of victory (MOV) as the dependent variable, with binary explanatory variables CROWTON and MENDENHALL (EDWARDS is the baseline), and HOME and OPP_MASSEY_RANK as controls. I apply the Durbin-Watson (DW) test to determine whether the error terms are independent as required. A DW test statistic significantly different from 2 would lead one to reject the null hypothesis that the errors are independent. The statistic is 1.6859 ($p < .0001$); accordingly, I replace the OLS with generalized least squares (GLS), the method suited for autocorrelated data.²²

Because how the error term in one game relates to the prior one is unknown, I allow the model to determine that relationship empirically, making the model empirical generalized least squares (EGLS).²³ With the same variables as the OLS, I construct the following EGLS model of autoregressive order one, AR(1). This means that the error term in the model for each game equals the error term of one prior game multiplied by an empirically determined constant. Results of both regressions are found in table 1.

22. Thomas P. Ryan, *Modern Regression Methods*, 2d ed. (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2009), 68.

23. Jon Fox, *Applied Regression Analysis and Generalized Linear Models*, 2d ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2008), 439–40.

Table 1. Impact on Margin of Victory OLS vs. EGLS

Coefficient	OLS (1972–2015) n = 552	EGLS (1972–2015) n = 552
INTERCEPT	–3.93132**	–3.793561**
OPP_MASSEY_RANK	0.20677****	0.204785****
HOME	3.114411****	3.184117****
CROWTON	–9.79724***	–9.727855**
MENDENHALL	–2.61446	–2.577163
R ² /Pseudo-R ²	0.357	0.357
Proportion of Games Correctly Predicted	0.786	0.783
Akaike Information Criterion	4701.214	4686.212

#p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; ****p < .0001.

The values in the columns represent the effect the variables have on margin of victory. Unsurprisingly, the OLS and EGLS have nearly identical estimates; the OLS estimator on autocorrelated data, though it yields incorrect test statistics, is still unbiased, like the GLS family. The only qualitative difference between the OLS and EGLS is in the coefficient CROWTON, significant at the 0.001 level in the OLS and 0.01 level in the EGLS. The control variables in this model are all highly significant in the directions expected: easier opponents and home field advantage resulted in larger margins of victory. Both models correctly forecast the win-loss outcome of over 78 percent of games in the sample. As measured by the R² value (Pseudo-R² for the EGLS), both models explain 35.7 percent of the variation in MOV. The Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), which measures information loss in the models, favors the EGLS. The error terms in the OLS model are strongly correlated, theoretically throwing significance tests off, so I proceed with the EGLS.

The EGLS has a parameter relating the error term in this time period (game in this case) to the previous one that the OLS does not, and equals 0.16828912 in this model. A question arises about whether the error terms are correlated to not only one previous game but more. A model in which the error term in one period is related to the ones in two prior periods is the AR(2) model. I rerun the EGLS, assuming an AR(2) structure, and find the parameters for one and two prior periods to be 0.15897588 and 0.02503452, respectively. The correlation structure would be:

$$\varepsilon_g = 0.159\varepsilon_{g-1} + 0.025\varepsilon_{g-2} + \nu_g$$

However, the 95 percent confidence interval for the second-order parameter is $[-0.05680647 \ 0.1065413]$, which contains zero, indicating that it is not statistically different from zero, providing rationale for discarding the AR(2) and keeping the AR(1) model, shown below:

$$MOV_g = -3.794 + 0.205OPPMASSEY_g + 3.184HOME_g - 9.728CROWTON_g + 0.168\varepsilon_{g-1} + \nu_g$$

The g denotes the current game and $g-1$ the prior game. Notice the MENDENHALL coefficient is insignificant. The computer polls, which produced this tool for evaluating teams, demonstrate that Mendenhall's performances roughly equaled that of Edwards's. Some may counter that this is unfair to Edwards because Edwards elevated the program to national prominence. "BYU wasn't BYU before LaVell," captures this claim. Mendenhall likewise inherited a team mired in consecutive losing seasons, but unlike Edwards, they were losing seasons with a storied brand, and all the recruiting advantages that come with it. Edwards deserves a grace period for this reason.

I rerun the regression and find the statistical equality between the EDWARDS and MENDENHALL coefficients to be sensitive to changes in the number of grace years. Granting Edwards just a one-year grace period makes his performance statistically better than Mendenhall's at the 10 percent level ($p = 0.0941$). Extending the grace period to three seasons makes Edwards's performance statistically better than Mendenhall's at the 5 percent level ($p = 0.0470$). Each iterative model can be found in appendix B for one- to four-season grace periods, but I present the models with zero-, one-, and three-year grace periods in table 2 to show how the significance of MENDENHALL coefficient changes.

The model fit, both in terms of the variance explained and the win-loss outcome of games in the sample correctly predicted, appears to improve (though not monotonically) as we allow Edwards more time, which suggests that granting Edwards the grace period is appropriate. I do not support granting Mendenhall the same grace period both for substantive reasons I listed above and because model fit deteriorates when I do so. But Edwards's performance remains better than Mendenhall's even if I do. I include the would-be results in appendix B. Hence, I arrive at the following predictive equation:

$$MOV_g = -2.901 + 0.208OPPMASSEY_g + 3.173HOME_g - 10.811CROWTON_g - 3.798MENDENHALL_g + 0.147\varepsilon_{g-1} + \nu_g$$

**Table 2. EGLS-AR(1), Impact on Margin-of-Victory,
Grace Periods for LaVell Edwards**

Variable	No Grace Period (1972–2015) n=552	1-Year Grace Period (1973–2015) n=541	3-Year Grace Period (1975–2015) n=518
INTERCEPT	–3.793561**	–3.466628	–2.901024**
OPP_MASSEY_RANK	0.204785****	0.206912****	0.207504****
HOME	3.184117****	3.195950****	3.172963****
CROWTON	–9.727855**	–10.207137**	–10.811242***
MENDENHALL	–2.577163	–3.184314#	–3.798108*
ε_{g-1}	0.1624007*	0.1480461*	0.146773*
Pseudo-R ²	0.357	0.366	0.365
% Games Predicted	0.783	0.767	0.789

#p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; ****p < .0001.

The logic of computer polls allows us more apt comparisons of BYU under different head coaches than polls that survey journalists or coaches. The methods undergirding the computer polls enable performances to be adjusted for opponent difficulty and the home-away factor. With those controls, I conclude that BYU football averaged 3.8 more points in margin of victory under Edwards than under Mendenhall, and 10.8 more points under Edwards than under Crowton.

The “Blind Side” Thesis

In addition to evaluating teams, the analytics revolution also changed how positions are valued. Quarterback (QB) has long been recognized as the most important position. The center “snaps” the ball to the QB to begin the play, and the QB decides what to do with the ball. Eyes naturally follow the player holding the ball. A key discovery in the past decade was that one particular offensive line (OL) position, the left tackle (LT), who does not carry the ball but is tasked with protecting the quarterback’s blind side, is second most important.

The rise of the LT’s value began when, as Alamar documented, returns from passing rose over time.²⁴ Average yards advanced from pass

24. Benjamin C. Alamar, “The Passing Premium Puzzle,” *Journal of Quantitative Analysis in Sports* 2, no. 4 (2006): article 5, doi:10.2202/1559-0410.1051.

attempts increased from 4.66 in 1960 to 5.8 in 2005.²⁵ Lewis explicated the causal mechanism behind this rise in his popular book *The Blind Side*. Coaches caught onto the fact that the extensive width of the football field can be exploited by having receivers spread out more, isolating them, rendering them easier to throw to.²⁶ Consequently, teams passed more, causing a rise in the values of a QB's longevity. Just as the insurance premium for an asset rises in tandem with the asset price, the price of protection for a QB, the LT's salary, increased. Previously undervalued, the LT became recognized as the second-most important position in the National Football League (NFL) and was paid accordingly.

Duly appreciated, the LT's value drew analytical scrutiny. Alamar and Weinstein-Gould calculated, using a convenience sample of seven teams for each of three 2007 games, the relative contributions of each of the five OLs at creating time in keeping defensive linemen (DLs) from the QB's space.²⁷ Then they related the time created to the percentage of throws the QB completed. They estimated that the New York Jets' trade of lineman Pete Kendall to the Washington football team for Adrien Clarke resulted in their QB connecting three percentage points less of his passes. Alamar and Goldner subsequently translated time created for QBs into yards LTs advanced for their teams.²⁸

Additionally, since the most important position is the passer, and the second most important position is the lineman who protects his blind side, it logically follows that the third most important position would be the player on the other team trying to move past the LT and rush the quarterback. In football, behind the DLs are linebackers (LBs). As Lewis explained, in a 4-3 defense (four DLs and three LBs), the most common alignment, the right defensive end (RDE) is the primary pass rusher. But in the 3-4 defense (three DLs and four LBs), the outside linebacker (OLB) is the primary pass rusher.²⁹ Lewis portrayed OLB Lawrence

25. Alamar, "Passing Premium Puzzle," 3.

26. Michael Lewis, *The Blind Side: The Evolution of a Game* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006; 2009), 103-14.

27. Benjamin C. Alamar and Jesse Weinstein-Gould, "Isolating the Effect of Individual Linemen on the Passing Game in the National Football League," *Journal of Quantitative Analysis in Sports* 4, no. 2 (2008): article 10, doi:10.2202/1559-0410.1113.

28. Benjamin C. Alamar and Keith Goldner, "The Blindside Project: Measuring the Impact of Individual Offensive Linemen," *Chance* 24, no. 4 (2011): 25-29, doi:10.1080/09332480.2011.10739883.

29. Lewis, *Blind Side*, 127.

Taylor's wreaking havoc on QBs as the driving force behind demand for LTs.³⁰ In light of this, I examine how BYU has fared in acquiring players at these three most important positions.

The QB position has historically accrued fame for BYU. BYU QBs have won the Heisman Trophy (Ty Detmer),³¹ two Super Bowl most valuable player awards (Jim McMahon and Steve Young), and countless other accolades. Today, QB remains a position rich in LDS talent. In the past decade and a half, BYU landed two high-school QBs rated the best nationally by recruiting agencies: Ben Olson of Thousand Oaks, California (2002), and Jake Heaps of Sammamish, Washington (2010). In years where BYU did *not* sign the highest-rated QB in the nation, there was little difference between the best and what BYU signed. The 2015 season was illustrative of the QB abundance BYU typically enjoys: After the Heisman candidate Taysom Hill suffered a season-ending lisfranc injury in the first game, he was replaced by Tanner Mangum, the co-most valuable player with future Heisman-winner Jameis Winston at an Elite 11 high school camp.

After acquiring QBs, developing them has been generally unproblematic. BYU has produced a continuous stream of NFL QBs since the sunset of the golden LaVell Edwards era: Brandon Doman (2002, San Francisco 49ers); John Beck (2006, Miami Dolphins); and Max Hall (2010, Arizona Cardinals). A break occurred in the mid-2010s when Heaps's talent failed to materialize and Hill's injury and resultant loss of speed clouded his NFL chances. But with Mangum and 2015 St. George, Utah, signee Kody Wilestead, who was also selected to participate in the same Elite 11 QB camp, one can expect the stream of NFL quarterbacks to continue. BYU operates close to its frontier at QB.

Like QB, OL is a position in which BYU has been historically strong. Draft data from the *Salt Lake Tribune's* Cougarstats.com show that from 1983 to 1999, twenty BYU OLs were drafted into either the NFL or the now-defunct United States Football League, with the number of DLs drafted a distant second (eight). The light has dimmed, however, with only two more OLs drafted since. BYU has dropped from the optimum at recruiting for the second most important position.

With the importance of LTs and DEs/OLBs in mind, I break down how BYU has fared at acquiring the best players at those positions. I include all LBs, DLs, and OLs, except centers. Centers snap the ball

30. Lewis, *Blind Side*, 15–27.

31. The Heisman Trophy is awarded annually to the best college player.

through their legs to the QB and tend to be smaller and less interchangeable with other OLs. For the other positions, the best pass rusher plays OLB/DE, regardless of where he played in high school. Data on recruits are available from Scout.com from 2002 on. Due to BYU's honor code limitations, I restrict the investigation to LDS players to whom BYU has offered a scholarship. I tabulate high school recruits ranked in the top twenty-five at their positions, and junior college (JC) recruits ranked in the top ten. Table 3 displays all the players who meet the criteria outlined above.

Most striking is the preponderance of Polynesian-lineage surnames in table 3. Deploying a name method previously used to identify ethnic Asians on National Merit Scholars lists, combined with information from Scout.com articles,³² I run frequencies in table 4. Polynesians in this elite group opted to play elsewhere by a ratio of over two-to-one. BYU missed on 64.1 percent of elite LDS recruits at the second and third most important positions. However, a Fisher Exact Test of independence, used to determine whether two groups are similar, shows insufficient evidence that LDS athletes of Polynesian descent were less likely to sign with BYU than those of non-Polynesian descent. This indicates that the issue may be a general problem with recruiting players for the positions.

Of the total recruits at these positions BYU targeted, three-quarters are of Polynesian descent. This figure represents the coordinate at which sports, culture, and faith meet. Houghton has analyzed how the evolutionary development of muscular Polynesian physique was likely a product of natural selection for the oceanic environment.³³ According to Houghton, muscle tissue "allows for rapid variation in heat production," enabling Polynesians to survive both cold, windy, and wet maritime travel on one hand and hot life on land on the other.³⁴ Large build combined with a warrior culture dovetail with football. Underwood has documented the strong presence of Polynesians in the LDS Church and, hence, in BYU football.³⁵

32. See Ron Unz, "The Myth of American Meritocracy," *American Conservative*, November 28, 2012, 19, <http://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/the-myth-of-american-meritocracy/>.

33. Philip Houghton, "The Adaptive Significance of Polynesian Body Form," *Annals of Human Biology* 17, no. 1 (1990): 19–32, doi:10.1080/03014469000000752.

34. Houghton, "Adaptive Significance," 28.

35. Grant Underwood, ed., *Pioneers in the Pacific: Memory, History, Cultural Identity among the Latter-day Saints* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2005).

Table 3. Elite LDS Linemen and Linebackers BYU Recruited (Excluding Centers) 2002–15

Year	Players BYU Offered but Missed Position (Rank) Name/School Enrolled	Players BYU Acquired Position (Rank) Name
2002	DT (1) Haloti Ngata/Oregon DE (5) J. T. Mapu/Tennessee OL (20) Ryan Carter/Florida	DT (JC 6) Scott Young OL (15) Jake Kuresa
2003		OL (2) Ofa Moheatau DT (16) Brian Soi
2004	OL (JC 1) Taitusi Lutui/USC	
2005	DE (JC 5) C. J. Ah You/Oklahoma LB (11) Kaluka Maiava/USC OL (1) Adam Hawes/Arizona State	OL (8) Matt Reynolds
2006	OL (JC 2) Fenuki Tupou/Oregon DT (17) Sione Fua/Stanford	
2007		
2008	DT (25) Sealver Siliga/Utah OLB (9) Uona Kaveinga/USC	DT (JC 2) Tevita Hola DT (JC 9) Bernard Afutiti
2009	OLB (1) Manti Te’o/Notre Dame OG (3) Xavier S’ua Filo/UCLA MLB (17) L. T. Filiaga/Utah DT (15) Latu Heimuli/Utah	OLB (11) Kyle Van Noy
2010	DT (10) Ricky Heimuli/Oregon	MLB (8) Zac Stout OT (11) Graham Rowley DE (19) Bronson Kaufusi
2011		
2012	OLB (23) Vince Biegel/Wisconsin OG (21) Brandon Fanaika/Stanford	DE (23) Troy Hinds MLB (21) Butch Pau’u
2013		OG (16) Brayden Kearsley
2014	OG (2) Damien Mama/USC OG (5) Viane Talamaivao/USC DT (6) Bryan Mone/Michigan	
2015	OG (2) Tristen Hoge/Notre Dame OG (8) Christian Folau/Oregon State DT (5) Breiden Fehoko/Texas Tech OG (14) Semisi Uluave/California	

MLB: Middle Linebacker; DT: Defensive Tackle (one of the DL); OG: Offensive Guard (one of the OL); OT: Offensive Tackle (one of the OL).

Table 4. Frequency of Elite LDS Potential Recruits by Heritage

	Missed	Acquired	Total
Non-Polynesian	4 (10.3%)	6 (15.4%)	10 (25.6%)
Polynesian	21 (53.8%)	8 (20.5%)	29 (74.4%)
Total	25 (64.1%)	14 (35.9%)	39 (100.0%)

Harnessing the perceived abilities of a talented subpopulation has precedents. Morris detailed how the Taiwanese government saw the “physical gifts” of the country’s Austronesian natives and expended funds to “excavate” their talent for the national baseball team.³⁶ Though less than 2 percent of Taiwan’s population, the aboriginals comprised eleven of the twenty-five players on the baseball squad at the 2004 Athens Olympics, and the first two Taiwanese players in Major League Baseball.³⁷

BYU enjoys a structural advantage with Polynesian-heritage prospects: it can reap economies of scale in recruitment. Although Polynesians constitute an enormous proportion of college football players relative to their population, only a few other schools, like USC, can find it economical to direct their resources to this demographic. The outgoing BYU staff’s infrastructure built by Mendenhall and his management consultant, Paul Gustavson, doubtlessly employed an approach others could not replicate. In fact, at the heart of its organizational philosophy was an idea found in Porter’s “What Is Strategy?”³⁸ Porter argued that a firm must be doing something no one else is doing, or doing something differently from what other firms are doing. Otherwise, competitors would copy its strategy and erode its advantage. As Porter explained, “A company can outperform rivals only if it can establish a difference that it can preserve.”³⁹

Mendenhall and Gustavson pursued nonreplicable strategies by (1) exploiting the maturity and leadership skills of returned-missionary players through assigning them responsibilities usually assumed by coaches and staff, such as conducting practices and organizing off-field events;⁴⁰ (2) channeling BYU’s uniquely religious nature as a higher purpose to ignite players to “play from the deepest place possible [their faith];”⁴¹ and (3) taking advantage of the BYU Honor Code and the resultant lower levels of toxins in players’ bodies by implementing endurance-training methods that coaches believed would help BYU

36. Andrew D. Morris, *Colonial Project, National Game: A History of Baseball in Taiwan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 80.

37. Morris, *Colonial Project, National Game*, 165.

38. Michael E. Porter, “What Is Strategy?” *Harvard Business Review* 74, no. 6 (1996): 61–78.

39. Porter, “What Is Strategy?” 62.

40. Paul Gustavson and Alison von Feldt, *Running into the Wind: Bronco Mendenhall—5 Strategies for Building a Successful Team* (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, 2012), 120.

41. Gustavson and von Feldt, *Running into the Wind*, 227.

outlast opponents.⁴² How Mendenhall and Gustavson interacted with BYU's unique demographic endowment is unclear. It is known that Crowton conducted luaus for potential recruits.⁴³

Recent coaching changes should help BYU in recruiting Polynesian players. During the writing of this article, Mendenhall accepted the position of head coach at the University of Virginia, and BYU hired Kalani Sitake in mid-December 2015 to replace him. The affable Sitake is known for his recruiting prowess. Upon his hiring, athletic director Tom Holmoe said of him, "He is an outstanding leader and coach, an exceptional recruiter."⁴⁴ Though Tongan-American, Sitake remarked, "I'm kind of offended when they say I'm a Polynesian recruiter. Some players happen to be Polynesian, some African-American, some white. I value all of them. I'm just a coach who happens to be Polynesian."⁴⁵

Sitake's statement is true enough. Nonetheless, one would still expect Sitake to help in recruiting this talented demographic. Mirabile and Witte, in the most comprehensive study on college football recruiting to date (more on this below), found that a series of variables that relate the recruit to a particular school, which they dubbed the "affinity cohort," significantly influenced the likelihood a recruit would sign.⁴⁶ Among them was whether the recruit had family ties to the school. For mid- and high-rated recruits, family ties tripled the probability a recruit would choose the school.⁴⁷ Considering the affinity factor, one would expect Sitake's ties to the Polynesian community to make a difference.

In summary, ideas of the analytics revolution have led to the conclusion that Edwards outperformed Mendenhall who outperformed Crowton; that BYU's historical overachievement for its talent level has been

42. See Trevor Matich, interview by Spencer Linton and Jarom Jordan, *BYU Sports Nation*, BYUTV, September 14, 2015, available on *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kbbYwT4V5o>.

43. See Bruce Feldman, "A Recruiting Pitch of Another Kind," *ESPN*, May 28, 2002, <http://espn.go.com/gen/s/2002/0527/1387550.html>.

44. Thomas A. Holmoe, in "Sitake Comes Home," *BYU Magazine* (Winter 2016): 8.

45. Doug Robinson, "Kalani Sitake: 'The Protector' Puts Family, Cougars, under His Wing," *Deseret News*, March 25, 2016, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865650869/Kalani-Sitake-The-Protector-puts-family-Cougars-under-his-wing.html?pg=all>.

46. McDonald Paul Mirabile and Mark David Witte, "A Discrete-Choice Model of a College Football Recruit's Program Selection Decision," *Journal of Sports Economics* (2015): 1–28, doi:10.1177/1527002514566278.

47. Mirabile and Witte, "Discrete-Choice Model," 17.

due to its concentration of talent in the most important positions; that currently, BYU performs near what is possible in recruiting passers, but not those who protect the passer's blind side nor those pressuring opposing passers.

Recruiting

Sitake's recruiting skill stems from personality and effort. That does not mean the analytics cannot identify factors that affect the probability a targeted recruit will sign. Unlike professional sports, wherein teams draft incoming players from the level below, college teams must convince high schoolers, who voluntarily sign with any program that has offered them a scholarship, to choose them. Hence, the rise of analytics would naturally launch numerous studies on college recruiting. Valuable to BYU are papers that predict whether a prospect will sign with a particular school. DuMond, Lynch, and Platania authored the first paper of this kind.⁴⁸ They used a conditional probit model based on Rivals.com data and found that a school's AP ranking the prior year, membership in a BCS conference, whether or not the school has a bowl ban, stadium capacity, and a tier-one academic ranking, among other variables, affected the likelihood a recruit would sign.

Subsequently, Mirabile and Witte improved on the model of DuMond and his coauthors with a study of their own, mentioned above. They used eleven years of data (2002–12), compared to three for DuMond.⁴⁹ This gave Mirabile and Witte a total of 19,815 players and 113,384 schools. By comparison, the DuMond sample contained 3,395 players and 13,394 schools. The larger sample size enabled Mirabile and Witte to partition the sample into three—one for lower-rated recruits (rated two stars), one for mid-rated recruits (three stars), and one for higher-rated recruits (four or five stars). DuMond and his coauthors merely included the rating as a covariate.⁵⁰ This difference is important because recruits of differing qualities exhibit different preferences. For instance, Mirabile and Witte found that lower-rated recruits value academics more strongly in their decisions.⁵¹ The data and models the two studies used

48. J. Michael DuMond, Allen K. Lynch, and Jennifer Platania, "An Economic Model of the College Football Recruiting Process," *Journal of Sports Economics* 9, no. 1 (2008): 67–87, doi:10.1177/1527002506298125.

49. Mirabile and Witte, "Discrete-Choice Model," 8.

50. DuMond, Lynch, and Platania, "Economic Model," 77.

51. Mirabile and Witte, "Discrete-Choice Model," 20.

were similar: Mirabile and Witte used data from Scout.com; DuMond and his coauthors used data from Rivals.com, both top recruiting sites; the former used a conditional logit regression, the latter a conditional probit.⁵² Both probit and logit have binary dependent variables; the probit assumes the data to be normally distributed, logit log-normally.

Both models find that, counter to prevailing wisdom, a school's NFL placement ability had no effect on recruits.⁵³ Thus BYU's recent poor NFL output numbers should not constitute a pressing concern. Mirabile and Witte found a host of other statistically significant variables, many with implications for BYU. Due to space limitations, I focus on just one with a large coefficient: membership in a BCS conference.

Both models also found a school's BCS (now P5) membership to be a statistically significant factor.⁵⁴ Mirabile and Witte discovered that a prospect is 31 percent more likely to choose a P5 school over a non-P5 school.⁵⁵ Currently, BYU plays as a football independent unaffiliated with a conference. Mendenhall and Holmoe have expressed desires for P5 inclusion. Holmoe recognized that the widening resource gap between the P5 and G5 would diminish BYU's ability to compete.⁵⁶ BYU neared prospective P5 status when the Big XII conference announced it was seeking to expand membership on July 19, 2016. But after a long, drawn-out selection process, the conference publicly reversed course on October 17 of the same year.⁵⁷

52. Mirabile and Witte, "Discrete-Choice Model," 15.

53. Mirabile and Witte, "Discrete-Choice Model," 15; DuMond, Lynch, and Platania, "Economic Model of the College Football Recruiting Process," 79.

54. The BCS conferences represent the top tier of college football. This club has been renamed the "Power Five" (P5). The second tier is the "Group of Five" (G5).

55. Mirabile and Witte, "Discrete-Choice Model," 17.

56. Quoted in Jerry Hinnen, "BYU AD Tom Holmoe: 'Intention' Is to Find Power Five Home in 'Near Future,'" *CBS Sports*, February 25, 2015, <http://www.cbssports.com/collegefootball/eye-on-college-football/25081119/byu-ad-tom-holmoe-intention-is-to-find-power-5-home-in-near-future>.

57. At the time of the July 19 announcement, BYU was widely held to be the leading candidate to join the conference. See Jake Trotter, "Houston, BYU Especially Would Add to Big 12's Athletics," *ESPN*, August 11, 2016, http://www.espn.com/college-football/story/_/id/17271490/many-big-12-expansion-candidates-actually-bolster-football-play. But BYU's inclusion faced opposition from LGBT advocates who believed the Honor Code was discriminatory. Many in the sports media reported that once BYU was eliminated from consideration, conference expansion was not nearly so attractive, so the university presidents opted to remain pat and receive more money from their television partners

The growth of analytics produced predictive models of player recruitment, enabling teams to identify factors that influence where a high school player chooses to play at the collegiate level. Preeminent among the findings was that membership in a P5 conference would help BYU's chances with signing a high school athlete by roughly 31 percent. Exclusion from a P5 conference will also leave BYU with a wealth gap vis-à-vis P5 members.

BYU FOOTBALL RESPONDS TO THE REVOLUTION I: MENDENHALL AND ANALYTICS

The analytics revolution has not pervaded every team equally. Baumer and Zimbalist found that as of 2012, four major league baseball teams—Atlanta, Colorado, Miami, and Philadelphia—had no front-office employees devoted to analytics.⁵⁸ Alamar added that even among teams known to use analytics, the sophistication in their use varies.⁵⁹ Davenport, in an industry white paper, classified analytic practices into two categories: “table stakes” analytics, which are becoming commonplace in sports, and “frontier” analytics, used aggressively by only a few teams.⁶⁰ Table stakes analytics relevant to college football include external data sources, descriptive analytics on players, game simulations, and game-tactic analysis. “Frontier” analytics include video motion-capture data, locational/biometric data, open data analysis by fans, engaging players in analytics, and gathering and using proprietary data.⁶¹ Where does BYU football fall on this spectrum? None outside the program can definitely say. Due to obvious competitive reasons, teams often maintain secrecy about their analytic practices. For instance, Neuroscout LLC, a company that uses EEG machines to measure how quickly batters

instead. See Pete Thamel, “Big 12 Decides Not to Expand Conference,” *Sports Illustrated*, October 17, 2016, <http://www.si.com/college-football/2016/10/17/big-12-expansion-proposal-rejected>. The growing assertiveness of LGBT advocacy is something BYU and other Church-affiliated institutions must engage in the foreseeable future, whether or not the reports are correct.

58. Baumer and Zimbalist, *Sabermetric Revolution*, 26.

59. Benjamin C. Alamar, *Sports Analytics: A Guide for Coaches, Managers, and Other Decision Makers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 13.

60. Thomas H. Davenport, *Analytics in Sports: The New Science of Winning* (Portland, Ore.: International Institute for Analytics, 2014), 6–7, http://www.sas.com/content/dam/SAS/en_us/doc/whitepaper2/iaa-analytics-in-sports-106993.pdf.

61. Davenport, *Analytics in Sports*, 16.

recognize pitches, services unnamed Major League Baseball teams.⁶² BYU statistics professor Shane Reese has advised several of the school's sports programs, including basketball,⁶³ and has offered his services to Mendenhall.⁶⁴ Mendenhall expressed interest but did not meet with Reese again. Not until seven years later did Mendenhall meet with members of the statistics department.⁶⁵ After he left BYU and took the head coaching position at the University of Virginia, his new athletic director, Craig Littlepage, described him as "data-driven."⁶⁶ Ava Wallace of the *Washington Post* wrote on December 7, 2015, that Mendenhall "likes advanced statistics and depends on behavioral organization to implement his system."⁶⁷

Involving Players in Analytics

Davenport said that one approach to analytics is to involve players.⁶⁸ BYU's connection to analytics began long before Mendenhall. Former BYU and NFL quarterback Virgil Carter published the first known paper on football analytics in 1970. In "Technical Notes—Operations Research on Football," he divided the football field into ten-yard increments and calculated the expected points scored from each of those locations on the field. Expected points would equal a touchdown (seven

62. Larry Greenmeier, "'Neuroscout' Gets into Batters' Heads to Rate Hitters," *Scientific American*, July 1, 2014, <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/neuro-scout-gets-into-batters-heads-to-rate-hitters/>.

63. Steven Potter, "The Numbers Game: BYU Rolls with Sports Analytics Trend," *Daily Universe*, May 8, 2014, <http://universe.byu.edu/2014/05/08/20150223the-numbers-game-byu-rolls-with-sports-analytics-trend/>.

64. Tad Walch, "Could a Statistical Model Detect Cheating NBA Ref?" *Deseret News*, August 16, 2007, <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/695201262/Could-a-statistical-model-detect-cheating-NBA-ref.html?pg=all>.

65. Emily Hellewell, "Statistics MVP: Grad Student Rates College Athletes," *BYU News*, April 12, 2016, <https://news.byu.edu/news/statistics-mvp-grad-student-rates-college-athletes>.

66. Craig Littlepage, "Bronco Mendenhall Introductory Press Conference Transcript" (Press Conference, John Paul Jones Arena, December 7, 2015), *Virginia: University of Virginia—Official Athletics Website*, <http://www.virginiasports.com/sports/m-footbl/spec-rel/120715aaj.html>.

67. Ava Wallace, "What's His Story? Bronco Mendenhall Explains Himself at Virginia," *Washington Post*, December 7, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/colleges/whats-his-story-bronco-mendenhall-explains-himself-at-virginia/2015/12/07/62becf8e-9d2e-11e5-bce4-708fe33e3288_story.html.

68. Davenport, *Analytics in Sports*, 9.

points), field goal (FG, three points), or safety (two points), multiplied by the percentage of times teams ended up scoring in drives from that portion of the field, minus the same for the opponent.⁶⁹ Particularly telling was Carter's description of the data-collection methodology: "Each of the 8,373 individual plays in these games was coded, punched, and entered into a computer, and all analyses were made on this database."⁷⁰ At the time of punch card computers, a BYU graduate was involved in football analytics. Four decades later, large online databases would give rise to the analytics revolution, and Carter's methodology became the basis of the Romer, White and Berry, and Knowlton and Fellingham papers to be examined further in this section.

When Carter's paper was published in 1970, he was no longer a member of the BYU football team with a stake in its success. But at least one player has been involved in analytics while playing football at BYU. In the Mendenhall era, two eventual NFL DEs majored in statistics: Ezekiel Ansah and Bronson Kaufusi. Ansah was drafted in the first round as the fifth selection in 2013, Kaufusi in the third round in 2016. Kaufusi's emphasis was in analytics, and he was involved in an analytics project for the team.⁷¹ His involvement showed the program has adopted the "frontier" analytic practice of engaging players in the process.

Points Scored

There is no evidence that Mendenhall was instrumental in involving Kaufusi, but Mendenhall did demonstrate awareness of statistics. In *Running into the Wind*, we read: "As early as Bronco's first spring as head coach, he and his staff sought to pinpoint the game performance measures most closely correlated with winning. Building on some early research by the team under former head coach Gary Crowton, they studied twenty years of Cougar football and then college football as a whole to uncover the top ten statistics that indicate success. They aimed with laser-precision at finding the absolutely most crucial metrics."⁷² The book does not mention what those metrics were. Fortunately, we can know more by matching the passage in the book to a speech Mendenhall relayed to the team:

69. Virgil Carter and Robert E. Machol, "Technical Notes—Operations Research on Football," *Operations Research* 19, no. 2 (1971): 541–44, doi:10.1287/opre.19.2.541.

70. Carter and Machol, "Operations Research on Football," 541.

71. Bronson Kaufusi, conversation with author, May 29, 2016.

72. Gustavson and von Feldt, *Running into the Wind*, 135.

“So we did our own little study, and not surprisingly, points scored was number one. Then points allowed was number two. Then, so all we tried to do was then say, OK, what mark was common amongst the team? And I wanted to give something tangible to our players. And that number happened to be twenty-four points, again, at BYU since the beginning of LaVell’s era all the way until now, and it held again.”⁷³

Embedded within his statement is a clip of Mendenhall telling players that when BYU scored over twenty-four points, the team won 90 percent of the time. Winning is, by definition, scoring more points than one’s opponent, so when Wallace said that Mendenhall liked “advanced statistics,” she was probably talking about something other than “points scored.” Later, I will discuss the program adopting a more useful system that computes how much each play contributes to points scored.

Execution

The Mendenhall-Gustavson regime emphasized execution over schematics. A full corpus of Mendenhall’s quotes on this matter will not be retrieved. But the Broncoism “execute at a higher level” encapsulates this philosophy, which has empirical grounding: “Bronco and his staff were familiar with a study commissioned by Robert Kraft, the owner of the New England Patriots. The study found that only three to five plays per game really separate football dynasties from average teams. Although the researchers had expected that talent would be the factor that made the difference in those few plays, they discovered instead that the advantage went to the team with the most accurate execution of the planned play.”⁷⁴ Mendenhall and Gustavson were holding team execution above individual talent. But the program exalted execution over in-game strategy as well. In this regard, whether it was wise for them to generalize based on an NFL study requires more investigation. Play-calling in the NFL is more homogeneous, meaning less wiggle room for strategy than in the NCAA. ESPN.com data from 2010 to 2015 show that NCAA teams passed the ball on an average of 45.1 percent of plays from scrimmage, with the middle half of the distribution spanning 40.9 percent to 50.5 percent. NFL teams from the same period passed the ball an average of 56.3 percent of the time, but its middle half of the distribution spanned 53.2 percent to 59.8 percent. The interquartile range is

73. Bronco Mendenhall, quoted in “Inside BYU Football (9/15/15),” *BYUTV*, September 15, 2015, <http://www.byutv.org/watch/6596bb35-92c4-4b71-8945-e465f2918152/inside-byu-football-inside-byu-football-91515>.

74. Gustavson and von Feldt, *Running into the Wind*, 156.

9.6 percentage points for NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) teams and just 6.6 percentage points for NFL teams. An F-test for variance, used to determine whether the spreads of two groups are equal, shows that the variance in pass percentage was higher for the NCAA FBS than that for the NFL with high certainty ($p < 0.0001$). More room for strategy exists for college; thus the primacy of execution in the NFL may not apply in college.

Penalties

Another Mendenhall-Gustavson application of statistics is found in the attitude toward penalties. Facing local media concerns over the high number of penalties BYU had been incurring, Mendenhall said, “As I have said many times before, I don’t see a correlation, at least a statistical correlation, between penalties and wins and losses. As [of] a few weeks ago, ourselves, TCU, and Utah were in the bottom of the league in penalties. Some of that comes with aggressive play. I don’t condone it, but I would rather [not] be holding our players back than having them play too cautious.”⁷⁵

What Mendenhall said here is that the three winningest teams in the Mountain West Conference were also the most penalized. He even elucidated the cause: actively avoiding penalties resulted in timid play. This also applies to the NFL. As Michael Salfino notes on January 28, 2015, in the *Wall Street Journal*, in 2014 the two Super Bowl teams, New England and Seattle, ranked second and first in penalties committed, respectively. This phenomenon held the year before; Super Bowl champion Baltimore and runner-up San Francisco were first and second in penalties committed, respectively. The most successful teams racked up the most violations.

Mendenhall and Salfino singled out teams atop the success distribution. Hauge studied all NFL teams from 1995 to 2009, and obtained contradictory results.⁷⁶ In two separate regressions with only one variable each, she found a negative relationship between a team’s winning percentage and its number of penalties in one regression and its penalty

75. Jillian Williams, “Mendenhall: We Are Anxious to Come Back Home and Play” (Press Conference, October 6, 2008, updated October 20, 2008), *The Official Home of the BYU Cougars*, <http://byucougars.com/m-football/mendenhall-we-are-anxious-come-back-home-and-play>.

76. Janice Hauge, “Incentive for Aggression in American Football,” in *Violence and Aggression in Sporting Contests: Economics, History, and Policy*, ed. R. Todd Jewell (New York: Springer, 2011).

yards accrued in another.⁷⁷ In a third regression, she threw egregious penalties into the regression and concluded, “winning percentage is negatively correlated with both the number of offensive penalties and the total number of yards in offensive penalties. . . . Offensive penalties attributed to severe infractions has a negative and statistically significant effect on winning *percentage*, although the same is not true of defensive penalties.”⁷⁸

Hauge constructed two more models, using penalties to explain points scored and allowed. She found that if a team incurred fewer penalties than opponents, they tended to score more points. If they incurred more penalties than their opponents, they allowed more points.⁷⁹

Informed football fans know that factors other than penalties affect winning and scoring. From a statistical standpoint, that Hauge failed to control for them in all her regressions leads to omitted variable bias. Winston, who advised the National Basketball Association’s (NBA) Dallas Mavericks, offered analysis that not only corrected this deficiency, but would better adjudicate Mendenhall’s belief about penalties because it used NCAA data.⁸⁰ Winston gathered yards per run, yards per pass, and penalty and turnover differences for all games involving the 128 NCAA FBS teams in 2014 as explanatory variables in an OLS regression on margin of victory.⁸¹ He found all variables to have statistically significant impacts on margin of victory *except* penalty differential. This result, derived from more applicable and more granular data (because it used games as observations instead of seasons) and better methods by including proper control variables, justifies Mendenhall’s distaste for

77. Hauge, “Incentive for Aggression,” 40.

78. Hauge, “Incentive for Aggression,” 39; emphasis in original. Hauge defined as “severe” penalties ten yards and over. Strangely, she included “points for” and “points against” as control variables in this regression. I leave it to the reader to interpret her result: penalties hurt a team’s winning percentage apart from how many points it scores and allows.

79. Hauge, “Incentive for Aggression,” 42.

80. Wayne L. Winston, “Lecture 45—5.4 What Makes NFL Teams Win?” (lecture, University of Houston, September 9, 2016), *Coursera*, <https://www.coursera.org/learn/mathematics-sport/lecture/KogT1/5-4-what-makes-nfl-teams-win>. Although the title of the lecture references the NFL, Winston directed the audience to an NCAA dataset and regression results, both available from the author upon request.

81. The aforementioned P5 AND G5 tiers form the upper-division FBS. Below the FBS is the lower-division Football Championship Series (FCS).

excessive attention to penalties and demonstrates his in-game tactical analysis to be consistent with analytics.

Biometric Data

In addition to Mendenhall's statements, the program's use of player-tracking technology offers clues on the intensity with which it adopted advanced statistics. The Mendenhall-Gustavson regime availed itself of biometric data. I mentioned earlier that the regime exploited the health benefits of the BYU Honor Code for perceived advantages in athletic performance. In the interview through which we know this, Matich also said that staff members "use high technology to train and monitor very closely the actual physiological state of players' bodies under stress. And they're able to take that up to the point to where they can get the maximum conditioning out of it, without going over and having it become detrimental."⁸² The program under Mendenhall was adopting a "frontier" analytic practice by employing this sophisticated biometric program.

Fourth-Down Decisions

One can also assess whether Mendenhall was adopting analytics through his observable behavior. Among the best-known studies in the past decade has been Romer's paper about fourth-down decision-making.⁸³ When a team has the ball, it is given four plays, or "downs," to advance ten yards, after which it is given four more downs. If the team fails, it relinquishes the ball to the opponent at the spot where it failed. If it does not believe it can advance whatever is remaining of the ten yards on the last down, it can opt to punt the ball away to the opponent, forcing the opponent to start from an inferior position. It can also opt to kick a field goal (kicking the ball through the goalposts behind the end zone for three points). Punting and kicking are considered safer strategies than "going for it" (attempting to gain four more downs by advancing).

Using dynamic scoring, a method typically employed to predict the impact of economic policies, Romer examined all fourth-down situations by NFL teams from 2009 to 2011 in the first three quarters of games. Based on the "expected points" concept by Carter, he found that

82. Matich, interview.

83. David Romer, "Do Firms Maximize? Evidence from Professional Football," *Journal of Political Economy* 114, no. 2 (2006): 340–65, doi:10.1086/501171.

coaches took the safer route far more frequently than optimal. Of the 1,068 times it was optimal for the team to “go for it,” coaches did so only 109 times.⁸⁴

One can infer whether Mendenhall was aware of this widely known finding by examining his fourth-down behavior. Romer did not provide the optimal strategy for every situation on the field, against which to compare Mendenhall’s decisions. Fortunately, a similar study by Burke and Quealy did.⁸⁵ They employed the same methodology as Romer, except with more data. Play-by-play data for Mendenhall’s games are available from ESPN.com and BYUCougars.com. Mendenhall faced 306 fourth-down situations in the first three quarters of games, with 15 or fewer yards to go to convert, in which it is optimal to “go for it.” As seen on table 5, he “went for it” 102 times, a frequency of exactly one-third. I use a two-sample proportion test to determine whether his percentage was higher than that of NFL coaches. It was, with high certainty ($p < 0.0001$). To examine whether Mendenhall was operating optimally less than all the time, I use the exact binomial test, designed to determine whether observations are different from a theoretical expectation. His percentage was far less than 100 percent ($p < 0.0001$). So while he was subject to risk aversion like any other coach, he acted optimally over three times more frequently than the average NFL coach, indicating awareness of Romer’s study and the adoption of in-game tactical analysis.

Table 5. Comparative Fourth-Down Decision-Making

	Situations in which “Going for it” on Fourth Down is Optimal	Times the Coach “Went for It” in Those Situations	Frequency
NFL Coaches 2009–11	1068	109	10.2%
Mendenhall 2005–15	306	102	33.3%

Icing the Kicker

Another indicator of how intensely Mendenhall applied analytics is in his engaging in a practice known as “icing the kicker.” Before the opposing team kicks a field goal (FG), coaches often call a time out or two to

84. Romer, “Do Firms Maximize?” 354.
85. Brian Burke and Kevin Quealy, “How Coaches and the NYT Fourth-Down Bot Compare,” *New York Times*, November 28, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/newsgraphics/2013/11/28/fourth-downs/post.html>.

inflict anxiety on the kicker by forcing him to contemplate his upcoming kick, in hopes that this will decrease the probability the kicker converts the FG. Mendenhall stirred controversy in the 2014 bowl game, when he consumed his two remaining timeouts to do this when opponent University of Memphis was facing a point-after-touchdown (PAT) attempt, which was considered a “chip shot” that succeeded with little variation.

To examine whether icing works, Berry and Wood collected data on all 2003 NFL FG attempts from 2002–3 for a logistic regression with physical and psychological variables surrounding the kicker, including whether the kicker was iced.⁸⁶ In a logistic regression, the dependent variable is binary—in this case, 1 if the kick was made, 0 if not. The study found that icing lowered the likelihood of success by 46.5 percent ($p = 0.03$).⁸⁷ Before concluding that Mendenhall’s act is consistent with analytics, two things require consideration. First, when the authors decomposed the data by kick length, they found that “icing” had the largest impact among FGs from 31 to 50 yards. For FGs thirty yards and under, there were only five iced attempts recorded and four of them were made. Since a PAT equates to a FG of 20 yards, it belongs in this category, so nothing can be said about Mendenhall’s decision to ice a PAT attempt. The sample size for short FGs was simply too small.

Second, the sample size of the entire study was questioned. Moskowitz and Wertheim noticed that Berry and Wood’s dataset contained only thirty-eight incidences in which the kicker was iced, and followed up by extending the data from 2001 to 2009.⁸⁸ They found that icing made no statistically significant difference. The bulk of the evidence suggests that icing does not work, so Mendenhall’s decision to ice indicated he is not aware of these studies.

Overall, Mendenhall’s attitude and actions in regard to points, execution, penalties, player development, fourth-down decisions, and “icing,” demonstrated that, although not “all-in,” he incorporated analytics in his decision-making to a substantial degree. He acted more optimally than the average NFL coach, adopted sophisticated player-tracking technology, and harbored a counterintuitive yet justifiable attitude toward

86. Scott M. Berry and Craig Wood, “The Cold-Foot Effect,” *Chance* 17, no. 4 (2004): 47–51, doi:10.1080/09332480.2004.10554926.

87. Berry and Wood, “Cold-Foot Effect,” 51.

88. Tobias J. Moskowitz and L. Jon Wertheim, *Scorecasting: The Hidden Influences behind How Sports Are Played and Games Are Won* (New York: Crown Archetype, 2012), 213–14.

penalties. Mendenhall's record, combined with a player's involvement in analytics, show that the program did not let the analytics revolution pass by unnoticed during his tenure.

BYU FOOTBALL RESPONDS TO THE REVOLUTION II: NEW STAFF AND ANALYTICS

Mendenhall's departure means it is also important to examine the value the incoming staff has accorded analytics. Clues from the short duration the regime has been in place indicate that receptiveness varies among high-level individual coaches. Sitake appears open-minded about analytics, while the views of new offensive coordinator Ty Detmer are unknown.

Advanced Player Metrics

Sitake's periodic meetings with Zachary Knowlton, a BYU graduate student in statistics, furnish evidence that Sitake welcomed analytics. Knowlton reported that Sitake was "really, really open to what we can do to help," and that he helped Sitake "relate player production to points."⁸⁹ Novel statistics for translating performances into points are among the innovations of the analytics revolution. Bill James broke ground in 1979 with a simple but powerfully predictive *runs created* formula equating runs to the outcomes batters produce, namely hits, singles, doubles, triples, home runs, walks, and hits-by-pitch.⁹⁰

With *runs created*, James determined the impact of those outcomes intuitively. Lindsey constructed a more precise formula based on how much the batter changed the expected number of runs with those

89. Zachary Knowlton, interview by Spencer Linton and Jason Shepherd, *BYU Sports Nation*, BYUTV, April 27, 2016, available on *Youtube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5Ck2uQPLDM>. Knowlton completed his master's degree in April 2016 and is no longer involved in BYU sports analytics.

90. Wayne L. Winston, *Mathletics: How Gamblers, Managers, and Sports Enthusiasts Use Mathematics in Baseball, Basketball, and Football* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 11–12. Points are called "runs" in baseball because players run through three "bases" in a diamond-shaped path to score. A validation study showed teams' *runs created* predicted run scoring within 14.6 percent, compared to 31.7 percent for the traditional metric of batting average. See Jim Albert and Jay Bennett, *Curve Ball: Baseball, Statistics, and the Role of Chance in the Game* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 2001; 2003), 230.

outcomes.⁹¹ To illustrate: A player goes to bat with a runner on first base and one out. In that situation, teams score an average of 0.498 runs before the end of the half-inning.⁹² If he hits a single and the runner moves to third base, there are now runners on first and third bases with one out. In this new state, teams score an expected 1.115 more runs by the half-inning's end. The batter contributed $1.115 - 0.498 = 0.617$ runs by hitting that single. Note Lindsey could measure a player's contribution to scoring without anyone's having scored. Thereby outcomes of every play have scoring values attached, even those where no scoring occurred.

White and Berry did likewise for the NFL by calculating the expected points scored from every scenario on the field and deriving a player's value from how much his action changed those points.⁹³ To explain, the authors provided this illustrative scenario: Teams with the ball on third down with five yards remaining from converting a first down at ten yards from the end zone score 3.9 expected points, that is, an average of 3.9 points. If the QB throws a touchdown pass from that spot for 7 points, he contributes $7 - 3.9 = 3.1$ points.⁹⁴ If the opponent intercepts the throw and scores a touchdown, the QB contributes $(-7) - 3.9 = -10.9$ points.

To compute the expected points used above, White and Berry ran a polychotomous regression, which allows for a finite number of discrete dependent variable values and thereby fits the seven discrete scoring outcomes in football: touchdowns, FGs and safeties scored and allowed, and no scoring. Their respective points are $\{7, -7, 3, -3, 2, -2, 0\}$. They set yards from the goal line and yards remaining to convert a first down as continuous variables and second, third, and fourth downs as binary variables (with first down as the baseline) that explain the seven outcomes. Expected points from a particular down-distance-position state equal the aggregate impact on scoring of down, distance from converting back to first down, and field position of that state.

91. George R. Lindsey, "An Investigation of Strategies in Baseball," *Operations Research* 11, no. 4 (1963): 477–501, doi:10.1287/opre.11.4.477.

92. Lindsey, "Investigation of Strategies," 485.

93. Chris White and Scott Berry, "Tiered Polychotomous Regression: Ranking NFL Quarterbacks," *American Statistician* 56, no. 1 (2002): 10–21, doi:10.1198/000313002753631312.

94. White and Berry, "Tiered Polychotomous Regression," 11.

Knowlton and Fellingham replicated White and Berry's work on NCAA data, also using a polychotomous regression.⁹⁵ Then Knowlton presented this work to Mendenhall,⁹⁶ and later to Sitake,⁹⁷ integrating it with grades the coaches gave players on tasks he assigned them. Coaches give each player a plus-minus grade for tasks on each play (for instance, block opposing player x). Knowlton provided Sitake measures of player contributions from performing said tasks through how much they changed expected points. As with Lindsey, and White and Berry before him, Knowlton was able to attach point values to player performances "whether or not they score a touchdown."⁹⁸ While nothing is known about Mendenhall's receptiveness, Sitake's staff "really liked it."⁹⁹

Implementation of Analytic Practices

In addition to openness to analytics, Sitake's working relationship with Knowlton appeared to follow analytic best practices. Alamar, who has advised National Basketball Association and NFL teams, asserted that for analytics to be successful, there needs to be acknowledgement that (1) "rarely will the analyst understand the sport as deeply as the top decision makers," and (2) "decision makers need to ask questions based on their deep knowledge of the sport with the goal of gaining some additional insight into the sport in general or about a specific player or team."¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, when analysts wish decision makers adopt a new metric, they must "provide the proper evidence and context for the new metric in order to demonstrate its value to the decision makers."¹⁰¹

Knowlton's following description indicates that his collaboration with Sitake follows Alamar's model: "What we do is . . . provide another resource for the coaches. They know what they're doing. But if they have another resource, they can quantify that information; we want to provide that resource."¹⁰² Knowlton elsewhere acknowledged his supplementary role to the more knowledgeable coach: "A coach will

95. Zachary Knowlton and Gilbert Fellingham, "Ranking NCAA Football Teams through Expected Points," paper presented at the 2015 Joint Statistical Meeting of the American Statistical Association, Seattle, Wash., August 8–13, 2015.

96. Hellewell, "Statistics MVP."

97. Knowlton, interview.

98. Quoted in Hellewell, "Statistics MVP."

99. Knowlton, interview.

100. Alamar, *Sports Analytics*, 46.

101. Alamar, *Sports Analytics*, 71.

102. Knowlton, interview.

have a coach's eye. They've been playing football forever; they'll know who played well or not that game."¹⁰³ Additionally, in lock-step with Alamar's model, Knowlton reported having Sitake ask the research questions: "[Sitake] wants to move it toward scouting, as well as toward that self-scouting, self-evaluation."¹⁰⁴ Knowlton also reported that when he presented Sitake with a game-by-game report of the 2015 season, Sitake replied, "This makes a lot of sense," indicating that Knowlton effectively demonstrated the value of new metrics in the report.¹⁰⁵ Based on Knowlton's description, Sitake and Knowlton followed Alamar's blueprint for analytic success.

Offensive Scheme

While Sitake expressed enthusiasm for new statistics and analytic practices, Detmer sent a murkier signal. In his introductory press conference, Detmer fielded the following question from Utah radio personality Greg Wrubell: "Are you into analytics at all? And what do you think are going to be the most important offensive indicators to you?" Detmer responded, "I haven't been a big analytical guy."¹⁰⁶ He proceeded to list basic statistics: turnovers, penalties, first downs, and red-zone scoring, as metrics to which he would pay attention. "Football's football at the end of the day," he said, exhibiting a traditionalist mindset.

Detmer focused on traditional statistics, while Sitake took more advanced statistics like expected points to heart. Detmer did not outright reject analytics but merely expressed that he had not kept current. Moreover, he is widely known for his prodigious football mind and may flourish without their application. Similarly, Baumer and Zimbalist noted that the Atlanta Braves, who won fourteen consecutive division titles, five league titles, and a World Series Championship under GM Schuerholz, "were not known for embracing the Sabermetric philosophy, [but] the intelligence of their front office personnel was impressive."¹⁰⁷ Detmer's intelligence with in-game schematics will likely matter more than any use of analytics.

103. Quoted in Hellewell, "Statistics MVP"

104. Knowlton, interview.

105. Knowlton, interview.

106. Quoted in Brandon Despain, "Football—Ty Detmer Press Conference" (Press Conference, January 5, 2016), *The Official Home of the BYU Cougars*, <http://byucougars.com/video/m-football/football-ty-detmer-press-conference>.

107. Baumer and Zimbalist, *Sabermetric Revolution*, 129.

That said, tension might arise between analytics and Detmer's *modus operandi*. For instance, the QB can receive the snap from the center to begin the play via two means, by hand or from a distance. The latter is known as the "shotgun" because from five or more yards behind the line of scrimmage the quarterback can spray the ball around more easily to various receivers. A study of 2006 NFL data showed that teams advanced, on average, five yards per play when the QB received the snap by hand, and 6.4 yards from shotgun.¹⁰⁸ In the same press conference, Detmer said that he would have the QB take the snap by hand more, which empirics seem to indicate would result in fewer yards advanced. By stating he "would like to see more use of the tight end," he gave all indications of returning BYU's offense to one similar to those of his days as a QB, an offense in which he took virtually every snap by hand.¹⁰⁹ But this tension should not hinder the program. As stated earlier, analytics should play a supplementary role to more knowledgeable decision makers, and few are more knowledgeable than Detmer.¹¹⁰

Davenport argued that football lagged behind baseball and basketball in analytics usage, due to (1) the complex interaction of twenty-two players on the field, (2) the difficulty in rating performance of players on each play, and (3) the conservative football coaching culture.¹¹¹ Reason 1 owes to the nature of the sport and is immutable. The staff has mitigated reason 2 by adopting a system of translating performance into points. Detmer's sustained NFL career as a "player-coach" is a possible explanation why reason 3 may be present within the program.¹¹²

If football's lack of analytic intensity makes it lag behind other sports, it also makes the BYU football program's analytic intensity more advanced relative to the rest of football. Take Mendenhall's fourth-down

108. Mike Tanier, "Gunner Gruden," in *Pro Football Prospectus 2007*, ed. Aaron Schatz (New York: Plume, 2007), 277–79.

109. Quoted in Despain, "Ty Detmer Press Conference." The tight end splits time between blocking and catching.

110. Steve Young ranked Detmer behind only Joe Montana among players with the best football intuition he had encountered in his illustrious NFL career. See Steve Young, interview by Spencer Linton and Jarom Jordan, *BYU Sports Nation*, BYUTV, January 8, 2016, available on *Youtube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JLwsUP6FHU>.

111. Davenport, *Analytics in Sports*, 6.

112. The description "player-coach" comes from Blaine Fowler. See Blaine Fowler, interview by Spencer Linton and Brian Logan, *BYU Sports Nation*, BYUTV, June 29, 2016, available on *Youtube*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nzh48GayODU>.

behavior, for example. Although he “went for it” only a third of the time it was advantageous for him to do so, it was still three times more frequently than NFL coaches did. BYU uses biometric data to maximize player endurance and has engaged at least one player in analytics, two practices Davenport deemed to be at the frontier. Mendenhall emphasized points scored and allowed, but Sitake went one step further and adopted advanced metrics that determine how much each play contributes to those totals. There are no signs of BYU using motion-capture data, of gathering proprietary data, or of centralizing all its data into information systems for decision-making. The program does not appear to have any staff devoted to analytics aside from a consultant. BYU sits at the frontier of the revolution in some ways, but not all.

CONCLUSION

This article explored three main ideas from new analytic thought of import to the program: objective tools for evaluating teams, the importance of a long-ignored position, and factors affecting recruiting. Advanced statistics enable us to cut through much of the noise and inform questions. While Mendenhall may have polarized fans, we now know that his performance level was not lower than that of Edwards, unless we grant Edwards a three-year grace period. However, it is the position of this article that that grace period is preferred.

We also know that much of the best LDS talent is stocked at the two most important positions. BYU’s ability to acquire elite players at the most important position, QB, has remained steady, while much potential remains untapped at personnel to protect the QB and rush opposing QBs. Current coaching changes may help the program realize that potential, but I believe the program should consider taking action to lock in its ability to recruit OLs and DLs, an action less contingent on the sitting staff. Lack of power-conference membership and fewer NFL prospects have frustrated some fans; analytics confirmed the importance of the former to recruiting but complicated the latter by challenging the notion that a school’s NFL placement abilities weigh heavily on a recruit’s college decision. This finding, though robust (it received confirmation from two different studies), does not overturn the consensus among college football coaches that NFL aspirations drive a college recruit’s decision.¹¹³

113. More likely, to gauge how much a school helps potential recruits’ chances to play professionally, recruits use a school’s P5 status instead of tracking how many NFL players the program produces. As then-Notre Dame head

Analytics have shed light on the program and have also made their way into the program's decision-making. At the dawn of a new intellectual era in sports, BYU's outgoing and incoming staffs have embraced analytics to a substantial degree. Mendenhall has left no doubt about his awareness of at least some developments in analytics. Although he has engaged in some not-so-analytic behavior, like icing the kicker, he appears overall to be ahead of most of his profession regarding statistics.

The new staff's receptiveness to analytics depends on personnel. Sitake has embraced an innovative way of relating the results of each football play to points scored. Knowing how much each completed task is worth would enable him to value plays and players more accurately and gain a competitive advantage. The nature of his working relationship with a statistician also demonstrates proper execution of analytic practices.¹¹⁴

Detmer has apparently not stayed abreast of analytic findings. Although I identified possible tensions between analytic thought and his own thinking, I do not anticipate this to be problematic. Analytics should play a supplementary, not substitutionary role to his distinguished football intuition.

Based on this assessment, the program is at a more advanced than average position overall with regards to analytics, though many opportunities remain unexplored.¹¹⁵ While this article includes only a sampling of new analytic ideas, its primary motivation is to begin a conversation and engage the passionate numerati (quantitatively oriented fans) to consecrate their skills to creating independent resources that will identify possible advantages for the program and assist in bringing positive publicity to BYU and its sponsoring church.

coach Charlie Weis said in his introductory press conference, "When players [are] going to college, when they go to *front-line programs*, they want to be able to play on Sundays. They want to play on Saturdays, so that they could end up playing on Sundays." "Notre Dame Head Coach Charlie Weis Teleconference Transcript" (Press Conference, December 13, 2004), ND, <http://www.und.com/sports/m-footbl/spec-rel/121304aaa.html>; emphasis added. "Playing on Sundays" alludes to NFL games, "playing on Saturdays" to college games.

114. Reports from BYU's sports analytics group late in the publication process indicate that Sitake suspended his meetings with the group when the 2016 season started. The relationship between the program and analytics remains in flux.

115. This is changing rapidly even as this article heads to the press. See Sharon Katz, "College Football's Analytics Revolution Is Just Beginning," *ESPN*, September 30, 2016, http://www.espn.com/college-football/story/_/id/17677192/college-football-analytics-revolution-just-beginning.

Appendix A: Data Sources

BYU Historical Games Results (used in tables 1 and 2). *Massey Ratings*. Games can be downloaded from <http://www.masseyratings.com/team.php?t=891&s=279541>. Each game conveniently contains the opponent's final Massey rank on the same row.

Draft Data. *Cougarstats*. Players are listed on <http://sltrib.cougarstats.com/draft.php>.

Recruiting Data (used in tables 3 and 4). *Scout*. This information can be downloaded from <http://www.scout.com/college/byu/2015-football-commits>. Scout.com profiles for each player identify whether players are LDS. Polynesians identified but not by name on that list are Jake Kuresa and Kyle Van Noy.

NCAA Run/Pass Frequencies. *ESPN*. Rushing: http://espn.go.com/college-football/statistics/team/_/stat/rushing. Passing: http://espn.go.com/college-football/statistics/team/_/stat/passing.

NFL Run/Pass Frequencies. *ESPN*. Rushing: http://espn.go.com/nfl/statistics/player/_/stat/rushing. Passing: http://espn.go.com/nfl/statistics/player/_/stat/passing.

BYU Play-by-Play Data (used in table 5). *ESPN/BYU Athletics*. Downloaded from http://espn.go.com/college-football/team/schedule/_/id/252/year/2015/byu-cougars. I derived Mendenhall's fourth-down decisions from this data. For some reason, the 2006 and 2007 Tulsa games had play-by-play data missing. Fortunately, they can be accessed here: <http://byucougars.com/m-football/event/2006/tulsa> and here: <http://byucougars.com/m-football/event/2007/tulsa>.

Appendix B: EGLS-AR(1) Regressions

Table 6. EGLS-AR(1), Impact on Margin-of-Victory, Grace Periods for LaVell Edwards

Variable	1 (1973–2015) n = 541	2 (1974–2015) n = 530	3 (1975–2015) n = 518	4 1976–2015 n = 507
INTERCEPT	-3.466628	-3.071090*	-2.901024**	-2.476015#
OPP_MASSEY_RANK	0.206912****	0.205205****	0.207504****	0.208183****
HOME	3.195950****	3.174340****	3.172963****	3.203545****
COACHCROWTON	-10.207137**	-10.482544***	-10.811242***	-11.286931**
COACHMENDENHALL	-3.184314#	-3.438003#	-3.798108*	-4.281655*
ξ_{g-1}	0.1480461*	0.151083*	0.146773*	0.134985*
Pseudo-R ²	0.366	0.362	0.365	0.368
% Games Predicted	0.767	0.781	0.789	0.784

#p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; ****p < .0001.

Table 7. EGLS-AR(1), Impact on Margin-of-Victory, Equal Grace Periods for Edwards and Mendenhall

Variable	1 (1973–2015) n = 529	2 (1974–2015) n = 505	3 (1975–2015) n = 480	4 1976–2015 n = 456
INTERCEPT	-3.265624**	-2.978307*	-2.863863*	-2.399087
OPP_MASSEY_RANK	0.204203****	0.203986****	0.207046****	0.207197****
HOME	3.180235****	3.075122***	2.966057****	2.717105****
COACHCROWTON	-10.221500**	-10.505347**	-10.834492***	-11.320090***
COACHMENDENHALL	-2.939799	-3.438003*	-5.431897*	-6.381887*
ξ_{g-1}	0.1474258*	0.1389885*	0.1357471*	0.1235686*
Pseudo-R ²	0.360	0.358	0.363	0.365
% Games Predicted	0.777	0.778	0.775	0.763

#p < .10; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001; ****p < .0001.

Appendix C: Limitations to Study

The BYU football staff and its statistical consultants have undoubtedly used more metrics than what outsiders can discern. Furthermore, recruiting rankings are determined by scouts and are subjective. Finally, statistical analysis is no substitute for the immeasurables of a good coach, quarterback, or left tackle.

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Gathering

Ah,
Child
Merry,
Wreathe
Bridal wreath
In June,
Lace daisy strands
Through summer,
Chain dandelions
Stem on stem,
And wear them
Through October.
Blossom read
The yellow chins
Of those who love
Sweet butter,
Pluck petals
Of forget-me-nots,
Enclose them in a letter.
Snap dragons
To your fingers five,
And sip on honey suckle.
Kiss the friendly columbine,
Twine up the purple myrtle.
Wear rings of woven clover
Sweet,
For earrings dangle cherries,
Dine with dolls of hollyhock
On willow sap and berries.
O golden ribbons
From the sun,
O silver ribbons
Of the moon,
Go, my child
And gather, gather,
That which passes
All too soon.

—Vivian M. Adams

Stephen H. Webb (1961–2016)

Universal Scholar and Personal Friend

Alonzo L. Gaskill

For many Latter-day Saints, their first awareness of the Roman Catholic scholar Stephen H. Webb came through his 2012 *First Things* article, titled “Mormonism Obsessed with Christ.”¹ In that piece—which surprised Latter-day Saints and non-Latter-day Saints alike—Webb pointed out that “what gives Christianity its identity is its commitment to the divinity of Jesus Christ. And on that ground Mormons are more Christian than many mainstream Christians. . . . Mormonism is obsessed with Christ, and everything that it teaches is meant to awaken, encourage, and expand faith in him.”² Within a week of that article’s publication, my inbox was flooded with emails from friends and acquaintances asking me things like “Have you seen *this*?!” or “What do you know about Steve Webb?” and “Wow! I love this guy! *He gets us*!”

In rapid succession, Steve published several books and other materials of considerable interest to Latter-day Saints, and he spoke twice on campus at Brigham Young University. A chapter from his Oxford book *Heavenly Flesh and the Metaphysics of Matter* was published in *BYU Studies* in 2011, under the title “Godbodied: The Matter of the Latter-day

1. See Stephen H. Webb, “Mormonism Obsessed with Christ,” *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* (February 2012): 21, available online at <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2012/02/mormonism-obsessed-with-christ>.

2. Webb, “Mormonism Obsessed.” It wasn’t until he was working on his book *Jesus Christ, Eternal God: Heavenly Flesh and the Metaphysics of Matter* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) that Steve began to look seriously at Mormon theology. He began, for the first time, to consider Joseph Smith as a serious theologian.

Saints.”³ In 2012, he delivered the Truman G. Madsen Lecture on Eternal Man for the Wheatley Institution,⁴ and in 2014 he was a keynote speaker at the annual BYU New Testament Commentary conference on S. Kent Brown’s *The Testimony of Luke*.

The story of Steve’s lifelong spiritual journey is too complex and lengthy to tell here. But, suffice it to say, he was a man who surveyed the landscape—and who thought deeply about the teachings of many traditions. He was reared as an independent Christian—part of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement.⁵ As an undergrad, Steve attended Wabash College,⁶ and there he evolved, becoming quite liberal for a time. During his undergraduate years, he joined the Disciples of Christ Church. According to his former research assistant, Adam Brasich, when he returned to Wabash (as a professor), Steve even tried to start a Disciples of Christ Church in the Indianapolis area.⁷ Steve later became a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America;⁸ and, finally, in 2007, he converted to Roman Catholicism.⁹ He once noted, “Becoming a Roman Catholic opened the door for me to begin appreciating Mormonism, while becoming immersed in Mormonism has helped me to retrieve the value of my evangelical youth.”¹⁰

3. Stephen H. Webb, “Godbodied: The Matter of the Latter-day Saints,” *BYU Studies* 50 no. 3 (2011): 83–100.

4. See Wheatley Institution, “Truman G. Madsen Lecture on Eternal Man,” November 15, 2012, <http://wheatley.byu.edu/events/individual.cfm?id=101>.

5. The Restoration Movement or “Campbellism” is a Christian tradition that began in the United States during the Second Great Awakening (1790–1840) and which originally sought to unify all Christians into a single body (after the pattern of New Testament Christianity). The movement is arguably the oldest ecumenical movement in the United States.

6. Founded in 1832, Wabash College is a small private liberal arts college for men located in Crawfordsville, Indiana.

7. Adam Brasich, interview with author, April 21, 2016.

8. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has about 4 million members in nearly ten thousand congregations in North America. It is a progressive denomination, rooted in Lutheran theology, but open to exploration and change. It often refers to itself as a religion that is ever being “made new.” See, for example, “About,” *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, <http://www.elca.org/en/About>; and “ELCA Presiding Bishop Says Church Is ‘Always Being Made New,’” *Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, October 18, 2012, http://www.elca.org/News-and-Events/7531?_ga=1.87639773.490311710.1477502010.

9. Steve was drawn to Catholicism, in part, because of the writings of Father Richard John Neuhaus, the founder of *First Things* magazine.

10. Stephen H. Webb, *Mormon Christianity: What Other Christians Can Learn from the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 13.

Steve's initial interest in the LDS Church began when his research assistant at Wabash College began investigating Mormonism.¹¹ Starting in the summer of 2009, Steve and Adam had frequent and deep conversations about Latter-day Saint theology and scripture, and Steve began to think in more serious terms about what practicing Mormons believe. He had known about the Church prior to that—and even taught about it at Wabash—but up to that time Steve never took the LDS faith seriously. He once confessed, “I . . . used to think of Mormonism as little more than an exotic and abnormal addition to Christianity. When I taught Mormon history to my students, . . . I regret to say that I did not try to hide my condescension. I have come to repent of this view, and not just because I came to my senses about how wrong it is to be rude toward somebody else's faith. I changed my mind because I came to realize just how deeply Christ-centered Mormonism is.”¹² Oddly, one who would not have initially classed himself as a “friend of the faith” turned out to be one of our greatest non-Mormon defenders. Like Saul before him in his conversion to Christianity, Steve was able to see the hand of God moving in his life to change his attitude about Latter-day Saints and their theology. I suppose one reason that Steve and I connected so well was that we shared a similar history in this regard. Neither of us were ever ardent anti-Mormons, but—in our younger and more naïve days—both of us failed to see the good in the LDS Church, and each of us made little effort to hide our condescension. We both found reasons to repent and to praise God for opening our eyes.

Steve was, on all accounts, very eclectic. He wrote on a variety of topics, from soccer to vegetarianism, and from environmentalism to Bob Dylan.¹³ In one of his pieces, he warned about the dangers of cultural relativism—and the loss of moral education in the academy.¹⁴ Steve

11. Adam Brasich, currently a PhD candidate in American religious history at Florida State University, was Steve Webb's research assistant during the summer of 2009. After that, Adam continued unofficially to work for Steve (reviewing his manuscripts, bouncing ideas off of each other, and so forth) for the next eighteen months. They remained good friends until Steve's untimely death in March 2016.

12. Webb, “Mormonism Obsessed.”

13. An effort is under way to create a repository, of sorts, of Steve's various pieces of research and writing, and to make them permanently accessible on the Internet and in a university archive.

14. Stephen H. Webb, “Christ against the Multiculturalists,” *First Things*, May 6, 2008, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2008/05/christ-against-the-multicultur>.

tackled movements that seek to erase any meaningful differences in gender, instead suggesting that gender is not simply an “accident of biology.”¹⁵ He wrote about how, in heaven, you and I will most likely have the “freedom to move through time.” Steve conjectured that, there, “the past will become a land we can inhabit for as long as it takes to experience the healing power of God’s love.”¹⁶ Finally, in one of his most moving pieces—written only two weeks before he passed—Steve wrote about the “God of the depressed.” Steve described depression as a “deeply religious experience, but it is an experience of God’s resistance to your most pressing personal petitions. The more you cry out for help, the more distant God can appear to be. This is negative theology gone deeply awry.” Steve added:

Jesus himself must have experienced depression while being famished for forty days and nights in the wilderness, praying while his disciples slept, and descending into hell.

He also spent many years hidden from public view, his mission kept secret, his life so obscure that the Gospels tell us nothing about them. He had a long time of waiting, and he knew what awaited him. It is this time of hiddenness, I think, that most captures the depressant’s emotional state. The depressed wait for the long night to end and the anguish to subside. The depressed, like Jesus during his so-called lost years, are hidden from sight, waiting for their lives to begin.¹⁷

Steve’s writings could be very deep and were often poignant. Some in the academic community liked what he wrote,¹⁸ while others attacked

15. Stephen H. Webb, “Theological Stakes of Sexual Difference,” *First Things*, January 21, 2014, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2014/01/theological-stakes-of-sexual-difference>.

16. Stephen H. Webb, “How to Tell Time in Heaven,” *First Things*, April 29, 2014, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2014/04/how-to-tell-time-in-heaven>.

17. Stephen H. Webb, “God of the Depressed,” *First Things*, February 19, 2016, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2016/02/god-of-the-depressed>.

18. See, for example, Mark A. Kellner, “Scholar Delves into Mormon ‘Lessons’ for Christians,” *Washington (D.C.) Times*, September 12, 2013, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/sep/12/kellner-scholar-delves-into-mormon-lessons-for-chr/>; Richard J. Mouw, “Mormon Catholicism: A Review of *Mormon Christianity*,” *First Things* (May 2014): 51–53, <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2014/05/mormon-catholicism>; John G. Turner, “Mormon Envy: A Provocative Reappraisal,” *Books and Culture: A Christian Review*, January 2014, <http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/webexclusives/2014/january/mormon-envy.html?paging=off>; John Turner, “Stephen Webb’s Mormon

his work with vigor.¹⁹ Because he enjoyed a good debate, he largely took the criticisms in stride—but, where he felt he was misunderstood or misrepresented, Steve was very comfortable pushing back.²⁰

Sadly, Steve passed away on March 5, 2016.²¹ While attending his funeral in Indiana, I was approached by several non-Latter-day Saints to

Christianity,” *Patheos*, January 25, 2014, http://www.patheos.com/blogs/anxious_bench/2014/01/stephen-webbs-mormon-christianity/.

19. See, for example, Thomas M. Cothran, “What Is Classical Theism?” *Strange Notions*, <http://www.strangenotions.com/what-is-classical-theism/>; Thomas M. Cothran, “A Bad Case against Classical Theism,” *Strange Notions*, <http://www.strangenotions.com/a-bad-case-against-classical-theism/>; Thomas M. Cothran, “Understanding Who God Really Is,” *Strange Notions*, <http://www.strangenotions.com/understanding-who-god-really-is/>; John W. Morehead, review of *Mormon Christianity*, in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 47 (Summer 2014): 158–63.

20. See, for example, Stephen H. Webb, “Response to Critics,” *A Journal for the Theology of Culture* 11, no. 1 (2015): 93–102. Steve’s widow, Dr. Diane Timmerman, shared this about how Steve felt he was perceived in Catholic scholarly circles: “He felt like longtime Catholic theologians did not take him seriously as a Catholic theologian. (An exception to this is the wonderful David Tracy, from the University of Chicago, who wrote me the nicest things about Steve, his work, and his mind back in March of 2016.) Steve tried for several professional opportunities (grants, fellowships, professorships) at Catholic institutions, but to no avail. A small piece of this was even Notre Dame Press not taking the book he wrote. So, for professional and personal reasons, he moved away from the Catholic church. But I can’t say he moved away for theological reasons. . . . Among some of the last books he purchased were some that had a Catholic foundation.” Diane Timmerman to author, September 21, 2016.

21. The wide circulation of his death notice only serves to show how very influential Stephen Webb was. See, for example, “Stephen Howe Webb,” *Indianapolis Star*, March 9, 2016, <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/indystar/obituary.aspx?pid=177969609>; “Stephen H. Webb,” *Matthews Mortuary*, http://www.matthewsmortuary.com/fh/obituaries/obituary.cfm?o_id=3619382&fh_id=13052; “Wabash Mourns Stephen Webb ‘83,” *Wabash College*, March 7, 2016, http://www.wabash.edu/news/displaystory.cfm?news_ID=10773; Samuel D. Rocha, “The Excess of Stephen H. Webb,” *First Things*, March 16, 2016, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2016/03/the-excess-of-stephen-h-webb>; “Stephen H. Webb, 1961–2016,” *The Interpreter Foundation*, March 7, 2016, <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/stephen-h-webb-1961-2016/>; Peggy Fletcher Stack, “Mormon Scholars Laud Late Catholic Thinker Who Probed LDS Theology,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 9, 2016, <http://www.sltrib.com/news/lds/3640037-155/mormon-scholars-pay-tribute-to-late>; Mike Parker, “Stephen H. Webb, 1961–2016,” *FairMormon Blog*, March 7, 2016, <http://blog.fairmormon.org/2016/03/07/stephen-h-webb-1961-2016/>; David Klinghoffer,

let me know that Mormonism was the *only* subject that Steve ever chose to write more than one book on.²² It was unusual for him to stay focused on one subject in his research and writing. Thus, his fixation on LDS theology was a curious thing, noted by many. There were many aspects of Mormon theology that drew Steve, chief among them being the idea of a material, embodied God. He was also enamored with Joseph Smith's native genius, in addition to the power he found in the Book of Mormon's witness of Christ. Where many non-LDS scholars scoff at the shallowness of LDS theology, Steve saw a depth, and that drove him to delve deeply into Mormon thought. One of his associates pointed out, "In his final works he reached out to the LDS community with gusto and sincere goodwill."²³ "Mormonism [might be] obsessed with Christ"²⁴ (to borrow a line from Steve), but those who knew him best knew that in the last few years of his life Stephen Webb was quite "obsessed" with all things LDS. He could not get enough of it. He had developed a great love for the Church's doctrine, history, and people.

Evidence of that is found in the book we coauthored together: *Catholic and Mormon: A Theological Conversation*. Time and again in that book Steve extolled what he loved about Mormon theology. I had to chuckle when we began writing the first chapter of the book. We mutually decided

"Remembering Stephen H. Webb," *Evolution News and Views*, March 17, 2016, http://www.evolutionnews.org/2016/03/remembering_ste102696.html; John Turner, "Stephen H. Webb," *Patheos*, March 24, 2016, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/anxiousbench/2016/03/stephen-h-webb/>; "Stephen H. Webb Died," *Mormon Discussions*, March 8, 2016, <http://mormondiscussions.com/phpBB3/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=41345>; Christian Century Staff, "Stephen H. Webb, Theologian and Author, Dies at 54," *Christian Century*, March 24, 2016, <http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2016-03/stephen-h-webb>.

22. Steve first examined Mormon theology in his 2011 text, *Jesus Christ, Eternal God: Heavenly Flesh and the Metaphysics of Matter* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). His 2013 book, *Mormon Christianity: What Other Christians Can Learn from the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), was entirely about LDS doctrine and the need for other Christian denominations to take seriously what the Latter-day Saints have to contribute. His last book on Mormonism was the one he coauthored with me: *Catholic and Mormon: A Theological Conversation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). In addition to these three books, Steve authored a number of articles on Latter-day Saint theology and practice.

23. Rocha, "Excess of Stephen H. Webb."

24. Webb, "Mormonism Obsessed."

that Steve would write the first section (describing Catholic views of authority), then I would write the LDS response, Steve would respond to that, and finally I would finish up the discussion. Steve got to work on his portion of the chapter, and emailed it to me. As I read it, I was puzzled. Much of his first installment on authority in Catholicism focused on how amazing Joseph Smith was as a spiritual leader and prophetic figure. After reading what Steve had written, I had to exclaim, “Steve, I thought I was going to write the LDS portion of the chapter!” Steve Webb had a gift for being able to see the good in Mormonism, Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and even in our unique culture. That showed in how he spoke about the Church, but also in what he wrote about it.

Steve was inordinately insightful. He saw what the average person missed. He found profundity in what others perceived as mundane. As a singular example, in a May 2014 lecture at Brigham Young University, Steve reviewed S. Kent Brown’s commentary on the Gospel of Luke.²⁵ In that lecture, he dwelt on the question of where Christ’s soul was during the three days in which his body lay in the tomb. Professor John W. Welch has reflected on Steve’s insights as follows:

Some scholars have argued that Christ descended, but only into the forecourt of hell, the so-called limbo of the fathers, but not actually into hell itself. Steve gladly pointed out his own previous argument that 1 Peter 3:19 “clarifies the descent by telling that Jesus preached to the spirits *in* prison,” and therefore he must have gone further and done more than just to unlock the gates of hell in its forecourts. Steve saw this preaching by Jesus to the prisoners in hell as “the culmination of Jesus’ ministry,” and not simply as a “prolongation of his crucifixion.” Having spent time, as he did, ministering in jails to incarcerated prisoners, Steve was sure that “Jesus would have felt right at home in hell, and the prisoners would have been glad to welcome him. The sharing of the good news is a joyful event, especially in a place where its message is most needed.”

At the end of his self-revealing comments two years ago, Steve went on to embrace the even more expansive idea offered by Mormon

25. Stephen H. Webb, “Luke and Mormonism,” paper presented at the Second Annual Conference of the BYU New Testament Commentary Project, Provo, Utah, May 14, 2014, in response to S. Kent Brown, *The Testimony of Luke* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2015), transcript available online at <http://www.byunewtestamentcommentary.com/conferences/may-2014/transcripts/luke-and-mormonism-by-stephen-h-webb/>.

doctrine. “Imagine my joy in discovering, after I worked on von Balthasar’s theology of Christ’s descent into hell, the Mormon understanding of spirit prison and the idea that Jesus indeed preached in hell, but he did more than that. He organized the righteous to preach in his absence. This is an astounding claim that has no precedence, as far as I know, in traditional theology, and yet it makes absolute theological and exegetical sense. To me, it means that even in hell the church is active in carrying out God’s plan. The Catholic Church believes that salvation comes through the church, and thus it makes sense that Jesus would not have left the spirits in prison without access to the church. The Mormon explication of the descent thus gives me a new delight in the passage from Matt. 16:8, where Jesus says he will build his church and not even the gates of hell will prevail against it.”²⁶

What a testament this insight is to the inspiration of our friend and to the goodness of the God whom Steve and all Latter-day Saints worship.

Those who knew Steve well knew that he was incapable of leaving religion alone. If he was invited to a party, he would turn it into a theological debate; and he really didn’t care which side of the argument he was defending, so long as there was an argument. He was really not a contentious man, but he was passionate and simply felt the need to think and challenge and discuss religion at all places and at all times. At his funeral, it was pointed out that some actually quit inviting him to social events for fear that he would turn a light-hearted get-together into a theological colloquium. It was his nature; and, for those of us who are similarly hardwired, this aspect of Steve’s personality was charming. For those other-minded souls, this could be quite annoying. Of course, that would be *their* loss!

There are certainly those within the ranks of the LDS Church who do not know the name Stephen Webb. However, a number of the General Authorities were certainly aware of him. On more than one occasion, I was inadvertently copied on an email to Steve from one of the Twelve Apostles or a member of the Seventy. (The “Reply All” feature has allowed me to eavesdrop on more than one intriguing conversation!) I joked at a lecture Steve and I were giving in Indiana that “I’ve been a member of the Church for more than three decades now and I have less access to the presiding Brethren than does my friend Steve.” In addition to several General Authorities he was friends or acquaintances

26. Adapted from John W. Welch to author, May 19, 2016, quoting Webb, “Luke and Mormonism.”

with, our brightest Latter-day Saint scholars have taken note of both his remarkable life and his untimely death. Thus, I thought I might share a few thoughts from various academics who have taken note of Steve's impact upon Mormonism.

Steve's former research assistant, Adam Brasich, described Steve's fascination with Mormonism this way:

In a way, I don't think any other theologian has taken Joseph Smith as seriously as a conversation partner as Steve—in terms of taking Mormon theology as an open possibility for other Christians. He treated it as an alternative version of Christianity that can teach Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants a lot about themselves and about the weaknesses of their own theology, particularly in a post-Christian world. For example, new discoveries in physics contradict 3rd and 4th century Christian ideas of matter. The Christian Church is stuck in those 3rd and 4th century views of the material. How are we to deal with this? Steve would say, well, you have Joseph Smith and Mormonism to help you resolve this. He saw Mormonism as a way of dealing with the post-Christian world and the breaking down of different orthodoxies. Here were some alternative ideas that Joseph Smith came up with that offer some solutions. I think Steve was unique in that particular way.²⁷

Indeed, the LDS view on matter—and a material God and resurrection—were ideas that Steve saw as logical, ancient, and yet abandoned by the bulk of Christianity. He felt others could learn from what Joseph taught on these subjects.

Philp Barlow, the Leonard J. Arrington Chair of Mormon History and Culture at Utah State University, first met Steve in the mid-1990s and had become well acquainted with him and his writings. He described Steve as

transparently brilliant, articulate in an on-the-spot sort of way. . . . He was also a bit feisty in an appealing way, ready to stand up and hold his intellectual ground, without being sectarian, when religious belief was occasionally condescended towards by other equally rigorous minds. His mind operated on warp drive, at three times the pace of my own. The range of provocative, high-level, cogent, informed, imaginative, often experimental books that he produced—let alone his shorter works—leaves me slack-jawed. . . . Hence, when he became provoked by the richness and promise of Mormon thought and culture, and enamored of Mormon people in the latter years of his life, Mormonism received the

27. Brasich, interview.

attention of an extraordinarily knowledgeable, dramatically far-reaching mind. The result was a splash of illumination for Mormons and their observers, an implicit putting into context of more shallow and narrow attention to the Latter-day Saints, and a courageous, sometimes defiant reimagining of the Mormon and Christian past and present. He was an uncommon mind, an uncommon person. I will evermore miss a new Webb title on my shelf on an almost annual basis.²⁸

Steve absolutely was an “uncommon mind” and “an uncommon person.” Writing with him was a delight. He wrote with passion and energy—and ideas seemed to burst forth from him like water from a hydrant. He was broad in his knowledge base, but he could see how all of it was interconnected. He was quite remarkable in this regard.

John W. Welch—the Robert K. Thomas professor of law in the J. Reuben Clark Law School, and the founder of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS)—spoke of Steve’s contributions in this way:

The death of Stephen Webb, which is nothing short of tragic, leaves me and all who even remotely knew him weakened and diminished, wondering what might have been. . . . With meteoric brilliance he swept across the open skies of the Mormon intellectual landscape. . . . Steve contributed so much to so many people, and had so much more yet to offer to all of us on this side of the veil of mortality, that one can only have faith, with glowing hope, that millions of souls on the other side will enjoy and embrace his knowing smile and collegial companionship as much as we have here. . . .

Steve had a special knack for seeing virtuoso performances where lesser minds could see only trivial or marginal comments. This trait of Stephen’s no doubt explains his gripping fascination with Mormonism, the theology of which has been overlooked by so many others but which for Steve promised extraordinary usefulness to all the rest of Christianity. Steve recoiled against the unfortunate points of departure in modern scholarship that typically begins by doubting credible witnesses, dismisses God’s direct involvement physically in history, and

28. Phil Barlow, personal correspondence, April 22, 2016. Similarly, Adam Brasich said: “He was adventuresome—he was so full of a quest for truth, a quest for knowledge. There were no boundaries. And so that’s what allowed him to start digging into Mormonism to try to figure out what gems were in the rough there. He was willing to do whatever it took to lay hold on truth.” Brasich, interview.

that “claims, probably worst of all, an unearned sense of moral superiority over our spiritual and academic forefathers,” as Steve puts it.

... The ligatures that bind us together with God and with each other have the potentialities and actualities to save and exalt this world which fell but not without plan and purpose. Stephen Webb lived, and lives, as solid evidence that this is so. I consider myself blessed by God that our lives intersected.²⁹

David Paulsen, emeritus professor of philosophy at BYU (and the contemporary Mormon theologian whose writings were most influential upon Stephen Webb) and Hal R. Boyd, special assistant to the president at Eastern Kentucky University, offered this tribute:

Latter-day Saints have made many friends and allies with scholars of different faiths. Some laud Mormon piety and our pro-social communitarianism. Stephen H. Webb, however, was the rare Christian scholar to go beyond cultural commentary and methodically evaluate LDS theology, publishing multiple books and articles on the subject. . . . Stephen saw the Latter-day Saint doctrine of divine *material* embodiment as a novel way to reintroduce the Christian God to those whose worldview rejects the existence of anything outside the material universe. Stephen was, in the words of Paul, an “example of the believers,” and his personal interactions among the Latter-day Saints were marked by Christian charity and goodwill. We are continually inspired by Stephen’s life as well as his theological legacy.³⁰

Indeed, few outside of Mormonism have treated us more fairly—or taken us more seriously—than Steve. He didn’t shy away from pointing out our warts; but he could see beyond those, as he plumbed the depths of Mormon thought and surfaced with what he perceived as the gems of this unique brand of Christianity.

Terryl Givens, who holds the James A. Bostwick Chair in English at the University of Richmond, shared this about Steve and his ability to see the good and valuable in the beliefs of others:

Krister Stendahl famously spoke of “holy envy” as a vital but rare capacity in religious understanding. As with politics, few persons deeply vested in religion can demonstrate the moral generosity of appreciating the beautiful in another’s belief system. Steve was a shining exception, who had the magnanimity to unabashedly admire much he loved in

29. Welch to author.

30. David L. Paulsen and Hal R. Boyd to author, May 2, 2016.

Mormonism, and the intellectual acumen to recognize its theological strengths and early Christian precedents. We all benefitted from his friendship as well as his scholarship. With Steve, interfaith dialogue was genuinely beneficial to both parties with no condescending, and he will be sorely missed.³¹

Scott Petersen, former director of the Rollins Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology at Brigham Young University, said of Steve that he “was a very spiritually aware person who cherished the Savior.” Scott added that Steve

recognized that not everything from early Christianity was as neat and tidy as many churches wanted to make it. Accordingly, his open-minded approach allowed him to build bridges with many faiths and many individuals, even when they differed somewhat from his own personal beliefs. Steve’s authentic approach allowed him to explore Mormonism objectively. He passionately shared his view that Mormons were sincere Christians who contributed significantly to the Christian community of believers. He was willing to stand firm against the popular culture that Mormons were not “orthodox” Christians. Steve engaged and collaborated openly with Mormon scholars, and he took seriously the Savior’s directive to seek Christian unity (John 17). He will be greatly missed.³²

As the greatest minds of Mormonism attest, Stephen Webb’s passing is a loss for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—not simply because he was such a wonderful defender of our faith, but also because he was such a Christian man. Steve loved the Church, but each of us who knew him also felt his love for us as individuals. And so, at his passing, I look back on his life in solemn contemplation. I wonder how I might adequately summarize the remarkable life and contributions of this most extraordinary friend. Steve’s own words summarize what he believed was the reason he was so drawn to Mormonism.

One day, as Steve and I walked across the campus of Brigham Young University, he said to me, “Alonzo, I think I have a mission—a calling from God—to write on behalf of the Mormon Church. I can say things as an outsider that no Mormon could say or write; and people listen

31. Terryl L. Givens to author, April 29, 2016.

32. Scott R. Petersen to author, April 26, 2016. Steve wrote the foreword to Scott’s 2014 book, *Do the Mormons Have a Leg to Stand On? A Critical Look at LDS Doctrines in Light of the Bible and the Teachings of the Early Christian Church* (Orem, Utah: Millennial Press, 2014).

to me because I'm a Catholic—not a Latter-day Saint.”³³ I remember thinking he just might be right about that. There was nothing casual about this declaration from Steve's lips. It was not something he had just thought up; it was something that he felt deeply. It was something the Spirit of God had revealed to him—and he was faithful to that calling. I will never forget an experience we had as the two of us knelt in the basement of his Brownsburg home to invite the Spirit to be with us as we prepared to leave for a lecture we were giving that evening in Indianapolis. Steve asked that we pray before we left and requested to offer the prayer himself. Without going into details, I will simply say—if I ever doubted before—I knew *then* that this was a man who felt deeply that God had called him to do something sacred, and he wanted desperately to magnify that calling in a way that was pleasing to his Father in Heaven. In his book *Mormon Christianity: What Other Christians Can Learn from the Latter-day Saints*, Steve wrote: “I am not a Mormon, but sometimes I wish I were one.”³⁴ Each of us who knew him could feel that about Steve.

Finally, in a tribute to Stephen, one of his former colleagues wrote: “He left his mark wherever he went.”³⁵ That he did. Steve certainly left his mark upon my soul, and upon the minds and hearts of many Latter-day Saints. The scholarly world will never see Mormonism quite the same because of the teachings and testimony of our friend, Stephen H. Webb. And so, I close with Steve's own words regarding Christ, Joseph Smith, and the Mormons—a personal testimony he penned only a few months before his passing:

I believe that Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior, and I would not intentionally believe anything that detracts from that. I also believe that

33. Adam Braisch told me that Steve had said almost that exact same thing to him in April of 2005. Adam classed Steve among the likes of Harold Bloom and Jan Shipps, all three being outsiders who have developed an appreciation for Mormon history or theology—and who have been reasonably kind to the Church. For Steve, it wasn't the history or origins of the faith that drew him; it was the theology. In our recent interview, Adam said to me, “I hope that his legacy would be something along the lines of bringing Mormonism into conversation with other traditions in a way that is not arguing about the definition of Christian but, rather, actually takes a look at the ideas themselves—the doctrines—the teachings of the Church; and to what degree are Mormons a potential conversation partner with other denominations.”

34. Webb, *Mormon Christianity*, 11.

35. Rocha, “Excess of Stephen H. Webb.”

surely many, perhaps most, maybe all of the things I believe about Him are incomplete, distorted, maybe even untrue, but that I will grow in the truth of Him and about Him in heaven. I would never say or do or believe anything that takes away His honor and glory as my God, the Messiah of the Jewish people, the source of the whole world's salvation, who took upon Himself our sin on the cross, and indeed, the one who is the very reason and purpose of all of creation. I hope to be with Him forever. My journey with the Saints and into Mormonism is motivated solely by the hope and conviction that Joseph's own journey was blazed by the light of Jesus Christ and that he understood his ministry as an attempt to be of service to Him. All glory be to Jesus, now and forevermore. Amen.³⁶

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36. Stephen Webb, email to author, November 19, 2014.

The Bass Coupler

Marilyn Nielson

Being called to play the organ for the first time, as a pianist, felt like being asked to ice skate for the U.S. Olympic team because you did such a good job walking into the arena. “You already know how to *walk*, after all,” the coaches reason. “This is basically the same thing—a stride lengthened here, a leg elevated there. You’ll pick it up in no time.”

It was terrifying. But, as I would probably do if asked to join the Olympic team, I suited up. I bought a big spiral-bound hymnbook, took a deep breath, and prepared myself for a lot of bruises. I suppose I had always known this day would come. Not the way you know you want to learn Greek someday, or the way you know you’ve aced the interview and the scholarship is yours. More the way you know the dog on the corner is someday going to do more than just stand by the fence, growling. It was almost a relief when it finally happened and I could start dealing in realities.

The first reality I encountered was that a piano is not an organ. I suppose a cursory glance would reveal similar elements: they both have white keys! And black keys! But you’d have to be in a big hurry not to notice the elephant below those keyboards (and that’s keyboards, plural, you will note): the pedalboard. And we pianists, you will further note, prefer to reserve our feet for other uses, and to play the bass harmonies with our left hands as God intended!

The second reality was a softer, deadlier one. I’d had a semester of Organ 101 in college, and I knew about the bass coupler: that helpful computerized assistant that figures out if you’re playing any note below middle C in the manuals, and if you are, slings it down into a lower

register so you can *sound* as if you're playing it with the pedals when you aren't.

I planned to make full use of the bass coupler, of course. And I did.

After a time I was released as organist, but all church musicians know that a release is really just a temporary hiatus, and each time I returned to the organist calling and slid onto the bench again, I felt full-force how the course of the Lord is one eternal round. A few more kids, same hymnbook, and the same old pianist perched up there above the pedals, trying to make my fingers crawl over the keys like crabs instead of marching along like soldiers. Oh, I learned the pedal parts to a few songs along the way. I even bought organ shoes so my heels could reach the pedals more easily. But I wasn't a real organist, and even if no one in the congregation could tell when I was using the bass coupler (though that became less likely when, of all the luck, I moved into the same stake as not one, but *two* Tabernacle organists)—I knew it.

And that was the problem, really: the fact that using the bass coupler allowed me to sound, well, so passable! It helped me achieve the pianist-organist's greatest ambition: to be Unmemorable. Of course, I'm not saying we *should* aspire to this. The two Tabernacle organists in my stake play grand, sweeping music in stake conference, the kind of thing that makes your heart come right up in your chest, filling your eyes with tears and your head with thoughts of heavenly choirs. But at my skill level, there would be no heart-leaping. The best I could hope for was not to attract attention; at all costs, do *not* attract attention. Attention would mean I was failing at what was really my only task: to direct the worshippers' thoughts toward God. Not toward the train wreck in the bass line (or the tenor, which is where the trouble really happens). Not toward the inevitable accidental pushing of one of the memory-stop buttons, making your carefully balanced flutes suddenly explode into trumpets. Not toward, heaven help you, your hymnbook falling onto the pedalboard during the sacrament prayer. No, better to play the voice parts with my hands as all right-thinking people ought to, and leave the pedals to those blessed with four independently working limbs.

And yet, week after week, as the bass coupler concealed me time and again, I found that the exhilaration was missing from my playing. I love to play the piano. The beginning of a concert finds me breathless, fearful, shaking—but determined and full of light—and the middle of a concert . . . ah. The middle of a concert is like birthday and springtime rolled into one. The middle of a concert is like prayer, both praise and supplication together. The middle of sacrament meeting did not feel, to me, like the

middle of a concert. It felt like a very, very careful opening of a door, without ever stepping out into the daylight.

I began to notice my own response to using the bass coupler. Like the ambiance tool in a photo editing program, it wiped out my highs and lows, filled in the middle with an inoffensive pudding of sound. It brought me security. I didn't get nervous; my hands didn't tremble. The meeting wasn't full of risk and uncertainty. But also not . . . a delight. And shouldn't the Sabbath be a delight?

I'm not sure when I made my resolution to try to abandon the bass coupler and go it alone, pedals and all. I think I feared admitting it was an actual resolution, even to myself, not wanting to commit to something I couldn't do. Part of me thought it was silly, even somehow prideful. I never noticed whether *other* organists were using the bass coupler or not—could hardly even tell, in fact! And what right had I to put my own growth above the congregation's need to have correct notes to sing to? But the urge persisted. At first I aimed for playing one hymn per meeting bass-coupler-less. With the easier hymns, it went fine, and I gained confidence with the pedals. If I practiced enough, I could even tackle harder songs. Then I started learning to actually sight-read pedal parts (mostly on prelude hymns when the background noise level was high). Slowly, slowly, my abilities grew.

I was making lots of mistakes, of course. But I felt gradually less flustered by them. I got used to the feeling of nakedness, knowing that as I played the introduction it was just me and my feet and my wrong notes in front of God and everyone. I repeated to myself the Known Truth (not really sure if it was meant as torment or comfort) that *No One Listens to the Accompanist Anyway*. (Its corollary, *Except the Accompanist's Spouse*, was inapplicable in this case, since Sam was always too busy corralling all seven children by himself through the sacrament to listen closely to my playing.)

And . . . I noticed each week how well the typical four-verse hymn structure allows for redemption. As I started each verse anew, I vowed to get that tricky part right *this* time through. I suppose the tenors in the ward, if they'd thought about it, would probably have wondered why they always sounded so suddenly full and supported on verse 4. It was because I was finally calming down enough to take my attention *slightly* off the pedals and put it back on my left hand.

It's a delicate balance, though. I'm still a pianist at my core, and when I play the organ, all I know is that some sort of strange alchemy takes place between brain and feet, by way of the hands. It's a complete

mystery how the notes work their way down from my eyes into my feet, and if I examine it too closely, things begin to fall apart. It's the dividing up of the four voices that does it—not with soprano and alto in one hand and tenor and bass in the other, as any *decent* person would, but with only tenor in the left hand, and bass with both feet. It goes against all my ingrained mental pathways, and, though I can now mostly *do* it, I don't know *how* I do it, and my brain doesn't appear to *want* to know. I'm not saying I can let my mind wander—quite the contrary, my concentration must be intense—but I do a sort of mental unfocusing—or hyperfocusing—like one does when looking at those 3-D “magic eye” patterns or making the dots on the wallpaper pop out of the wall. My eyes see the notes and tell my hands and feet magically what to do. Only, of course, they often don't. And so, in spite of myself, I find that now and then I am beginning to be Memorable—and not for the reasons one would hope.

Starting the introduction to a hymn is the musical equivalent to closing my eyes and bumping my bicycle down off a sheer drop—just the edge of the curb and down into the street, I hope, where I will join other cyclists and be carried along in the exhilarating sweep of traffic—but honestly, off a cliff for all I know. And, as I've said, when things go wrong it's the tenors that suffer first. You'd think it would be the basses, but nothing is quite so obvious as a pedal line that suddenly ceases, so I've learned to take a quick look downward for reference and keep my feet soldiering on. The melody usually continues to exist in some feeble form, and the alto drags unwillingly along with it. But the poor tenor often drops out altogether for lines at a time. If it weren't for the fact that one of our bishopric members has a particularly strong, fine tenor voice, which carries us through the times of famine—and if it weren't, of course, for the absolution of verse 4—I'm sure the tenors would have left the ward in droves by now.

But they stay. The whole congregation stays. And so do I. Week after week I return to my efforts. I have actually begun to feel at home on the organ bench. There is sometimes a small piece of bread nearby, which I have become fond of and wouldn't dream of moving, since it has sent me off into so many pleasant reveries imagining how on earth it could have gotten from its happy position in the sacrament tray to its precarious one under the organ pedals—none of us who sit on the stand being the bread-throwing sort. There are my organ shoes, which I, being weighed down with children and other baggage on Sunday mornings, leave tucked discreetly under a choir bench and slip on

before the beginning of the meeting. And then there is my dear familiar hymnbook, or rather my *late* hymnbook—it having disappeared from its long-accustomed spot in the organ bench some months ago, to my great misery and dismay. Of course I’ve turned every place upside down, searching. That book had *years* of pedal markings written in it, hard-won and long-slaved-over fingerings; hymn chains; notes about which prelude pieces are easy enough to sight-read; chord progressions analyzed. I can hardly believe, even now, that it is gone—not to anyone who means ill, certainly. But to someone who no doubt doesn’t even realize they have it. Or . . . I just don’t know. My mind comes to a halt trying to even think of another possibility.

At any rate, there we have the whole of it. Frantic Sunday mornings, slight musical embarrassment, and a lost hymnbook. It’s so imperfect, this small, shabby sacrifice I’m trying to lay before the Lord. So insignificant. And yet, as I play the hymns with my hands and my feet—I feel a little taste of that exhilaration that comes after a good piano performance, or a race well-run. It makes me laugh to myself sometimes. I remember how, in my self-centeredness, I felt rather ill-used at times in high school because I was a fine pianist—but I happened to live in the same ward as a friend who was *internationally* renowned as a pianist. I was a fine distance runner—but I happened to run on the same team as two *nationally* known runners who left me in their dust. “This will teach me humility,” I thought to myself. But I have since learned what it is to be, not second-best, not somewhat-good—but truly *terrible* at something. Even a failure. I’ve learned it in motherhood, when I kneel weeping at my bedside from the enormity of the offenses I must have committed against my children that day. I’ve learned it in being a wife, when I’ve been sure there is no hope for anyone like me to find the daylight again. I’ve learned it in being called to work with the youth, which as everyone knows, ought only to be asked of those who are beautiful and funny and confident. And yes, I’ve even learned it in being an organist—in my clumsy, silly attempts to make music when making an accompaniment would have been safer.

And in those moments of utter despair and uncertainty, I have also learned for myself what it means to need God. I’ve learned to ask, and to hope. I’ve learned that personal comfort is not the ultimate good, and that sometimes great risk brings great reward. And I’ve learned to my surprise that failure happens only when I decide I dare not try again. And as soon as I *do* try again, it morphs magically into “that brief hiatus on the way to success.”

I define *success* somewhat loosely in the case of my organ playing, of course. I haven't left the bass coupler completely behind; nor, to be realistic, will I. In fact, if you hear our congregation singing "All Creatures of Our God and King" or "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" (two of my favorite hymns, by the way), you can be certain I'm employing the bass coupler with some zeal. I don't improve nearly so quickly as I would if I practiced more often, and I don't think my barely-held-together hymns will be causing anyone's heart to leap up anytime in the near future.

And yet something makes me keep at it on those pedal parts. Occasionally, I sit quiet and beaming after the hymn ends, enjoying the thrill of having gotten it—having finally gotten it. No one knows but me, but those moments are so meaningful, so internally sweet, that they even carry me through the other, more typical meetings—when I'm mangling the tenor line, holding out hope for a fourth-verse comeback, and wondering who will ever see or care about this unremarkable, unnecessary little sacrifice of mine.

Someday, perhaps, I will revisit this story and there will be a grand ending: a stunning solo performance, culmination of my years of gradual improvement; a ward member coming to me with moist eyes and pressing my hand as he thanks me brokenly for my hymn selection. I'd even settle for the miraculous reappearance of my poor hymnbook. But even now, as I laugh at myself trying to think of a suitable storybook finish, I hear a scripture echoing in my head: *Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things* (Matt. 25:21). Or maybe: *Well done, thou earnest and endeavoring organist. Thou hast been faithful in attempting to minimize thy use of the bass coupler, I will make thee ruler over several manuals plus a pedalboard and a whole host of stops.*

This essay by Marilyn Nielson received an honorable mention in the BYU Studies 2016 Richard H. Cracroft Personal Essay Contest.

Empathy and the Atonement

Tyler Johnson

Even as an incurable optimist, I can see the world is often drenched in suffering.

It is difficult to imagine a more idyllic home than my sunny northern California, yet even here sorrow surrounds me. I see it in the sunken eyes of a young woman who is struggling furiously to free herself from addiction. I hear it in the anguished voice of a friend as he tells me how he used to envision hanging himself because he so desperately wanted not to be gay. I feel it in the intensity with which a loved one pleads to know why God had seemingly abandoned him to the hands of a callous abuser. And it haunts the halls of the hospital where we often have to deliver shattering news—*I'm sorry, Ma'am, there is nothing more we can do for your husband; I'm sorry, Sir, but your cancer has spread to the liver and can no longer be cured.*

This is to say nothing of far-off places where suffering seems universal. Across the globe, great waves of refugees fan out across deserts and rivers, succumbing to starvation, disease, or, worse: abuse, rape, and torture. In far-away countries, warlords rule with blood and horror; evil dominion is the wont of the powerful across much of the earth. It is enough to stop and crush the fragile heart.

It is understandable, then, that the thoughtful throughout history have questioned God's love. For as long as people have conceived of an omnipotent and perfectly beneficent God, they have wondered, *Why do so many suffer so much—indeed, why does anyone suffer at all?* For the Christian disciple, these questions can be all the more vexing because even in our most difficult moments, and even when we look to God for

answers, his help is not always immediate or obvious. Even C. S. Lewis once questioned God's apparent apathy, observing in the midst of his anguish at the passing of his wife:

But go to [God] when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence. You may as well turn away. The longer you wait, the more emphatic the silence will become. There are no lights in the windows. It might be an empty house. Was it ever inhabited? It seemed so once. And that seeming was as strong as this. What can this mean? Why is He so present a commander in our time of prosperity and so very absent a help in time of trouble?¹

These questions yield no easy answers.

Yet, as I have come of age, Mormonism has offered me powerful and deeply satisfying responses to these thorny quandaries. I first sensed the stunning potency of Mormonism's intellectual answer to the problem of evil as a college freshman fifteen years ago. As time wore on, however, and as my loved ones and I became more intimately acquainted with sadness and loss, this intellectual answer grew insufficient. The problem is not with the sufficiency of Mormonism's answer to the intellectual problem of evil, but, rather, that the intellectual question is not really the one ultimately most worth asking. While I first asked, "Why does suffering exist if God loves us?" life eventually moved me to ask, "How has God responded to this suffering?" and "How would he have me respond?"

Happily, I've discovered that Mormonism also offers substantive and fulfilling responses to these more pressing questions. As I've made my own way along the pathway of Christian discipleship, I've found that Christ's perfect answer to the world's suffering is to offer to weep with us through each of our trials—he literally and individually takes our sorrow upon him. In similar fashion, I have become increasingly deeply convinced that empathy is the most powerful way in which God invites us to partner with him in assuaging the world's manifest sadness. Ultimately, by precept and by covenant, Mormonism invites us to make God's willing empathy our own. This empathy becomes a golden thread woven through the fabric of our theology and our lived discipleship.

1. C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1961), 6.

A Theological Response

No treatment of Mormonism's response to the problem of evil can be complete without recognizing David Paulsen's masterful theological exegesis on the subject. To this day, I recall listening—rapt—to Paulsen (a BYU religious philosophy professor) address the subject with force and elegance at a BYU devotional one Tuesday morning more than fifteen years ago. In that discourse, Paulsen laid out the contours of what is arguably religious philosophy's most vexing and insoluble dilemma, saying that the problem of evil not only challenges our faith but seemingly demands that we “stare contradiction right in the face.”²

He goes on to quote the philosopher David Hume, who wrote: “Why is there any misery at all in the world? Not by chance, surely. From some cause then. Is it the intention of the Deity? But he is perfectly benevolent. Is it contrary to his intention? But he is almighty. Nothing can shake the solidity of this reasoning, so short, so clear, so decisive.”³

Paulsen then proceeds to outline why the problem is even more hopeless than Hume suggests. In short, Paulsen's argument is that in addition to assigning God perfect goodness and omnipotence, most creedal Christians affirm that he has created all things *ex nihilo*. In so doing, they place God in an inescapable bind, making him not only aware of, but also an accessory to, every human crime.

Paulsen then proceeds to demonstrate, however, how Joseph Smith leads us out of this hopelessly tangled intellectual thicket. Paulsen points out that Joseph blasphemously denied *ex nihilo* creation, teaching instead that the matter of which we are made is coeternal with God and that some essence of what makes me me—my “intelligence”—has been forever and will never cease to be. If this is true, Paulsen explains, then God is freed from the unrelenting demands of absolute creation—he cannot then be held responsible for every consequence of our misused agency. Thus Joseph's teaching allows God's perfect love to remain intact, in spite of the evil we see in the world.

2. David Paulsen, “Joseph Smith and the Problem of Evil,” *BYU Studies* 39, no. 1 (2000): 54.

3. David Hume, “Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion,” in *Reason and Responsibility: Readings in Some Basic Problems of Philosophy*, 13th ed., ed. Joel Feinberg and Russ Shafer-Landau (Belmont, Calif.: Thompson Wadsworth, 2008), 65.

While I still deeply appreciate Dr. Paulsen's (and Joseph Smith's) gift to our community, it has struck me more powerfully with the passage of time that his answers do little to quench the thirst of the parched soul. Yes, it is true, Joseph's theology convincingly answers evil's cognitive *why* and thus gives us grounds to accept the existence of suffering in the universe of a perfectly loving God, but even this philosophy does little to ease real human suffering. The inadequacy is a categorical one—abstract theology packs a certain intellectual heft, but it is ultimately inadequate to address the pain of abuse, neglect, terror, and loss.

Mormonism, however, goes beyond this set of abstract—if beautiful—intellectual equations. While David Paulsen demonstrates how Joseph Smith's theology of eternal souls solves the intellectual problem of evil, other modern Mormon authors have demonstrated that Mormonism also helps ease the emotional weight of evil, and, finally and most importantly, both Mormon theology and our lived Mormon experience invite us as Latter-day Saints to partner with God in becoming the answer to the existence of evil in the world.

Empathy as God's Answer

Perhaps no book has affected me as profoundly in the last ten years as Terryl and Fiona Givens's *The God Who Weeps*. Among the many resonant ideas they articulate, one stood out to me as being of utmost, urgent importance. Their chief and most beautiful offering is this: that God most deeply deserves our worship because he willingly submitted himself to suffer, in every particular, each of the terrible vicissitudes through which we pass. Using as their central motif Enoch's encounter with a weeping God, the Givenses argue that God taking upon him our sins and suffering was far from a singular event (for example, in Gethsemane and on Calvary), but, rather, his decision to suffer with us is one of his character's central features. Their argument is that God answers the quandary of evil's existence by offering to make our suffering his own.⁴

As Terryl Givens has argued elsewhere, this central tenet—that God eternally mourns with us—is one of Mormonism's most profound contributions to modern religious discourse.⁵ While hints of this appear in

4. Terryl Givens and Fiona Givens, *The God Who Weeps: How Mormonism Makes Sense of Life* (Salt Lake City: Ensign Peak, 2012): 24–29.

5. Terryl Givens, "Mormons at the Forefront," *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life* (June/July 2016): 20, available online at <http://www.firstthings.com/article/2016/06/mormons-at-the-forefront>.

the Bible and creedal Christianity, the very idea is contradicted by the Nicene Creed (a God without passions could hardly sorrow, let alone weep), and it is demonstrated nowhere so urgently and descriptively as in distinctly Mormon scripture.

Understandably, we may naturally incline toward a conception of the Savior as a steel-skinned spiritual colossus, even when he dwelt in his mortal tabernacle. Yes, we may reason, *Jesus was not only human but also suffered immeasurably. In the end, however, we think, his divine parentage must have shielded him from the full weight of the burden he carried. His suffering was greater than ours, but given his godly strength he must hardly have felt the weight of it at all.*

Book of Mormon prophets, however, go to great lengths to teach us that the opposite of this is true. Nephi leads out, and his emphasis is unsubtle: “And the world, because of their iniquity, shall judge [Christ] to be a thing of naught; wherefore they scourge him, and *he suffereth it*; and they smite him, and *he suffereth it*. Yea, they spit upon him, and *he suffereth it*” (1 Ne. 19:9). Nephi may intend two purposes here: first, to emphasize Christ’s willingness to suffer (*suffer* meaning “to allow”); but the second purpose, I would submit, is to underline the visceral depth of the Savior’s suffering. The nails at Calvary did not glance off impenetrable wrists. Nephi wants us to understand that those weapons—and many others—found their marks in skin every bit as fleshy, fragile, and thin as ours; Christ’s searing pain raced across nerves and synapses with the same lancing speed with which pain arcs toward our brains. Nephi’s repetitive insistence that Christ did not merely pass through pain as an abstraction but suffered it in all its messy furor—just like we do—seems almost a calculated reaction against the idea of an unfeeling God.

King Benjamin goes further still: “[Christ] shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish” (Mosiah 3:7). Here, the prophet king is at pains to assure we understand that Christ did not just suffer these things *as deeply* as we do, but *much, much more deeply still*. Death is a blessed boundary, King Benjamin suggests, which separates even the world’s most beleaguered from even greater suffering.⁶

6. There is some physiologic sense to this idea. Pain stresses the body terribly. A person in pain suffers a surge of adrenergic hormones—a super-charged version of the response we colloquially call “fight or flight.” But if that surge becomes too severe, eventually the organism can’t handle it and a person passes

Yet for Christ, there was no such boundary. He, alone, ventured past the point where suffering overwhelms normal physiology and set forth into a desolate abandoned wilderness the likes of which we thankfully will never know if we repent. Paradoxically, rather than shielding him from suffering, his divinity excavated a great crater into which the dregs of the bitter cup were poured. No wonder the Savior is so expressive—indeed, his words ring with pathos—when he describes the experience himself: “I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent; . . . which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink” (D&C 19:16, 18).

Alma goes further still. While preaching to the people in Gideon, Alma gives perhaps the most poignant and meaningful three verses ever written about the atonement:

And [Christ] shall go forth, suffering pain and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pain and the sicknesses of his people. And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities. Now the Spirit knoweth all things; nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh that he might take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance. (Alma 7:11–13)

Like Nephi, Alma is insistent—with his repetition of “according to the flesh”—in emphasizing the visceral, urgent, and mortal dimension of the terrible price Jesus paid. Beyond this, however, Alma introduces another facet to our understanding of the Savior’s sacrifice. Often, when I conceive of the Atonement, I picture the Savior bent below the weight of the world, like Atlas beneath a globe freighted with the world’s sins. Alma, however, does not suggest such a single massive load; instead, he depicts a personal act of willing sacrifice wherein the Savior enters into our suffering with each of us one at a time.

into shock. While we don’t usually say as much, it is not hard to imagine that, if left entirely unchecked, this response would make suffering literally lethal.

How such a thing could have been accomplished, we do not know. Certainly, to fully realize such a vision must have involved some violation of the laws of space and time as we understand them. Nonetheless, Alma connotes an image of Christ learning to succor each person one at a time. Alma suggests a personal encounter wherein Christ invites me to lay my burdens at his feet and then, surveying my particular allotment of betrayals, illnesses, sadness, and sin, the Savior offers to suffer through all of it at my side. He repeats this process over and over again with each person in the whole human family until he has “descended below all things” (D&C 88:6) and, having “trodden the wine-press alone” (D&C 76:107), can offer with perfect understanding to succor each of us in our most desperate moments. Viewed in this light, the Atonement’s most meaningful balm is that it assures there is never a time when the Savior cannot say with genuine integrity, “I know just how you feel.” Jesus is, as Elder Neal A. Maxwell once beautifully put it, “a fully comprehending Christ.”⁷

Few general conference addresses in recent years have touched me as deeply as Elder Jeffrey R. Holland’s “Behold Thy Mother.”⁸ Elder Holland’s central conceit in this talk is that many of the superlatives we ascribe most readily to the Savior apply for similar reasons to mothers—just as Christ bore our sorrows and iniquities, our mothers bear us in the womb and then bear with us through our most poignant afflictions. Elder Holland’s most obvious purpose is to reverse engineer our understanding about Christ’s love to help us better understand just how deeply our mothers love us, as well as the depth of mothers’ collective sacrifice.

For me, however, his talk worked most powerfully to do the reverse—that is, to teach me about Jesus’s love. About halfway through the talk, Elder Holland tells of a young boy who entered the mission field worthily but who soon found himself overwhelmed by the complexities of confronting his own same-sex attraction and “some trauma he experienced in that regard.” The young elder, as Elder Holland recounts, returned home early from his mission, with his “faith . . . at crisis level,” and then soon found himself “by turns hurt, confused, angry, and desolate.”⁹

7. Neal A. Maxwell, *Not My Will but Thine* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 51.

8. Jeffrey R. Holland, “Behold Thy Mother,” *Ensign* 45 (November 2015): 47–50.

9. Holland, “Behold Thy Mother,” 49.

This boy's saving grace, however, was his mother's love. Elder Holland describes her love movingly:

His mission president, his stake president, his bishop spent countless hours searching and weeping and blessing him as they held on to him, but much of his wound was so personal that he kept at least parts of it beyond their reach. The beloved father in this story poured his entire soul into helping this child, but his very demanding employment circumstance meant that often the long, dark nights of the soul were faced by just this boy and his mother. Day and night, first for weeks, then for months that turned into years, they sought healing together. Through periods of bitterness (mostly his but sometimes hers) and unending fear (mostly hers but sometimes his), she bore—there's that beautiful, burdensome word again—she bore to her son her testimony of God's power, of His Church, but especially of His love for this child. In the same breath she testified of her own uncompromised, undying love for him as well. To bring together those two absolutely crucial, essential pillars of her very existence—the gospel of Jesus Christ and her family—she poured out her soul in prayer endlessly. She fasted and wept, she wept and fasted, and then she listened and listened as this son repeatedly told her of how his heart was breaking. Thus she carried him—again—only this time it was not for nine months. This time she thought that laboring through the battered landscape of his despair would take forever.¹⁰

As Elder Holland told the story in conference, my wife and I sat, transfixed, because the boy's mother is my wife's sister and the boy is my wife's nephew and dear friend (they are nearly the same age). We were among the first to know about his early homecoming, and we spent sleepless, tear-filled nights worried whether he would ever be whole again. My wife, especially, spent some nights journeying with him through that battered landscape, and from conversations with her, her sister, and the boy (now a man), I have some modicum of understanding of just how harrowing a journey it was (and still can be) for all involved.

What lends the story such remarkable power is the willingness of my sister-in-law (and, to a lesser degree, my wife) to enter into the boy's pain with him and the terrible price they paid to do so. For them, his suffering was not an abstraction but, rather, a visceral, immediate, ever-present

10. Holland, "Behold Thy Mother," 49.

reality that consumed their hearts and minds, at times, just as much as it did his. What spiritual alchemy allowed his suffering to become so truly theirs I do not know, but it is clear to me that the love impelling their willing suffering exerted a nearly irresistible spiritual pull on my young friend, and it was largely that force which drew him back into an orbit of safety and brought him back to his (earthly) spiritual home.

It is likewise the Savior's willing sacrifice and resulting empathy that pulls us toward him and his perfect love. As the story of God weeping with Enoch suggests, Christ's empathy—that is, his willingness to suffer with us—was not finished when he expired on Calvary but instead appears to be as eternal as his love. I learned the power of the pull this love exerts nearly ten years ago while studying my father's journals from around the time he got married. My father's dear friend had spent many years estranged from the Church, having immersed himself in hippie culture and the 1960s tide of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. Eventually, however, this friend returned to full faith and fellowship in the Church. One evening, many years after his return, my father found his friend, who was staying in our home, studying his scriptures and noted that he had embroidered on his scripture case "gravity." When my father asked why, the friend looked at him knowingly and said, "God's love is like gravity: you can hate it, curse it, and say it doesn't exist, but it is always there, pulling us closer to Christ." My wife and her sister have taught me, through their example, that it is the Savior's decision to suffer with us that gives his love such irresistible, irrepressible, gravitational power.

We Are His Hands

Once, when discussing the ideas of Terryl and Fiona Givens with my wife, she responded, "Yes, but sometimes when we are sad, we need someone 'with skin.'" Abstract theology—even when it's as beautiful as what the Givenses describe—does not on its own entirely erase abuse, heal the sick, comfort the widow, or counter power's abuses in the world. To accomplish these tasks, we must embody divine empathy—most often, we become the face and hands that allow those around us to feel God's love. In life's most vexing moments, we often cannot "fix" anything, but we can always offer to listen and to try to understand. My argument here is that, understood rightly, Mormonism—through both scripture and our lived cultural and religious experience—uniquely and actively encourages us to deepen our Christian discipleship by empathizing with those in need.

Perhaps it should not surprise us that it is Alma's father, Alma, who most memorably captures the covenantal nature of this empathy. Indeed, he suggests that empathy is not simply one among an array of important religious virtues; rather, it is—or ought to be—one of the defining hallmarks of our Mormon identity. While this may seem a radical claim, how else are we to understand his articulation that an undergirding principle by which we can know if we are prepared to be baptized is our willingness to empathetically care for the other members of the flock. Our preparation is complete, he explains, when we find ourselves ready to “mourn with those who mourn, and comfort those who stand in need of comfort” (Mosiah 18:9). We commit to do this on the day we become Latter-day Saints, and we implicitly renew this commitment each subsequent Sabbath as we take the sacrament—how better, after all, to simultaneously take Christ's name upon us, keep his commandments, and always remember him than by bearing the burdens of those around us?

Sitting in the pews on Sunday, then, we are to recognize that the suffering of our fellow Saints is, by covenant, our own. We are bound by our integrity to bear the burdens that weigh down our fellow disciples. This understanding illuminates for us one meaning of Jesus's paradoxical invitation to us to lay our burdens at his feet while also shouldering his heavy cross. Because Christ deserved no punishment himself—he committed no sin and likely could have escaped, by his divine heritage, all difficulty if he so chose—when he asks us to “take up [our] cross, and follow [him]” (Matt. 16:24), what he is really asking is that we shoulder the burdens of those around us. Their burdens are his, and so when we commit to become members of the “fellowship of his sufferings” (Philip. 3:10), we are actually promising to take up the burdens of those with whom we live, work, and worship.

It is for this reason that many of the seemingly mundane aspects of Mormon ecclesiastical organization constitute an inescapable aspect of the genius of Mormon Christian discipleship. A church run by lay clergy refuses to allocate to professional priests and preachers the burdens of parishioners. No, because all of us band together to run our wards, we are all ultimately responsible for each other's welfare. Home and visiting teaching, for example, are actually a means of assuring we each have a chance to enter into another family's sorrow, as well as celebrating together with them their joy. Similarly, geographically assigned wards assure we cannot ensconce ourselves only with those who are like us and who might make us comfortable. As Eugene England reminded us in “Why the Church Is as True as the Gospel,” the mundane

matter of working through the quotidian particulars of running a ward forces us up against personalities and characteristics that may nearly drive us to distraction—and that’s the point.¹¹ This sometimes tumultuous process buffs us, teaching us to love not in abstraction but in the face of our oh-so-mortal brothers and sisters.

This is perhaps why King Benjamin’s sermon is filled with poignant reminders that are key not just to understanding God’s mercy but to developing some modicum of it ourselves. More frequently than I care to admit, I find myself frustrated at faults I perceive in those I love; over and over again when I am tempted toward such small-minded thinking, I hear King Benjamin saying, “Tyler, you are a beggar, too,” and immediately I find that any umbrage at the faults of those around me melts away. We have no right, after all, to look askance at those who ask undeservedly for our help; we will doubtless be doing the same (at least to God) before long. The reminder King Benjamin offers—that we all incline before the divine throne, dressed in rags and pleading for mercy and help—is a vivid and potent impetus to enter into empathetic relationships with everyone we meet, no matter how mean or unimportant the person seems (see Mosiah 4). Indeed, some of our finest moments as a people are those where we combine our strength as we ride to the rescue of those in need. The ability of Mormons to mobilize in the aftermath of a natural disaster, for example, is legendary, and it has likewise been genuinely remarkable to watch our people respond to the recent call to make worldwide refugees’ stories our own—the resultant outpouring of time and resources has been heartening.

Initially, of course, there will be limits to the degree to which we can enter into others’ suffering. Unlike Jesus, our empathy cannot—at least initially—be perfect. In addition, for nascent Christians like most of us, empathy will tax us as perhaps no other Christian endeavor does. I, for one, come face to face with the limits of my own empathy daily. I am an oncologist, a father, a husband, a friend, and a disciple. In each of these roles, I make the deepening of my empathy a daily pursuit. Yet, in spite of my best efforts, I find this endeavor to be exhausting, toll-taking work.

Nonetheless, I have often found myself seemingly endowed with empathic reserves beyond my own capacities in some of the moments that matter most. This in one arena where I have found sweet fulfillment

11. Eugene England, “Why the Church Is as True as the Gospel,” *Sunstone* 10, no. 10 (1986): 32.

of a version of Nephi's promise, for it is "by grace" that I have empathy, "after [and sometimes in spite of] all [I] can do" (2 Ne. 25:23). I have found that, my own inadequacies and exhaustion notwithstanding, the Lord often honors my desire to have the strength to enter into another's suffering. Perhaps this is because the resulting spiritual connection is among the most sacred of which we mortals are capable. In what way, after all, can we more powerfully emulate Christ than this?

Perhaps no other aspect of Mormon life represents our distinctive success in cultivating a culture of empathy better than our genealogical labors. While genealogy might, on the surface, seem a fairly dowdy duty, and while some may approach it as a pro forma box to check, I've been impressed at the empathic depths to which genealogy often takes us. We Mormons delight in tales of our ancestors. Many members have an aunt or grandparent who has spent hours poring over century-old diaries or searching through reams of microfiche in an attempt to deepen her understanding of a long-departed ancestor's life. In its best iterations, all of this work symbolizes the empathic drive of members to enter into the lives of their forebears, to better understand what it would have been like to live so many years ago.

Likewise, the distinctive doctrine of performing ordinances vicariously for the deceased constitutes a call to devote ourselves to a sort of visceral, corporeal empathy. This work done on behalf of ancestors who have passed on is really quite staggering. First, think of the labor that goes into "preparing a name for the temple." In homes around the globe, members—be they teens or nonagenarians—sift through recent or ancient documents in an attempt to reconstruct the rudiments of a deceased person's life. What was her name? When was she born, and where? When did she die? Was she married? To whom? And the list of questions goes on. While the questions are basic and the degree to which the living member can really empathize with the plight of the deceased forebear is often limited, the fact that the work happens at all is quite striking and testifies to the force of the empathic impulse in Church culture.

Then, once these details are appropriately noted, a small card is created, which—again in the vein of seemingly mundane Mormon rituals with an elevated symbolism—represents the existence of a man or woman often long since passed. A distant family member, often many branch-points down the family tree, lovingly takes this card to a temple set apart and consecrated partly for this purpose. Finally, over a number of hours, the member lends his body as a temporary offering to allow the deceased's spirit a chance to access saving ordinances.

That this happens ever, at all, in a world consumed with so much empty buzzing busyness, should stop us in our tracks. But that such corporeal, focused, spiritual effort should be made endlessly on behalf of those we have never met and to whose thanks we will not—at least in this life—be exposed, is both spiritually impressive and incredibly hopeful. This oft-repeated ritual is a powerful testament to the power of the empathic impulse within the Church. Indeed, what other impulse could better impel Elijah's mission of turning the hearts of the children to their fathers and the hearts of the fathers to their children than empathy?

As I have pondered temple work as a part of this exploration of Mormon empathy, I have found that the image I describe above—of an empathetic believer entering a sacred space to do for another what he cannot do for himself—brings me back, full circle, to Jesus. For it is there, in the temple, in that infinitely repeated empathetic vicarious work, that we see a reflection—an earthly echo—of the beauty of the Savior's sacrifice.

I do not mean to suggest any special insight into the particular mechanism by which the Atonement works; indeed, I freely confess that while I treasure what understanding I have of the Atonement, it is limited and provincial. Still, while pondering on the temple as described above, a specific, visceral, and powerful image came to my mind, and that image has changed how I understand the Savior's sacrifice. I saw, in my mind's eye, the Savior entering his house and picking up a card with my name etched in black ink on light blue paper. I saw the Savior enter the "session" as I have so often done. But then, instead of the expansive and didactic re-enactment to which I am treated each time I go, the Savior is confronted instead with a synopsis of my life. There, in every particular, he suffers with me: each pain, each sin, each sickness, each sorrow. He willingly stays for the duration, feeling each lash I endure with flesh every bit as sensitive as mine. He stays with me, he cries with me, he suffers with me, and, by the end, his empathy for me glows—perfect and complete. And then, still in this vision, I see him shower me with love and then turn, pick up another card, and start the whole process again but for someone else.

Ultimately, then, Mormonism offers an answer to the problem of evil that comes in at least three parts. First, as outlined so eloquently by David Paulsen, Joseph's theology frees God from the constraints of an *ex nihilo* creation and thus allows us to believe in a perfectly loving God even in a world drenched in suffering. Beyond that, Mormonism offers us a perfectly and eternally vulnerable God who answers evil's existence by taking all suffering upon himself. Finally, and most

urgently, Mormonism teaches us that *we* must be God's most frequent and immediate response to evil—for those around us who suffer, we are, most often, God's face and hands.

Because We Are All Beggars

My argument here is that Mormonism offers an expansive understanding of empathy that rivals that found in any belief system with which I am familiar. Furthermore, in some respects—such as genealogy, temple work, and responding to crises around the world—I believe we are imperfect but that we excel. Yet, in other regards, there is still so much more we can do. Indeed, as I examine my life, and in spite of my best efforts, I am struck that I have so often passed by opportunities for empathy without even realizing they were there. In this regard, I am saddened to think how often I have been deaf and blind to the suffering of those around me. I fear that, in this way, I may have contributed to the “contraction of feeling and lack of charity” that the Prophet Joseph once lamented.¹²

In my mind's eye, I think of the poor who often arrived there through some hopelessly complex mix of poor personal decisions and even worse surrounding circumstances. I picture a young man who is coming to recognize that he is attracted to other men and who sits on the ward's periphery, terrified someone might find out. I see committed disciples, beset by doubt, who fear disclosing their questions out of trepidation that we will accuse them of sin as the impetus for their questioning. I see the childless couple, biologically barren and devastated to be so, who weep at the frequent, if unintended, slights doled out by fellow Saints. I hear the cries of the depressed woman who has just been told, again, that if she would only “try harder” her spirits would lift and her heart would easily gladden.

I do not mean to suggest any meanness of spirit on the part of those of us who pass by these suffering souls without offering them solace or comfort. Indeed, I believe my own failures in this regard have been the result not of personal pique, but of a failure of my moral imagination.

12. Jill Mulvay Derr and others, *The First Fifty Years of Relief Society: Key Documents in Latter-day Saint Women's History* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2016), 78, available online in “Nauvoo Relief Society Minute Book,” 62, Church Historian's Press, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/nauvoo-relief-society-minute-book/59>.

Nonetheless, whatever the reason, each time I “pass by on the other side” (Luke 10:31–32) I forfeit the opportunity to enter into an empathetic relationship that would lift us both together.

Perhaps King Benjamin knew our moral imaginations would need stirring in these latter days. Perhaps he envisioned our remarkable ability to vicariously empathize with some even while, at times, ignoring the suffering of others. Perhaps this understanding and vision partly drove him to deliver his stirring sermon. And perhaps it was with this understanding in mind that he reminded his listeners that the humility inherent in understanding that “we are all beggars” should be enough to rouse our faculties to a commitment to willingly enter into the suffering of those around us. King Benjamin’s entire sermon rings with empathy, but nowhere more so that when he resoundingly reminds us:

Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have . . . ? And has he suffered that ye have begged in vain? Nay. . . . O then, how ye ought to impart of the substance that ye have one to another. . . . I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants. (Mosiah 4:19–21, 26)

Don’t you see? he pleads. *Don’t you understand? Christ willingly took on him your suffering—he still bears the marks as reminders—and in so doing now asks you to do the same for those around you. Suffering is our opportunity to deepen our empathy and thus develop more fully one of Christ’s most resplendent virtues.*

Perhaps King Benjamin is so forceful—even uncomfortably direct—on this point because he understands that cultivating a moral imagination is heavy lifting and we often need coaxing to work that hard. Developing empathy for those who suffer around us is not the same as “being nice,” nor do kind acts fully suffice. Empathy, though a gift, is like a muscle we must exercise and strengthen. It requires a pause when a suffering person confronts us—a moment of silence in which we ask, “What would it be like to walk in this person’s shoes?” Or, in the eloquent summation provided by President Linda K. Burton, we might query: “What if *their* story were *my* story?”¹³ Such a probing mental task will

13. Linda K. Burton, “I Was a Stranger,” *Ensign* 46 (May 2016): 15; italics in original.

seldom leave us cool or apathetic but instead will often yield the shocking realization that *had my life been a little different, that could very well have been my fate*. Thus these moments offer a rare pivot point, a flash of time wherein my heart can genuinely soften and my spirit can grow that much more contrite. The miracle is that this purposeful moment is, nonetheless, just a moment—and yet, in it we can make the quantum leap from apathy or enmity to empathy, and this transformation can mean the world to those who suffer around us.

On a recent Tuesday, I found myself at the hospital near midnight. Over the preceding few days, I had cared for a young woman whose metastatic cancer had begun growing aggressively. As the cancer grew, she began suffering a number of complications from that growth, and the situation grew increasingly grim. I wondered—occasionally out loud to my team, but more often to myself—whether she would ever leave the hospital. Her case particularly unnerved me because she and her husband were both quite young. It was easy to imagine her husband's heartache as my own—I wondered how I would respond if it were my wife lying there, possibly dying. On that night, in particular, my heart was heavy as I rushed back to the hospital from home to attend to a worrisome new complication.

After a few hours spent attending to the patient, counseling with her family members, and consoling the other grieving members of my medical team, I headed with weary shoulders and a heavy heart out the back door of the hospital toward my car in the parking lot. This was a pathway I had traversed hundreds if not a thousand times before, but that night the walkway seemed unfamiliar to me because—in place of the bustling milieu of doctors and patients that normally envelops me there—I found myself alone, wrapped in the silence of the starry night. At one point along the path, I stopped and gazed into the silent cancer center. In my mind's eye, I imagined the hallways bursting with people, and, in that moment, it was as if my soul was infused with insight—suddenly, I could hear arising from each person I saw the worries that weighed on his or her heart. Here was a man who had just been told no further options could hold his cancer at bay; here was a woman who wondered if she could continue caring for her increasingly invalid husband; here was a man who, after coping with cancer for five years, was suddenly faced with the prospect of a divorce; here was a teen wondering what life would be like without her mother; here was a doctor terrified he had missed a critical diagnosis; and here, there, and everywhere wandered eternal souls, confined to mortality, and all carrying

loads that could easily break a wounded heart. My heart swelled in that moment, and I felt compelled forward with an urgent desire to reach out, help, lift, and heal.

Taken aback, nearly breathless from the impact of the image, I found myself stepping backward, as if the weight of the idea were just too much. It was one thing to discover—nearly unbidden—an easy sense of empathy toward that young couple with whom my wife and I had so much in common; it was another matter entirely—and an incredible and overwhelming one at that—to find myself suddenly filled with even a momentary trace of empathy extending in every direction. I have wondered since what my life would be like—what choices I would make—if I could be blessed to see things that way at all times, every day. I can only imagine such a life, and I can only conclude that it would be enormously difficult, staggeringly rewarding, and, in a word, divine.

Thus we arrive at a central paradox of the Mormon life. Mormonism may initially appeal to us because in the midst of our own suffering, our beliefs offer a cogent intellectual, emotional, and spiritual answer to the question “Why do I suffer?” Yet, if we are not careful, the comfort we find in these answers can lull us into a false security that inhibits us from entering into some of the most difficult, meaningful, and fulfilling work of becoming truly converted Mormon Christians. Perhaps it is partly for that reason that far from our baptism standing as a singular life event, the promises we make at baptism—including the one to empathically enter into the suffering of those around us—we implicitly renew every week as we partake of the sacrament. In that weekly sacred moment, we can remember that it was Alpha and Omega—the singular Being who by dint of his perfection merited no suffering whatsoever—who entered not just into mortality but likewise willingly took upon him our betrayals, sins, sicknesses, death, fears, and all other suffering. Furthermore, in that instant of epiphany we can remember that the Weeping God has made this empathy a defining feature of his divine character, and he has invited—no, commanded—that we do likewise.

It is little surprise in this context that Joseph Smith declared, “A man filled with the love of God, is not content with blessing his family alone, but ranges through the whole world anxious to bless the whole human race.”¹⁴ We will know the Atonement is working in us when the prospect

14. Joseph Smith, “Extract from an Epistle to the Elders in England,” *Times and Seasons* 2 (January 1, 1841): 258.

of suffering strikes us as so repugnant that it drives us to “pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that [we] may be filled with [Christ’s] love” (Moro. 7:48).¹⁵ Then, when the work on our knees is done, we will leap to our feet and wear out the rest of our lives by listening to those who need an open heart, consoling those who cry alone, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and seeking to succor and nourish wherever we go.

It is certain that becoming the answer to suffering will be difficult—sometimes it will wrench our very hearts—but for committed Mormons, the obligation presses on us with the weight of covenant and commandment. We cannot rightly escape the burden of compassion for our fellow travelers; empathy beats at the very heart of our religion.

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15. King Benjamin teaches precisely this principle in Mosiah 4:12–16. While we often read these verses as injunctions—that is, as “thou shalt” commandments—in fact King Benjamin lists these actions (living peaceably, helping the poor, nurturing children, succoring those who stand in need of succor, and many others) as signs indicating a disciple has “come to a knowledge of the goodness of God . . . through the atonement which was prepared from the foundation of the world” (vv. 6–7).

Death Being Swallowed Up in *Netzach* in the Bible and the Book of Mormon

David Larsen

One way to read the Book of Mormon is to be attentive to ways in which it comes across as a translated text. Being mindful of this is wise, because all translations—even inspired translations—lose something of the primary language, particularly as meanings shift when words are rendered into the vocabulary or idioms of the target language.

While the exact nature of the original language used by Abinadi, Ammon, Aaron, or Mormon is unknown, the English text of the Book of Mormon gives helpful hints. Nephi says he wrote his record in the “language of [his] father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians” (1 Ne. 1:2).¹ Roughly a thousand years later, Moroni observed, “And now, behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech. And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record” (Morm. 9:32–33). These two passages suggest that Egyptian and Hebrew elements were found in the language

1. See Neal Rappleye, “Learning Nephi’s Language: Creating a Context for 1 Nephi 1:2,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 16 (2015): 151–59, available online at <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/learning-nephis-language-creating-a-context-for-1-nephi-12/>; Stephen D. Ricks and John A. Tvedtnes, “Notes and Communications: Jewish and Other Semitic Texts Written in Egyptian Characters,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 2 (1996): 156–63.

used by Book of Mormon speakers and writers, which allows present-day scholars to look for places where the current translation displays these elements.²

Hebraic elements may be of several kinds. Some may be labeled “Hebraisms” or “Semiticisms.” These elements, which are usually syntactic or literary, are different from the standard English way of expressing things.³ For the purposes of determining verbal aspects of Nephite language, these expressions may be less useful, since they may simply reflect aspects of the translation or elements borrowed from the biblical idiom into which the Book of Mormon was translated. Another kind of textual element includes aspects that may be specifically tied back to another language, such as onomastic elements or wordplay. One example of this is the Book of Mormon name Jershon, which can be connected with the Hebrew root *yrš*, meaning “inheritance.” This is especially telling in Alma 27:22, where the Nephites promise the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi that they will give the land Jershon to them “for an inheritance.” There seems to be here a textual recognition of a connection between the name of the land as “Place of Inheritance” and the Nephites giving it as an “inheritance.”⁴ Recently, Matthew L. Bowen has produced a number of studies suggesting the use of verbal analogy or other examples of wordplay in the Book of Mormon.⁵ All of Bowen’s studies suppose a fairly strong connection to

2. For an early discussion on these methodological considerations, see John A. Tvedtnes, “Since the Book of Mormon Is Largely the Record of a Hebrew People, Is the Writing Characteristic of the Hebrew Language?” *Ensign* 16, no. 10 (1986): 64–66.

3. Examples of Hebraic elements are numerous: Andrew C. Smith, “Deflected Agreement in the Book of Mormon,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 21, no. 2 (2012): 40–57; John W. Welch, “Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon,” in *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structure, Analysis, Exegesis*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1998); Kerry Muhlestein, “Insights Available as We Approach the Original Text,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 15, no. 1 (2006): 60–65.

4. Stephen D. Ricks and John A. Tvedtnes, “Notes and Communication: The Hebrew Origins of Some Book of Mormon Place Names,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 6, no. 2 (1997): 257–58.

5. Matthew L. Bowen, “Onomastic Wordplay on *Joseph* and *Benjamin* and *Gezera Shawa* in the Book of Mormon,” *Interpreter* 18 (2016): 255–73, available online at <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/onomastic-wordplay-on-joseph-and-benjamin-and-gezera-shawa-in-the-book-of-mormon/>; Matthew L. Bowen, “‘They Were Moved with Compassion’ (Alma 27:4; 53:13): Toponymic Wordplay on *Zarahemla* and *Jershon*,” *Interpreter* 18 (2016): 233–53, available online at

Hebrew on the part of the prophet Mormon and in his compiled sources. This includes apparent wordplay coming from quotations of the Hebrew Bible, which seem to be keyed to specific words in the Hebrew Bible.

Building on these notions, this article suggests a possible connection between three Book of Mormon passages and a single Hebrew word with a wide semantic range—a range that appears to be reflected quite purposefully in the English translation of these three passages in the books of Mosiah and Alma. That Hebrew word is *netzach*.

Behind these three possible usages stands a text in Isaiah 25:8, where the Hebrew word *netzach* definitely is found. There, Isaiah announces a wondrous work that the Lord of hosts would perform at a future time: “He will swallow up death *in victory* [*netzach*]” (KJV; or “swallow up death *forever* [*netzach*],” as it is rendered in many modern translations).⁶ Similar language describing the Lord’s victory over death is also used in other places in the scriptures (see Ps. 21:9; 69:15), and this line in Isaiah is quoted by Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:54. Three passages in the Book of Mormon use a similar expression regarding death being swallowed up, with interesting differences. The first is in Mosiah 16:8. After quoting Isaiah 53 to Noah and his priests in the city of Nephi (in Mosiah 14), and after speaking of Christ being subjected unto death as his will was swallowed up in the will of the Father (Mosiah 15:2), Abinadi went on to declare to the priests the coming redemption of Christ and testified to them that, through it, “death is swallowed up *in Christ*” (Mosiah 16:8, emphasis added).

Second, a generation later, Aaron, a son of King Mosiah, taught King Lamoni’s father in the land of Ishmael about the plan of redemption and concluded that “death should be swallowed up in the hopes *of glory*” (Alma 22:14, emphasis added).

<http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/they-were-moved-with-compassion-alma-274-5313-toponymic-wordplay-on-zarahemla-and-jershon/>; Matthew L. Bowen, “Nephi’s Good Inclusio,” *Interpreter* 17 (2016): 181–95, available online at <http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/nephis-good-inclusio/>. Bowen’s characterization of these analogies as the rabbinic category of *gezera shawa* goes somewhat outside of the ordinary definition of *gezera shawa*, but his observations remain useful as a heuristic category. See the discussion in Hermann Strack and Günter Stemberger, *An Introduction to Talmud and Midrash* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 17–18.

6. J. J. M. Roberts, *First Isaiah: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), 320 n. *b; this expression is “celebrating Yahweh’s termination of Death and the sorrow humans experience in connection with it,” 323.

Third, a few years after that, in explaining why the Lamanite converts, now settled in the land of Jershon, were willing to die rather than take up arms, a declaration (presumably by Alma) says that this was because these Ammonites had such a strong hope in Christ and in the resurrection that “they never did look upon death with any degree of terror,” and therefore “death was swallowed up to them *by the victory of Christ* over it” (Alma 27:28, emphasis added).

***Netzach* in the Bible**

A natural question asks how one can account for this variety of apparently related expressions arising out of the language in Isaiah 25:8. A possible answer can be found in the fact that the semantic range of meanings of the Hebrew word *netzach*—the word translated as “victory” in the King James Version—embraces all of these nuances and meanings. Thus, the main differences between each of these passages in the Book of Mormon and Isaiah 25:8 (and also Paul’s quotation of it) can be seen as stemming from the various shades of meaning embedded in this underlying original Hebrew word in Isaiah 25:8.

This variation can be seen in many translations of Isaiah 25:8, both ancient and modern. Ancient readers and translators opted from among these senses. The Vulgate simply reads *netzach* as, “he will cast down death *for ever*.” The Syriac is more expansive, “death will be swallowed up *in victory for ever*.” The Septuagint reads literally, “death swallowed *having been strong*.”⁷

Indeed, in many contexts in the Old Testament, and in most modern translations of Isaiah 25:8, the Hebrew word *netzach* is translated as “forever.” The word *netzach* (or *nêṣaḥ*) comes from the Hebrew root *nṣḥ* (נצח), whose meanings have been the source of much debate in the academy. The following are some of the principal meanings that have been suggested for *nṣḥ*.⁸

7. Roberts, *First Isaiah*, 320 n. *b.

8. See David J. A. Clines, *The Concise Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009), 281; Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 2:716; Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (reprinted; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 663–64; G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Riggren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 9, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 529–33, cited hereafter as *TDOT*.

1. “shine, flash, be bright”—based on philological comparisons to similar roots in Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic (this meaning appears principally in 1 Sam. 15:29; 1 Chron. 29:11; and Lam. 3:18, but may be the principal idea behind all meanings of the word)
2. “distinguish oneself, be eminent” (*hithpael*, or “reflexive,” Hebrew verb form)—drawn from the usage in biblical Aramaic (Dan. 6:3) and Egyptian Aramaic
3. “splendor, glory”—the above meaning, expressed as a noun
4. “conquer, overcome, be victorious”—based on usage found in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in Aramaic and Phoenician texts—there may also be contained in this meaning (together with the underlying meaning “to shine”) the idea of a goal or objective to be achieved
5. “be permanent, enduring”—this is often considered to be the primary meaning, based on interpretation of several biblical texts—may also stem from the meaning “to shine, be bright,” enduring like the stars
6. “supervise, lead” (*piel*, or “active, intensified,” verb form)—this is the most frequent meaning of the verb form of *nṣḥ* found in the Old Testament
7. “to be clear, pure”—based on cognates in Arabic and Ethiopic

The form of the *nṣḥ* root that is found in Isaiah 25:8 is the noun (*netzach*) with the preposition *la-* as a prefix, which adds the meaning “for.” Hence, the translation given in most modern English renditions of *netzach* as a noun is “for ever” or “for eternity,” based on the sense of *netzach* as “permanence, enduring.” This is often claimed to be the principal, or most common, meaning of the noun form in the Old Testament. Passages that use the noun *netzach* and are understood to carry the same sense include (the words in italics are the KJV translation of *netzach*):

Isaiah 34:10—“none shall pass through it *for ever and ever*”

Isaiah 57:16—“*neither will I be always* wroth”

Jeremiah 15:18—“Why is my pain *perpetual*”

Jeremiah 50:39—“it shall be no more inhabited *for ever*”

Lamentations 5:20—“Wherefore dost thou forget us *for ever*”

Habakkuk 1:4—“judgment doth *never* go forth”

Amos 1:11—“he kept his wrath *for ever*”

Psalms 9:18—“For the needy shall not *alway* be forgotten”

Psalms 10:11—"he will *never* see it"

Psalms 13:1—"How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? *for ever?*"

Psalms 16:11—"there are pleasures *for evermore*"

Psalms 44:23—"cast us not off *for ever*"

Psalms 49:9—"That he should still live *for ever*"

Psalms 49:19—"they shall *never* see light"

Psalms 74:3—"unto the *perpetual* desolations"

Psalms 74:10—"blaspheme thy name *for ever*"

Psalms 74:19—"forget not the congregation of thy poor *for ever*"

For most of these passages, it is difficult to imagine a much different translation than the ones given—for example, rendering *netzach* as "victory," as the KJV does for Isaiah 25:8, would not work for the majority of these instances. The Greek Septuagint (LXX) translation of these verses tends to preserve the meaning of "strength, everlastingness, perpetuity." However, a notable difference is in the Psalms passages. There, in the LXX rendition of these verses from the Psalms, *netzach* takes on the meaning "in/to the end" (*eis to telos*)⁹ most likely referring to the Eschaton (the "end of times"). This expression of *netzach* is likely due to the understanding of the LXX translators of the book of Psalms as eschatological prophecy.

However, there are a few other important examples in the Old Testament of *netzach*, as a noun, which do not carry the sense of forever. In 1 Samuel 15:29, the prophet Samuel refers to the Lord as "the Glory of Israel" (translating *netzach yisrael*), as it is rendered in most modern English translations. Other translations render this phrase as "the Strength of Israel" (KJV, AKJV, ASV, WEB), "the Preeminent One of Israel" (NET), "the triumpher in Israel" (Douay-Rheims), "the Overcomer of Israel" (Jubilee Bible 2000), and "the Hope of Israel" (Darby), among others. Although translators have a hard time deciding how *netzach* should be translated here in 1 Samuel 15:29, the important point is that the sense in this verse is that the "*netzach* of Israel" is a person, namely, the Lord God. It is also interesting to note that among the translations given, the *netzach* is the "Triumpher" ("the Victor") and also the "Hope" of Israel.

9. The only exceptions are Psalms 10:11; 16:11; 49:19, which retain the sense of "forever."

First Chronicles 29:11 represents an example in which *netzach* is rendered as “the victory” in most English translations.

In Lamentations 3:18, *netzach* is usually translated as “strength” or “splendor.”

It is unclear how the word should be translated in Proverbs 21:28 (compare Job 23:7), with the KJV offering “the man that heareth speaketh *constantly*,” but other English translations translating it as “forever” (NASB, NET), “successfully” (NIV, ISV), “endure” (ESV), “of victory” (Douay-Rheims), among others.

Curiously, *netzach* also shows up once in the Bible with a quite different meaning, likely based on the Arabic *nadah/ha* (“sprinkle”) and means “juice,” referring to grape juice, but also connoting “blood” (see Isa. 63:3, 6).

In summary, the noun form of *netzach*, as it appears in the Hebrew Old Testament, most often carries the meaning of “forever, perpetual.” However, there are a small number of instances in which the noun apparently refers to a person (likely “the glory/strength/victor”) or to victory/success/strength. The translators that produced the Greek Septuagint kept the Hebrew meaning in most of the above-cited passages but understood *netzach* to be a reference to the end times in most of the Psalms passages.

When it is used as a verb, the verbal form (piel) of *nšḥ*, *natzach*, has an even wider range of different connotations in the Old Testament. As a verb it almost always means “to oversee, supervise.” These examples seem to refer to priests or Levites overseeing work associated with the temple (Ezra 3:8–9; 1 Chron. 23:4; 2 Chron. 2:1; 34:12–13), or leading the music of the temple (1 Chron. 15:21).

This meaning is also carried over into the participial form (*lʾmanatzeach*), which is used as a noun, as it appears in 2 Chronicles 2:17, Habbakuk 3:9, and in the heading to fifty-five of the psalms.¹⁰ In 2 Chronicles 2:17, the word refers to “overseers” of the temple construction or temple worship; and in Habakkuk 3:9, the author uses the word to, apparently, name the “director” of temple music. This last meaning is how the word is generally understood in its appearance in the headings of the psalms. It is taken to be a musical/liturgical reference to the person who is directing the choir, based on the general sense of “overseer/supervisor.” Ivan Engnell argued that the *manatzeach* was actually the king in his cultic role and was the North Israelite form of *lʾdawid*

10. Psalms 4:1; 5:1; 6:1; 8:1; 9:1; 11:1; 12:1; 13:1; 14:1; 18:1; and many others.

(“for David”), a reference to King David that appears in the heading of many psalms.¹¹ Sigmund Mowinckel understood the word to be a liturgical instruction meaning “to cause [God’s countenance] to shine,” or “to make atonement.”¹² These possibilities are intriguing—especially if the glory or eternality of the victor over death relates in some way to the high priest or the temple program—but these possible allusions do not appear to have been followed up on by subsequent research.¹³ However, the relationship between God’s face shining and salvation is quite clear in the psalms (for example, Psalm 80:3, 7, 19) and in the priestly blessing given, among other times, on the Day of Atonement (Numbers 6:27), although the verb *natzach* does not happen to be used in these passages.

The verbal form tends to take on yet another meaning in the Second Temple literature. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, it is used more overtly to signify “to be victorious” (4QBark^c) and “to conquer” (11QT 58:11). In 1QM 12:5, it may mean “to triumph” or “to shine”—although the meaning is somewhat unclear. Another Second Temple period text, Ben Sira, offers further examples of the meaning “to shine” or “cause to shine” (Ben Sira 35:10; 43:5, 13). In the Dead Sea text 4QMidrEschat^b 9:9, *natzach* is used to indicate “purification.” This range of meanings seems to substantiate, at least to some degree, Mowinckel’s speculations regarding the relationship between *natzach*, God’s glory, and his atoning work.

Regarding Paul’s quotation of the Greek translation of Isaiah 25:8 in 1 Corinthians 15:54, the rendering there of *netzach* in the Greek is *nikos*, which generally means “victory.” Although the LXX usually renders *netzach* as “the End” (*to telos*), as discussed previously, the Greek translation of the Torah by Theodotion, a Jewish proselyte from the second century BC, most often prefers the word *nikos* (victory). Theodotion’s translation was popular among early Christians, and Paul apparently preferred his rendering of Isaiah 25:8 over the LXX translation. Thus, Paul’s reading of the Isaiah prophecy envisions God’s *victory* over death

11. Ivan Engnell, *A Rigid Scrutiny: Critical Essays on the Old Testament* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 86, as cited in *TDOT*, 9:532.

12. Sigmund Mowinckel, *Psalmenstudien*, 2 vols. (reprint; Amsterdam, 1961), 1:17–22, as cited in *TDOT*, 9:532.

13. Roberts, *First Isaiah*, 323, however, draws an interesting connection between Jehovah swallowing up death in Isaiah 25:8, as he turns the tables in a “shocking reversal” as he swallowed up Baal in *Keilalphabetische Texte aus Ugarit* (KTU) 1.5 ii 2–4, thus invoking a cultic context for a priestly portrayal of Jehovah’s total victory over death, which is personified as the Canaanite god Mot.

through the resurrection, and he subsequently, and poignantly, emphasizes that God “giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 15:57).

This understanding was not unique to Paul. The idea that the Messiah, in particular, would effectuate or accompany this victory over death was understood as one of the meanings of the prophecy of Isaiah. This traditional understanding was held in later Jewish circles as well. Although written much later than New Testament times, the *Shemot* (Exodus) Rabbah, a collection of Jewish commentary on Exodus, expressed a similar interpretation of Isaiah 25:8: “But when Perez arose . . . from him Messiah would arise, and in his days God would cause death to be swallowed up, as it says, *He will swallow up death for ever*” (Isa. 25:8).¹⁴

The collection of Jewish mystical writings known as the Zohar contains similar notions: “The world cannot escape his [the evil serpent’s] punishment until King Messiah comes and the blessed Holy One raises those who sleep in the dust, as is written: *He will swallow up death for ever*” (Isa. 25:8).¹⁵

Evidence for *Netzach* in the Book of Mormon

One can see that the range of meanings for *netzach* discussed above, which can be found in the Syriac, Aramaic, and Greek translations of this word in the LXX and New Testament, can also be located in the background behind the apparent Nephite understandings of this word in Isaiah 25:8 and also in the English renditions of this underlying language in three texts of the Book of Mormon.

First, the understanding of a messianic victor is explicit in Mosiah 16:8, where Abinadi declares that “death is swallowed up in Christ.” It is clear that Abinadi, who used the words of the prophet Isaiah extensively in his preaching about the death and resurrection of the Messiah, is quoting from or alluding to Isaiah 25:8. Instead of conveying the meaning of the Hebrew *netzach* as “victory,” Abinadi’s use of or allusion to *netzach* directly declares the *netzach*, the victor, to be Christ. As discussed above, the Hebrew text of 1 Samuel 15:29 can be understood to carry this meaning, that Jehovah is “the Victor” or “the Triumpher.” Abinadi understands Jehovah, the God of Israel, to be the coming Messiah.

14. Exodus Rabbah 30:3 in *Midrash Rabbah: Exodus*, trans. S. M. Lehrman, 10 vols. (London: Soncino Press, 1983), 3:349.

15. The Zohar 1:114a in *The Zohar*, trans. Daniel C. Matt, 7 vols. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2004), 2:171.

Abinadi's overt use of the "prophetic past" in Mosiah 16:6 ("speaking of things to come as though they had already come") may also owe some debt to Isaiah 25:8, where the word "swallow" is also a past tense verb in the Hebrew text. As J. J. M. Roberts comments, "The use of the simple perfect form in this line for the future, followed by the converted perfect in the next line, and the imperfect in the following line is either a case of the prophetic perfect or a reflection of the same freedom found in archaic poetry."¹⁶

While it is unknown what word in his vernacular Abinadi used here, it appears that his testimony played off of some knowledge of the meanings of *netzach*. When he said "swallowed up in Christ," his declaration carried weight in the minds of his hostile but educated audience of priests, who knew enough of Isaiah to have defiantly challenged Abinadi to explain the meaning of Isaiah 52:7–10. Abinadi's intricate answer was cleverly sophisticated enough to set his accusers back on their heels. They probably had not thought of Isaiah this way before, but something about Abinadi's explication of the Isaiah texts rang correct to them. Dropping their charge of false prophecy, they came back three days later against Abinadi with a different charge, one amounting to blasphemy (Mosiah 17:8).

The second example from the Book of Mormon recounts how Aaron taught the Lamanite king that Christ, through his Atonement, "brea-keth the bands of death, that the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death should be swallowed up in the hopes of glory" (Alma 22:14). This verse also appears to be dependent on Isaiah 25:8, but its rendering of *netzach* is the furthest of these three from the KJV translation. However, as noted previously, the Hebrew word can carry the connotations of glory, a goal, or desired end, and thus "hope of glory" is also within the ambit of its possible meanings. Biblical translations of 1 Chronicles 29:11 variously render *netzach* as "victory," "glory" or "splendor." First Samuel 15:29 is sometimes translated as the "Glory of Israel." The coupling in Lamentations 3:18 can be translated: "And I said, my glory [*netzach*] and my hope [*tohal*] have perished from the Lord."

The composite idea of "the hopes of glory" is a beautiful way of personalizing the idea of *netzach*, especially in speaking to a king who was undoubtedly arrayed in some kind of glorious royal robes and surroundings. But he was "trouble[d]" (Alma 22:5). Yet he was seriously inclined to believe (22:7, 11–12) and had been deeply moved by hopeful desires for

16. Roberts, *First Isaiah*, 320, n. *b.

“eternal life” and for the joyous “root[ing] out” of the “wicked spirit” that he might “be filled with joy” (22:15).¹⁷ Indeed, after Aaron had “expound[ed] all these things” (22:14), he promised the king that if he would bow down and repent and call upon God’s name in faith, then he would be victorious and would “receive the hope which thou desirest” (22:16).

While this Lamanite king probably did not know anything about the lexical range of meanings behind the word *netzach*, Aaron very well may have. He was himself a preferred son of King Mosiah and presumably had been taught in the language and learning of his father and grandfather, King Benjamin (see Mosiah 1:3; 29:2). As Aaron “did expound” (Alma 22:13) the doctrine of the glorious victory of Christ, all these meanings seem to have broken forth in a rhetorical and spiritual cascade.

The third and final instance of *netzach* in this sequence arises in a context involving the Ammonites. The text explains that they had such strong hope in Christ and life after death that “death was swallowed up to them *by the victory of Christ* over it” (Alma 27:28, emphasis added). Here is found the understanding of *netzach* both as “victory” and also as “Victor,” the Lord Jesus Christ. Once again, the expression here resonates with the range of meanings of *netzach* set forth above, while it speaks specifically of the eternal messianic victory.

This all may have been a traditional understanding of the word *netzach* in Isaiah 28:5, tracing back to Isaiah’s or Lehi’s times. If words written by Alma the Younger gave Mormon his source material here in Alma 27, Alma may have been the source of this doubled iteration of Abinadi’s shorter expression, which Alma could well have learned from his father, Alma, who would have remembered it as one of the last words he heard Abinadi speak. Any such mention of that ultimate and enduring victory by the eternal Victor over death would have been as poignant to these Ammonites as it was to Abinadi. As Abinadi had chosen to be burned to death rather than to retract his prophecy, the Ammonites had

17. Although joy is not listed among the direct meaning of *netzach*, everything about victory, glory, brightness, permanence, and eminence is closely engaged with joy. Exuberantly evoking this association, some Book of Mormon author (whether Alma or Mormon) went on to coin the expression “to be swallowed up in the joy,” which appears in Alma 27:17 (“even to the exhausting of his strength”) and also in Alma 31:38 (having “afflictions . . . swallowed up in the joy of Christ”). The idea of joy is apropos in these two verses, since being “swallowed up in *netzach*” could have been readily associated with the joyous successes of Christ’s power generally.

chosen to be slaughtered on the battlefield rather than to renounce their covenant to oppose at all cost any further shedding of blood.

If Abinadi, Aaron, and Alma or Mormon, the authors of the Book of Mormon passages discussed here, were indeed familiar with the Hebrew text of Isaiah's words in Isaiah 25:8, then this study demonstrates that they had a particularly keen understanding of the range of possible meanings behind this Hebrew term. They were apparently familiar enough with the nuances of meaning contained within the word *netzach* to be able use it or to paraphrase it suitably in addressing various audiences. However this happened, in expressing the doctrine of Christ's victory over death to a variety of audiences in varied circumstances, their words coalesce around a number of religious expressions related to that Hebrew word. Mormon himself, in his final farewell following the disastrous defeat of his own Nephite armies, echoed these understandings as he called out to any surviving remnant of his people that they might know that "Jesus Christ . . . hath gained the victory" through which death is "swallowed up" (Morm. 7:5). Thus, these nuances of meaning were somehow known, sensed, and preserved throughout the various stages of the writing, abridgement, and translation of the Book of Mormon.

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The Time It Takes to Age

Rebecca Smylie

We moved to Africa for my husband's job, and those first months in Dakar, Senegal, were hard. We had a newborn and were sleep deprived. The antimalarials gave me bad dreams. We were living out of suitcases, we found dead birds in the back bedroom, and our three-year-old couldn't seem to stop crying. Increasingly, we heard her fighting with a row of new imaginary friends, who were more often than not consigned to time out in the "bird room." How would I survive two years?

It was a joint struggle at first, but before long Levi found traction at work, and, left behind, I found myself staring at the government-issued rug—a dull yellow—and wondering how these children and I were supposed to pass our days in an empty apartment. Occasionally, I would muster strength and take initiative, but most mornings, I woke to find we were once again covered in a fine Saharan dust carried in by the Harmattan winds.

No problem. I've always known where to turn when things are hard. I prayed for strength and guidance and searched my scriptures. I listened to living prophets and threw my head back to receive anything heaven would send. And yet, heaven seemed oddly silent.

There was the morning I came downstairs to the parking lot to find our car blocked in by a three-foot pile of sewage soaked rags. It's funny now, but at the time I was too bogged down to appreciate the thrill of something *not* mundane in my life. I found our building's maintenance man and tried to explain the problem, but the language barrier was real. In the end, I resorted to universal hand gestures: I plugged my nose to

say “this stinks” and when that failed to impress him, I put my hands around my neck as if I were choking. “You are killing me,” I told him.

This new culture was confusing and exhausting. I now carried a sort of low-grade stress and anxiety at all times. It was created by nagging fears of the unknown, of the language barrier, of malaria, of dirty water, of political unrest. Also I was dealing with hardships more familiar—I was lonely, I was bored, I lacked purpose, I just wanted to sleep.

My husband wasn’t unsympathetic, but what could he do? We stayed up late, night after night, talking through my unhappiness, and then, in fix-it fashion, he offered possible solutions. One night, in a burst of uncharacteristic optimism, the two of us came up with a list of hobbies tagged for their potential to make this place come alive. We got a small garden plot, we signed up for sailing lessons, we started to learn about artisanal cheese making.

It started off rough. We soon found out that the garden was inhabited by spitting black cobras. When we showed up at the Dakar Yacht Club, we were surprised to find that it was in fact only a rusted out shipping container and an old Hobie catamaran. We capsized four times on our maiden voyage, and then our sailing adventure ended when the wind pushed us into the rocky port of Dakar, where Levi and I jumped ship (literally), clambered to and then over a barbed-wire fence and hitchhiked—barefoot, bruised, and bloodied—back to the beach.

But we still had cheese. We chose cheese making as a hobby when a friend back home pointed out that because of food laws in the United States, it was often difficult and not always legal to obtain raw milk. But those laws didn’t exist in West Africa. “You’ll be able to get raw milk there,” she said. “You’d be able to make really great cheese.”

I myself had never desired or even sipped raw milk, let alone turned it into cheese. But just knowing that I could, that Africa was increasing my freedom in this one small way, I latched onto the idea: We were going to be cheesemakers.

Stories differ about how the very first cheese was made. To be safe, we could say it happened somewhere in the world sometime between 3,000 BCE and 8,000 BCE. Since ancient times, inflated animal organs functioned as storage vessels. Rennet, the enzyme that turns milk into cheese, is found in animal stomach lining, and so it makes sense that cheese was discovered accidentally, and more than once, when milk was stored in a bag made from an animal’s stomach.

I like the oft-cited theory that cheese first happened at the hand of an Arab nomad, who before starting out on a desert journey filled a sheep-stomach bag with milk. At some point on that journey, he reached for

his milk and found curds and whey instead. Voila! Cheese. Please bless, I thought to myself, that here in my corner of the desert I might find, like that ancient nomad, unexpected surprises.

Our first step was finding good raw milk. Everything we read emphasized the importance of healthy and happy cows. “The cheese-making process begins with what their mammal of choice is eating. Are the cows grazing up the French Alps? . . . Are they eating fresh clover and grasses that are only available in a certain part of the world?”¹ wrote Gordon Edgar. Here was our first obstacle. We saw cows every day in Senegal, but they failed to inspire us. Somewhat menacing was our three-year-old’s observation when we quizzed her about the foods that animals eat. “What do sharks/monkeys/lions eat?” we asked.

“Fish!/Bananas!/Antelope!”

“And what do cows eat?”

She paused, obviously picturing the cows she saw walking up and down our street, sloshing through the occasional stream of raw sewage. “Trash!” she yelled back enthusiastically.

Indeed, asking the cowherd next door if we could buy a bottle of milk was likely to yield a round of cheese with after flavors of plastic bag, cardboard pulp, and raw sewage.

Undaunted, we kept looking and did eventually find a small dairy outside of town that produced fresh, cream-line milk. At first opportunity, we drove out to meet the cows. They were the healthiest we’d seen in all of Senegal, and so at roughly nine dollars a gallon, plus a three-hour car ride on pocked and largely unpaved roads, we were closer to cheese.

Turning milk into cheese sounds easy enough. Left alone, milk sours and then curdles. This is because of a naturally occurring bacteria that turns the milk sugar (lactose) into lactic acid. To get cheese, you want the milk to curdle before it’s sour. This is where rennet comes in. Rennet speeds up the coagulation so that it happens while the milk is still sweet. So milk either spoils on its own—we call that spoiled milk—or someone forces it to spoil, and we call that cheese.

We were ready to try it ourselves. We had read everything we could, we were corresponding with experienced cheesemakers back home, and we had good milk. And yet, repeatedly, we failed. Time and time again we lifted the lid off the pot to find that instead of neatly separated

1. Gordon Edgar, *Cheesemonger: A Life on the Wedge* (White River Junction, Vt.: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2010), 399–403.

curds and whey, we had a few gallons of rotten milk. Prone to dramatics, I had to make a conscious effort not to see the failed cheese as a symbol of myself or my surroundings. I couldn't help but compare myself to the famously unhappy. "Hast thou not poured me out a milk and curdled me like cheese?" cried Job (Job 10:10).

Only once did we get to the step in the cheese-making process where we cut the curd. After heating the milk to exactly ninety degrees, we covered the pot to hold the milk at that temperature for a specified amount of time. This was important: we had to keep the milk's dark environment the same and then time would change it into cheese. It was a sweet moment for us, lifting the lid off the pot to find that the curd gave a clean break. For the first time, bonds had actually formed between the protein molecules.

We poured our curds into a mold and then pressed them with a haphazard press we'd fashioned out of old law-school books. First ten pounds, then twenty, then fifty. And then we left it alone so it could age. At least a month, the instructions said. The longer we waited, the better the flavor. We decided we'd hold out for at least six weeks and talked about the ceremony with which we'd cut into it. Should we invite people over? How many?

It was heady stuff, this aging our own cheese. I got on the Internet to look at the British Cheese Board. And why not? These were our people now: people with curd. They had conducted a study, I read, to assess the effect of cheese on dreaming. "Get this," I told my husband. "If you want more vivid dreams, try a bit of Blue Stilton. Red Leicester for nostalgia. Cheddar, it seems, helps you to dream of celebrities." We laughed. What celebrity would come to congratulate us in our dreams?

And then there came a point when we couldn't wait any longer. At least that must be how it played out, because I really do remember making plans to share this moment with friends, but as it happened we were in pajamas and by ourselves when we cut into our first hard cheese. With flair and showmanship I lifted a thin slice to my mouth. I couldn't believe we were finally at this point in our journey.

One of the lessons I kept forgetting in Senegal was that I needed to manage my own expectations. For example, I should not have expected there to be a yacht at the Dakar Yacht Club. If I were successful in managing my expectations, I knew, then every once in a while this place could really surprise me. But as punishment for my naiveté, the disappointments were always real and often hilarious. I spit the cheese out before I even fully closed my mouth. It was, without a doubt, one of the worst things we had ever tasted.

We gave up. From that point on, our Senegalese hobby would be binge watching whatever television series our expat friends had on DVD—which is how celebrities made their way into our dreams. Who needs cheddar cheese?

I never did get good at living there. I figured out where I needed to go in order to buy things, and I knew which roads would get washed out during rainy season, but I never enjoyed myself, even as the expats around me seemed thrilled about the “magic” of Africa.

I kept praying and seeking, and the answer continued to be no. I felt like a pot of ninety-degree milk in an unchanging environment. It did end though.

After two years in Senegal, I got to go home. It was pouring rain and still dark when we drove to the airport. The dirt roads in our neighborhood had been washed out since the start of rainy season, but like I said, we knew our way by now. We told our driver where to find roads still passable and huddled our daughters on our laps, still in their pajamas, damp from that final run from apartment to car. Tomorrow, I thought, there will be more cockroaches in the apartment than usual.

I have strong memories of sitting on the runway, looking out at Dakar for the last time. The sun was starting to rise on a landscape both wet and dusty. As I observed the busy of the tarmac, and with the span of the Atlantic to really sort through my emotions, I came to acknowledge (and then scribbled it in my daughter’s coloring book so I wouldn’t forget) that the true sadness of my time in Senegal was that by the end of it, I couldn’t look back and talk about ways that the challenges had grown or bettered me. Conversely, I recognized in myself weaknesses that hadn’t been here before. I was relieved and happy to leave this place because I hoped that the closing of the airplane door would create a blessed demarcation of space wherein I could overcome and change the person that had happened to me in Dakar.

I’ve heard a hundred thousand times that our trials will strengthen us, but, I wondered, isn’t this because we sally up? The glory is not in the trial itself, not just in the dust and the heat. I gave myself credit for finishing the race, but I was weary. Oh so weary! And I thought about our cheese and saw in myself that it’s not the rot, it’s controlling the rot: the difference between a carefully aged piece of cheese and spoiled milk.

These new weaknesses were confusing to me, because I had tried. I’d prayed for help all along the way, reaching for God, but like never before in my life, he was hard to find. Then seeking him yet again as I got off that plane from Senegal, bone weary, I was quietly gifted the understanding that God was okay with me in my weary state. Eventually,

I started to wonder if he was letting me experience this weariness on purpose.

I thought of Lehi, that prophet who teaches so well the value of opposition, having to travel “for the space of many hours in darkness” (1 Ne. 8:8), before getting to the tree of life. I thought of Christ, forsaken. I thought of a round of perfectly aged cheese and remembered that the passage of time was as essential an ingredient as any.

I thought of a favorite Messianic prophecy. “When ye are weary,” writes Isaiah, “he waketh morning by morning” (2 Ne. 7:4). It’s a prophecy that speaks so directly to the mornings when I just didn’t want to get out of bed, or the afternoons when I sat on that government-issued rug watching my babies play but couldn’t find the energy to join them, or the evenings where I sat still and absent, staring at the heavy front door and willing my husband to walk through it.

Was this God controlling my spoil? It felt an awful lot like rotting, but time passes and we are different than when we started. Though I may be too tired to notice, when I am weary, he wakes.

And so the point of all those cheese-making failures hit me suddenly one day. I was with my family at a festival celebration in Guatemala City, where we were happily living. Somewhere, and only by the passage of time, I was okay with a life overseas. When I told other foreign service officers that I hadn’t liked living in Senegal, I excused the country. “But I think it was me,” I would say. “It was my first time living overseas.” And here, without fail, those more experienced than I would nod their heads emphatically. Yes. It is all hard at first, but time *is* the process.

At that festival, I met a goatherd named Walter. There in the busy plaza, he fed my children milk straight from the bleating goats behind him. “Could I buy more milk from you?” I asked, thinking *chevre*. I pictured myself standing over a pot of warming milk with my Levi. I imagined lifting the lid together to see if this time there was a clear separation of curd and whey. I smiled to think that it might actually happen. What’s more, I also smiled at the subsequent thought that for us, it probably wouldn’t. But no matter, we would try again. Time would make us better at this thing that was hard for us. We were aging.

Socrates' Mission

Daniel W. Graham

Socrates is the quintessential watershed of ancient thought. He is known as the thinker who turned philosophy away from cosmological speculation to ethics and value theory. In his own time, he was hailed by Apollo's Oracle at Delphi as the man who was wiser than all others, and he was lampooned by Aristophanes on the comic stage as a quack, a sophist, and a fraud. His followers included two of the greatest traitors Athens produced, Alcibiades and Critias, and two of the greatest thinkers and moralists, Plato and Xenophon. In the end, he was tried on charges of impiety and corrupting the youth and was condemned to death. His enemies saw him as a heretic, while his friends saw him as a paragon of piety and righteousness. Who was Socrates and what was he up to that he should polarize his city?¹ I will argue, with his friends, that Socrates was a man of God who, in his own idiosyncratic way, brought about a philosophical and religious revolution.

Recent scholarship has helped to rehabilitate Socrates as a major philosopher,² and my own research on his life and thought have

1. There is no authoritative biography of Socrates. But see W. K. C. Guthrie, *Socrates*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971); see also W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 3, pt. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 14–26.

2. See especially Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991). I will follow this author in taking the early dialogues of Plato as evidence of views of the historical Socrates. (In the middle and late dialogues of Plato, Socrates arguably becomes a mouthpiece for Plato's views.)

Daniel W. Graham

In the summer of 1981, I had the privilege of studying the philosophy of Socrates with Gregory Vlastos, the world's foremost scholar of Socrates. I came to appreciate the paradoxes of the Athenian philosopher, who does not lecture or expound doctrines but asks questions and more questions of anyone he met. Usually, however, Socrates did not talk about himself but about the ideas of his companions.



The one place we can learn something about what motivated Socrates is Plato's *Apology*, in which Plato, the follower of Socrates, records his master's speech at Socrates' trial. Here Socrates tells the jury that he was inspired by an oracle to realize he had a mission to the people of Athens.

The notion of Socrates having a mission is often taken with a grain of salt by scholars. But it may offer us the only chance of understanding the philosopher's motivation in a statement that comes from his own mouth. Whereas many scholars are puzzled or dismissive of Socrates' religious tendencies, I find them to be sincere and heartfelt. His sense of mission seems to drive him to go to his fellow citizens, one by one, to encourage them to take care of their souls rather than their wealth and reputation. He maintained that the one way mortals can honor the gods is to live upright moral lives. In the process, he fairly invented philosophical ethics.

Socrates was put on trial, condemned, and executed for alleged crimes against the state. He became a martyr to his followers. In the early Christian era, Christian thinkers came to see him as a fellow seeker of truth and a martyr in the cause of righteousness, a kind of proto-Christian disciple. In my research, I was surprised to find that the day of his death coincided with what was in effect the Athenian Day of Atonement. He was, in his historical setting, a type of Christ. This, then, is the story of the mission, death, and triumph of Socrates of Athens.

convinced me that there is method in his madness: It makes sense to think of Socrates both as a thinker and as a man, both as a creature of his time and as a man for all seasons. To study Socrates is to confront the so-called Socratic paradoxes. Socrates found his truth in unexpected places. He found wisdom in ignorance, truth in opinions, virtue in knowledge, and piety in human affairs. In solving his own puzzles Socrates was, as I shall attempt to show, the first thinker to turn philosophy to a study of human good, to a study of man as an autonomous individual, or, as he was wont to say, to the care of one's soul. And in the process, he carried out what he regarded as a religious mission, one that redefined the place of both God and man in the cosmos.

A New Kind of Education

Socrates grew up in the glory days of Athens. After her defeat of an Asian superpower (the Persian Empire), Athens pioneered a radical democracy and built an empire of her own. Democracy required widespread literacy, and Socrates was a beneficiary. Socrates learned his ABCs quietly in a small school in which he was taught reading and writing, music, and physical education for about seven years.³ Like his peers, he was expected to memorize long passages of Homer's epic poems to recite. He was also expected to absorb the heroic ideals of the poems, peopled by anthropomorphic gods and goddesses who ruled the world from Olympus but often mingled with mortals, and their religious background.

As the son of a stonecutter, Socrates also learned the rudiments of the craftsman's trade, a *technē* or applied science of the sort that was making great advances. The magnificent architecture of classical Athens, the lifelike but idealistic statuary, the brilliant red-figure pottery, the swift war galleys, all were products of human crafts that came into their own in the fifth century BC.

3. John M. Cooper, ed., *Plato: Complete Works* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), *Crito* 50d–e, 51c; compare Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.6.14. Aristoxenus, the first biographer of Socrates, claims he was poorly educated and barely literate; see Plutarch, *The Malice of Herodotus* sec. 9; Plutarch, *Moralia* 856c–d; Aristoxenus fr. 55 Wehrli. But this is not the view of those who knew him best. See also Plato, *Phaedo* 97b–c, 98b; compare Plato, *Apology* 26d–e; and Plato, *Protagoras* 339a–347a, in which Socrates holds his own in a discussion of a poem of Simonides. All quotes in this paper that come from the Greek texts are my own translations, except as otherwise noted.

When he was a young man, Socrates left his father's workshop to study with a philosopher, Archelaus, who was a student of Anaxagoras and a practitioner of scientific philosophy.⁴ This philosophy consisted of a cosmological theory about how the world arose out of chaos and came to embody an orderly cosmos. In this context, human beings were seen as a part of natural history, arising out of the primeval mud and advancing to develop communities, language, and crafts.

When Socrates was a young man, a new kind of educator appeared in the Sophists. Sophists were itinerant teachers who traveled from city to city teaching short courses for money. They were good at advertising themselves and at teaching subjects that young men wanted to study. In fact, they were a by-product of the new democratic governments that were appearing all over the Greek world, inspired and encouraged by the Athenian democracy. What the Sophists offered for the most part was an education in the arts of government: public speaking, political science, and financial management, all of which would allow the have-nots to participate effectively in government alongside the haves. What the young men lacked in experience and family connections they could make up by learning at the feet of an expert in political science and public speaking.

As a bright young thinker, Socrates could choose among several paths to knowledge.

A Mission from God

In the end, Socrates confronted the educational programs of his day—traditional religion, craft technology, scientific philosophy, and political studies—and found them all wanting. In particular, each seemed to lack an account of human goodness. Traditional Greek religion taught that one should not try to be too good. Euripides tells the tale of Hippolytus, who lives a life of perfect chastity and honors the goddess of chastity, Artemis. At the beginning of his play, the goddess Aphrodite vows to destroy Hippolytus because he slights her, the goddess of lust. If mortals are too chaste, they will offend the goddess of lust; if mortals are too sober, they will offend the god of wine and strong drink; if they are too just, they will dishonor the god of deceit.⁵

4. Diogenes Laertius 2.23; see also Andreas Patzer, "Sokrates und Archelaos: Historische und fiktionale Texte über den jungen Sokrates," in *Sokrates im Gang der Zeiten*, ed. Wolfgang von der Weppen and Bernhard Zimmermann (Tübingen: Attempo, 2006), 9–56; Daniel W. Graham, "Socrates on Samos," *Classical Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2008): 308–13.

5. Euripides, *Hippolytus* 1–22.

Technē, human technology, is all about applying knowledge to make things or bring about better states of affairs. Of itself it has no morality. It aims to satisfy the needs of patrons who pay for buildings or health or ships. As for scientific philosophy, it holds that morality arises with the invention of culture by human beings. Morality is a mere convention or custom, *nomos*, designed to keep order; indeed, perhaps even the gods are a human invention. And sophists are more than happy to take the anthropology of the scientific philosophers as an excuse to dismiss morality as a mere artifact of a given culture that can be accepted or rejected at will. Thus technology, scientific philosophy, and sophistic rhetoric seem to offer no clues to the important questions of what is right and wrong, good and evil. And the *theologoi*, the religious writers, imply that human goodness is utterly impossible, possessed securely only by the gods and at best intermittently by humans as a divine gift.

Socrates went around asking questions about the virtues: justice, piety, moderation, wisdom, courage. He sought for definitions of the virtues and an understanding of what they were and how to acquire them. How far Socrates progressed in his search for goodness is unclear. He evidently gained a reputation as a wise man and won a following among young men of the city. At some point, his good friend and age-mate, Chaerephon, took it into his head to make a pilgrimage to the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi. He asked the oracle if anyone was wiser than Socrates and received the answer: no.⁶ This confirmed Chaerephon's faith in his friend. He reported the oracle's answer to Socrates as a vindication of the philosopher's project.

But Socrates was deeply disturbed by the answer. How could he be outstanding in wisdom when he had no special knowledge? Socrates was sure that something was wrong. He set out to find someone who was clearly wiser than himself so that he could bring this knowledge to the oracle and point out that there must be some misunderstanding.⁷

Socrates relates in his trial speech how he interviewed several politicians who were renowned for their wisdom and found them to be ignorant. He then went to the poets and discovered that while they were gifted in their writings, they could not explain their works intelligently to others. Finally, he went to the craftsmen and discovered that, though they had great skill at their crafts, their success led them to think they were experts in everything, and hence they showed their own folly. In the end, Socrates came to recognize that he had one small advantage

6. Plato, *Apology* 20e8–21a7.

7. Plato, *Apology* 21b1–c2.

over these reputed wise people: he knew his own limitations. He did not deceive himself into believing he had knowledge that he did not have.⁸

“What is likely, gentlemen,” Socrates explains to his jury, “is that only the god is really wise, and in his oracle he means to say this, that human wisdom is of little or no value. And he seems to speak of this guy Socrates—using my name—in making me an example, as if to say, He is wisest among you, O men, who like Socrates knows that he is truly of no value in wisdom.”⁹ Unlike most people, Socrates knew what he knew and what he did not know. This modest discovery of Socrates would have a profound impact on his life. He began to see his lack of expert knowledge—his greatest weakness—as his greatest strength. Socrates came to see himself as having a mission from the god to share his wisdom—to show others the limitations of their understanding. Socrates was no longer seeking for his own enlightenment, but seeking to point out to others the limits of human knowledge.

In his trial speech, Socrates goes on to explain the substance of his mission:

Men of Athens, I appreciate and love you, but I will obey the god rather than you, and as long as I draw breath and have the ability, I will not stop philosophizing and exhorting you and appealing to any one of you I happen to meet, saying what I always say, “Good sir, since you are an Athenian, a citizen of the greatest city and the one most renowned for wisdom and power, aren’t you ashamed of yourself for devoting yourself to maximizing your wealth, your reputation, and your rank, while you show no interest at all in how to improve your wisdom, your honesty, and the state of your soul?”

And if any of you protests and says he does care about these things, I won’t just quit and go away, but I will ask questions, examine, and cross-examine him. And if I find he has not acquired virtue, but only claims he has, I will accuse him of valuing the most important things the least and the least important things the most. I will do this to anyone I meet, young or old, foreigner or citizen, but especially to you citizens, since you are my kindred. Know well that this is what the god commands, and I believe that *no greater good has ever come to this city than my mission [hupēresia] for the god*. For I spend all my time doing nothing else but urging you, both young and old, not to worry about your bodies or your possessions in preference to or as much as your soul, how it may be as good as possible, declaring, *Goodness does not come from wealth*,

8. Plato, *Apology* 21c3–22e6.

9. Plato, *Apology* 23a5–b4.

*but from goodness comes wealth and every good thing that men possess, whether in private or public life.*¹⁰

Socrates' message is that virtue or moral goodness is more important than any other object in life. Moral character outweighed all the other advantages that might be accumulated. If that is right, Socrates' mission was to be a moral reformer to Athens—to teach the Athenians that something was more important than the material and social advantages they all pursued.

The Method in His Madness

Yet there is a problem here. What actually occurs in Plato's Socratic dialogues is not Socrates' exhortations to Athenians to care about their souls. Rather, Socrates seeks for definitions of various virtues, which his interlocutors duly offer, only to have Socrates refute them. The inquiries never seem to bear fruit, and Socrates never seems to improve anyone. Listening in as Plato's audience, the audience can well sympathize with the sophist Thrasymachus, when he interrupts a typical Socratic conversation after Socrates has refuted several definitions:

What hogwash this is, Socrates! Why are you people carrying on like nitwits, bowing and scraping to each other? If you really want to know what justice is, don't just ask questions and refute what someone answers to show off, knowing as you do that it's much easier to ask questions than to answer them. No, answer for yourself and tell us what *you* say justice is!¹¹

Socrates seems to have no answers, but only to ask questions that neither he nor any of his associates can answer. Socrates can point out the inconsistencies of other people's conceptions, but he can't provide his own answers, much less defend them. How, then, can he be what he claims to be at his trial, which is the gods' gift to Athens? How can Socrates, the refuter of definitions, be Socrates the moral reformer?¹²

10. Plato, *Apology* 29d2–30b4. See John Burnet, *Plato's Euthyphro, Apology of Socrates, and Crito* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), *ad* 30b3, which makes *agatha* in b4 the predicate; however, this requires changing the syntax of the second clause in the middle of a parallel construction.

11. Plato, *Republic* 1.336b–d.

12. For a recent helpful discussion of this question, see Roslyn Weiss, "Socrates: Seeker or Preacher?" in *A Companion to Socrates*, ed. Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar (Chichester, England: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 243–53.

This problem perhaps lies at the heart of the Socratic paradoxes. For want of an answer to the question, most scholars view Socrates as a brilliant social critic but a philosophical failure. He asks penetrating questions of his peers, but because he cannot answer his own questions, he must leave his work to someone like Plato, who can found philosophical ethics on the rock of metaphysics and epistemology. This is, of course, what Plato would have liked readers to think.

But there is a way to rehabilitate Socrates' program. The evidence is in Plato's *Apology*, hiding in plain sight. Socrates says he has only one small advantage over his peers, namely his awareness of what he knows and what he does not know—the limits of his own knowledge. He points out that he has never shirked his duty, either on the battlefield or in the forum. If he had done so, he could indeed be said not to believe in the gods because he feared death.

To fear death, gentlemen [he says,] is nothing but thinking you are wise when you are not; it is thinking you know what you don't know. No one in fact knows whether death may be the greatest of all goods, but men fear it as if they knew for sure that it was the greatest of all evils. And how is this not *the most reprehensible ignorance*, that of thinking you know what you don't know? For my part, gentlemen, perhaps I stand out from the majority of men in this one thing, and if I should claim to be wiser than anyone it would be precisely in this, that *inasmuch as I have no adequate knowledge about the afterlife, I recognize that I do not know.* But to do wrong and to disobey one's superior, whether god or man, that I *do* know to be evil and shameful. Consequently, in place of those evils which I know to be evils, I shall never fear or flee from events that, for all I know, might actually be goods.¹³

Cowardice results from fearing death. Fearing death amounts to thinking death is the greatest of all evils. But no one actually knows whether death may not be the greatest good. Hence, cowardice results from what Socrates calls "the most reprehensible ignorance." Now it appears that Socrates' courage results directly from his awareness of his own ignorance. He knows that he does not know that death is the greatest of all evils, and so he does not take death into consideration in his moral deliberations. If someone were to threaten Socrates with death (as at his trial), he would say that this issue was moot. What is really important is what is good and bad. Obedience to moral authority is good, and the god is a moral authority, so the philosopher will fulfill

13. Plato, *Apology* 28d–29c.

the godly mission without regard to the question of whether it leads to life or death.

By dismissing concerns about life and death from moral deliberation, Socrates focuses on the purely moral issues: is the proposed conduct right or wrong? If it is right, he does it; if it is wrong, he avoids it. So, by knowing what he knows (disobedience to authorities is wrong) and what he does not know (death is the greatest evil), Socrates is free to make a purely moral decision, untroubled by issues of his own personal welfare or even survival.

Consider what happens after the trial. In Plato's *Crito*, Socrates is sitting in prison awaiting execution. His rich friend Crito comes to visit him and offers more than comfort and companionship. He has hatched a plot to break Socrates out of prison, having bribed the guards and arranged for a getaway vehicle. He makes a series of arguments to persuade Socrates to cooperate with the plan so that Socrates can save himself, support his family, and continue his philosophical mission. "I, you see," says Socrates, "am not just now but always and forever committed to following none other of my ideas than the principle that seems to me to be most reasonable."¹⁴

Socrates asks his friend if he still holds that living well is more important than just living. He does. He further questions if living well means to live nobly and justly. Yes, it did. "Since the argument demands it, we for our part must take into account nothing but what we just now talked about: whether we shall be doing *right* in paying money and giving thanks to those who help me break out of here, and whether everybody will be doing *right* in making the escape—or whether in truth we shall be doing *wrong* in this action. And if it becomes clear that we are committing injustice, it will *not* be *right* to weigh in the balance whether we shall die if we stay and behave ourselves, or whether we shall suffer any other fate whatsoever, against the cost of committing injustice."¹⁵

Again, issues of moral rightness trump personal welfare. But up to that point, Socrates and Crito are talking only in generalities. What is right in the present situation? Socrates invokes a moral principle that he and Crito have often agreed upon: "one should never return harm for harm or do wrong to any man, no matter what one suffers from him."¹⁶ Socrates asks Crito if he still accepts the principle, and Crito reluctantly

14. Plato, *Crito* 46a–c.

15. Plato, *Crito* 47d–48d.

16. Plato, *Crito* 49c.

assents. This is a powerful principle, reminiscent of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount and the Golden Rule. But what is the evidence for this moral precept? In the present dialogue, Socrates does not argue further for the precept—though he would have if Crito had abandoned the principle.

In the opening Socratic book of Plato's *Republic* is the argument for following through with the precept.¹⁷ When Polemarchus defines justice as doing good to friends and harm to enemies, Socrates challenges the second half of the definition. He leads Polemarchus to see that to harm someone is to make that person worse. To make someone worse—really worse—is to make that person less virtuous, and in this case, less just. But how, he asks, can it be the work of justice to make someone less just? There is a kind of practical contradiction in the course of action being recommended. Surely justice is not about promoting injustice. Thus it is never right to harm anyone.

Armed with this no-harm precept, Socrates goes on to show that if he should break out of prison, he would be doing his best to harm the city of Athens, which has provided him countless benefits. To do so—even if Athens has wronged him, which Socrates declares the city has not—would be to do harm to another. The principle of avoiding all harm prevents him from acting in the way that Crito recommends. Again he can say that he does not know that death is a great evil, but he does know that seeking to harm another is a great evil. He turns down Crito's offer and awaits his fate.

Thus, Socrates' actions are shaped by his awareness of his own ignorance. He makes moral decisions on the basis of moral principles, not on the basis of his own expected advantage or disadvantage. Far from being a hindrance, his ignorance and his knowledge of his own ignorance guarantee that he will act in an ethically appropriate way—that he will do what is right—despite pressure from his friends or community to act otherwise. Socrates is just, and he owes his justice to his knowledge. He knows what is and is not to be done. He must not inflict harm on anyone, not even on the Athenian state, and so he must obey its laws.

17. Plato's *Republic* develops Plato's own theories, but the first of the ten books in the dialogue gives a typically Socratic treatment of justice that makes no reference to Platonic theories. Some scholars think it was originally composed as a free-standing dialogue, but then incorporated into the *Republic* as an introduction.

Morality and Religion

The dominant reaction by scholars to Socrates' philosophical project is disappointment. Socrates seeks for moral knowledge. He fails to find it. He repeatedly fails to improve any of the interlocutors he questions in the dialogues. He has a wonderful objective, but he cannot carry it to fruition. Given his objective, "nothing that Socrates can truly claim to know would count as making him possess that which is most precious: moral wisdom."¹⁸ He is on this account a quixotic figure. Yet this pessimistic interpretation cannot be right. There is at least one individual in the Socratic dialogues who is a spectacular success in his moral life: Socrates himself. Scholars accuse Socrates of failing to establish any theoretical basis for his own actions because he fails to correct others. But Socrates provides a compelling vindication of his own actions in his defense speech. And he shows in his conversation with Crito that he recognizes moral principles that he can defend logically, and he demonstrates further that he abides by those principles without deviating, even when he is face to face with his own execution. Crito blinks, but Socrates does not.

At the conclusion of his dialogue *Phaedo*, Plato has his narrator, Phaedo, say of Socrates, "This . . . was the death of our companion, the man, we would declare, who was of those of his generation whom we knew the noblest, the wisest, and the most just."¹⁹ Another illustrious disciple of Socrates, Xenophon concurs in the judgment.²⁰

Socrates had a profound effect on the people who followed him, and through them he had a far-reaching effect on intellectual and cultural history. Before him there was no moral theory worth the name. Socrates invented moral theory, the study of ethics. Socrates concentrated on questions of right and wrong, good and evil, and he turned his followers' attention to them. But he did more: he came to see his apparently negative method of refutation as a positive way of improving character. By his own lights, his every refutation was an act of moral regeneration.

Socrates came to see the individual—the soul, as he put it—as the sum of all the person's opinions. When Socrates' questions led the interlocutor to contradict himself, they revealed an inconsistency in that person's beliefs. Logically speaking, this is right: contradiction in the conclusion of an argument results from an inconsistency in the premises.

18. Thomas C. Brickhouse and Nicholas D. Smith, *Plato's Socrates* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 72.

19. Plato, *Phaedo* 116c–118a; quotation from 118a15–17.

20. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.8.11; Plato, *Apology* 34a–e.

To get rid of the contradiction in the conclusions, eliminate the premise that is incompatible with the others. Socrates allowed his interlocutors to advance as premises only opinions they personally held, and with good reason: he designed his questions to test the answerer's *beliefs*.

To get rid of contradictory beliefs, people must identify and eliminate the false belief that clashes with their true beliefs. To hold that belief is to think they are wise when they are not, to think they know what they do not know. Once they have purged themselves of all false beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and evil, they will naturally use their true beliefs to make correct moral judgments. Socrates will not have *taught* them anything, but he will have removed the roadblocks to correct reasoning, and hence he will have helped them to recognize the appropriate action.

"What kind of person am I?" Socrates asks in the *Gorgias*. "I am one who would gladly be refuted if I say something false, and who would gladly refute (*elenchein*) another if he says something false; but I would just as soon be refuted as to refute. For I consider it to be a greater good to be refuted inasmuch as it is a greater good for one to be freed from the greatest evil than to free another. For I believe that *there is no greater evil for a person than to have a false opinion about the subjects we are now discussing*."²¹ (Those subjects are what is right and wrong.)

Socrates' study is perhaps significant in *not* purporting to be a science or a craft comprising expert knowledge. Rather, it purports to be a very human type of wisdom based on a kind of self-knowledge and awareness of one's limitations. Having tested the sophists' essays in *politikē technē*, political or social science, and found them wanting, he does not try to invent his own social science, but rather retreats to a project of nonscientific, nonexpert understanding. He envisages a self-reflective, self-correcting discipline, a critique of other kinds of knowledge. It is this study alone that demonstrates what is really important and points people in the direction of the good life. He pursues a critical, nonexpert kind of wisdom—a kind of humanism, one might say.

What then is the good life? A life of morality, pure and simple. Morality is achieved by testing one's moral beliefs every day, preferably in the company of others. As for power, money, and reputation, these are all unimportant in relation to the true values. What then should philosophy teach? It should teach how to examine the soul to determine what is truly important. What is the most important study of all? Moral

21. Plato, *Gorgias* 458a–b.

philosophy, which teaches how to live the good life. As for science and technology, these studies are well and good, but until people come to know what makes life worth living, these studies are at best a distraction and often a seduction. Socrates invented the study of ethics and he was, arguably, the first ethical man—the first individual to live his life by a logical system of moral rules and to make those rules the foundation of all his actions. There were many before Socrates who lived highly moral lives, but no one before Socrates had essayed to live *ethically* by the application of rigorous moral reasoning.

Even Socrates' relationship to deity seems to be governed by ethics. While Socrates expresses reverence for the gods and admits to being inspired by a divine voice, he does not study religion or theology. Yet he seems to have strong views about certain religious topics. In the *Euthyphro*, Socrates explores the meaning of the virtue of piety, or reverence with the gods, with Euthyphro, who professes to be a religious expert and accepts the traditional Greek myths, including those recounting wars among the gods. "This is the very reason," Socrates confides, "that I am brought to trial. For when someone says these kinds of things about the gods, I find it hard to accept his views. For this reason, apparently, people will say I am wicked."²²

Though he claims no expertise in religion, Socrates feels uncomfortable with a view of the gods as fighting among themselves and acting immorally. Socrates asks Euthyphro to define the virtue of piety. It is what the gods love, replies Euthyphro. But Socrates reminds him that his gods quarrel among themselves, so they may disagree on such things. (He may have had in mind something like the conflict between Artemis, goddess of chastity, and Aphrodite, goddess of lust.) Well, then, piety must be what *all* the gods love, Euthyphro replies. But is something pious because the gods love it, or do the gods love it because it is pious? To Socrates, it is the latter. Then there must be some further reason that it is pious. Perhaps piety is that part of justice having to do with how mortals act toward the gods. But the gods are self-sufficient without mortals; so what do gods need from them? Euthyphro lapses back into saying things are pious because the gods love them. The two inquirers arrive at no solution.

There are strong hints, however, that Socrates has an answer to the puzzle. The gods do not need anything for their own welfare. But what they require is that humans treat their fellow humans with justice. That

22. Plato, *Euthyphro* 6a.

is precisely why Socrates can claim to be the best thing that has ever happened to Athens: his questions lead his hearers to recognize their responsibility to act justly and morally towards others. Wealth, power, and reputation do not produce virtue, but virtue produces all other good things. Whatever else is true of the gods, they are moral beings who delight in the moral behavior of humans. To be pious requires mortals to serve and help other mortals; that is what the gods want, and so by serving others, mortals act piously and please the gods. In the end, then, moral behavior and piety are inseparable: the gods, if they truly are worthy of worship, are moral beings, who want humans to emulate them in behaving justly to one another.²³ As one scholar puts it, for Socrates “*piety is doing god’s work to benefit human beings.*”²⁴

Socrates has strong religious convictions that operate in the background of his philosophical activities. Students of Socrates recognize that he participates in the religious practices of his community, that he sees himself as a servant of the gods, and, most remarkably, that he receives inspiration from divine sources.²⁵ Socrates comes to view himself as receiving a calling from the god through the oracle at Delphi. But even apart from this experience, he professes to receive promptings from his *daimonion*, “a sort of divine voice,” explains Socrates, “which, starting from childhood, comes to me, whenever it comes, always to turn me away from what I am about to do but never to tell me what to do.”²⁶ He always obeys the prompting, though he is left to determine for himself why it came to him. Further, he feels himself called to do one thing, to carry on his philosophical inquiries. “To do this,” he affirms, “I have been commanded by the god, through oracles, dreams, and every way that a

23. Plato, *Republic* 1.379a–b; 10.613a–b.

24. Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, 176, emphasis in original.

25. See especially Mark L. McPherran, *The Religion of Socrates* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996); with further studies in Nicholas D. Smith and Paul B. Woodruff, eds., *Reason and Religion in Socratic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Pierre Destrée and Nicholas D. Smith, eds., *Socrates’ Divine Sign: Religion, Practice, and Value in Socratic Philosophy* (Kelowna, B.C.: Academic Printing and Publishing, 2005); *Apeiron* 38, no. 2; Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher*, 157–78. On following the religious practices of the community, see Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.3.1, 4.3.16, 1.1.2, 1.2.64.

26. Plato, *Apology* 31d2–4.

divine mandate has ever directed a man to act.”²⁷ There are examples of prophetic and instructive dreams Socrates had near the end of his life.²⁸

As to oracles and other forms of divination, Socrates holds that one should not bother the gods about things that one can know for oneself, but about important questions that cannot be answered by reason—such as the outcome of a future event—one should consult the gods.²⁹ He advises Xenophon to consult the oracle at Delphi before setting out to join Cyrus's military expedition, allegedly to subdue some rebels (but in reality to overthrow the Persian government), for Socrates recognizes the action might be seen as hostile to the aims of the Athenian government. Xenophon consults the oracle, but instead of asking whether he should go, he asks what gods he should sacrifice to in order to prosper in his project. Socrates is displeased that his follower had avoided the real question, but advises him to go, since he had in effect already made that commitment to the god.³⁰

For all his belief—faith, one might say—in the gods, Socrates has no systematic theology to teach. He professes no knowledge about an afterlife, and it is dubious whether he believes in a creation account and divine providence.³¹ He firmly believes that the gods are moral and beneficent to humans, that they need nothing from humans, but that humans can and should serve the gods by doing good to their fellow men. He seems committed to a belief in a thoroughgoing moral order in the world, but beyond that he has no interest in cosmology or scientific inquiry. It is enough for humans to know that it is rational to be moral and irrational to be immoral, and similarly it is pious to be moral and impious to be immoral.

27. Plato, *Apology* 33c4–7.

28. Plato, *Crito* 44a–b; Plato, *Phaedo* 60c–61b.

29. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.1.6–9.

30. Xenophon, *Anabasis*, ed. Maurice W. Mather and Joseph William Hewitt (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), 3.1.5–7.

31. On the afterlife, see Plato, *Apology* 40c–41c. Plato's *Phaedo* provides multiple arguments for the immortality of the soul, but this work seems to express Plato's psychology and theology rather than Socrates'. On Plato's religious theory, see Michael Morgan, *Platonic Piety: Philosophy and Ritual in Fourth-Century Athens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). Xenophon has Socrates teach an account of the gods as creators and nurturers of humans, offering a teleological proof for the existence of the gods; see Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.4.1–19, 4.3.1–18. McPherran, *Religion of Socrates*, 272–91, defends this as a Socratic view, but here Xenophon's Socrates seems to become too didactic and theoretical.

Revolutionary Implications

With these convictions, Socrates passionately pursues his mission of turning people to the care of their souls and the recognition of moral imperatives. His mission brings him into conflict with powerful individuals who think he is trying to subvert the state. Socrates uses his trial as a forum to promote his mission, with predictably bad results. He is put to death as a malefactor, and there, one might have expected, is the end of his program of reform.

Yet it was not. Socrates' disciples met together in the nearby city of Megara, hosted by Euclides, and planned a response.³² Soon afterward several Socratics began publishing dialogues re-creating the conversations of Socrates, and at the same time inventing a new genre of literature. They showed Socrates seeking for definitions of virtues, asking questions, refuting, inquiring. The power of the written word carried Socrates' arguments far beyond the confines of Athens. Soon almost everyone in Athens, and many abroad, came to know Socrates in a way few had known him in his lifetime. Antisthenes, Aeschines, Euclides, Aristippus, Phaedo, Plato, and Xenophon portrayed Socrates plying his trade on the streets of Athens. Most of these Socratic dialogues are lost, but there are fragments of the "lesser" Socratics' works and the complete Socratic works of Plato and Xenophon. Socrates' disciples waged a propaganda war for the memory of Socrates, and, by the middle of the fourth century, they won. Socrates became a culture hero, a martyr and saint to philosophy.

And the philosophy that the hero presided over was not the philosophy he grew up with. Gone were the cosmological speculations and the sophistical refutations. Philosophy became imbued with morality. Ethics was now the centerpiece and the proof of any theory. To be a philosopher was to be committed to the moral life. Logic, epistemology, metaphysics, psychology, and political theory emerged or reemerged as handmaids to ethics. A theory that did not make people better was not philosophy but sophistry (which then became a pejorative term). Philosophy became an honorific title to be associated with thoughtful and virtuous people. And Athens, for the first time, became known as the mother-city of philosophy.

32. Diogenes Laertius 3.6.

When, in the second and third centuries AD, learned Christians looked about for some common ground they could share with pagans, they found philosophy, and particularly Socratic philosophy, to be especially attractive. Justin Martyr observed, "Socrates, who was more zealous in [philosophy] than all of [the other Greeks], was accused of the very same crimes as ourselves. For they said that he was introducing new divinities, and did not consider those to be gods whom the state recognised."³³ Justin saw Socrates as a martyr to the truth, who was persecuted because of his piety in accepting what he understood of the true religion. Clement of Alexandria, head of the first Christian institution of higher education, the Catechetical School of Alexandria, Egypt, also saw Socrates as a pre-Christian martyr, quoting his words from the *Apology* in defense of Christian martyrs.³⁴ Clement claimed that by looking forward to death, Socrates pursued the true philosophy.³⁵ Indeed, Clement argued that as the Law of Moses was a guide or schoolmaster to bring the Jews to Christ, so philosophy (and he had in mind Socratic-Platonic philosophy) was a schoolmaster to bring the Greeks to Christ.³⁶ Socrates was, the early Church Fathers saw, a type of Christian living, of Christian sacrifice, and of Christ himself.

There is an even more striking parallel between the life and mission of Socrates and the life and mission of Jesus Christ that the Church Fathers were unaware of, as, I think, are most scholars of ancient philosophy. The Greeks organized their years using lunar months, starting the civil year after the summer solstice. The eleventh month of the Athenian year was called Thargelion, roughly May to June, getting its name from the festival of Thargelia, which occurred in the eleventh

33. Justin Martyr, "Second Apology," 10.5, trans. M. Dods, in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, *Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmanns, 1950). Christian thinkers were, however, sometimes ambivalent about Socrates; see Michael Frede, "The Early Christian Reception of Socrates," in *Remembering Socrates: Philosophical Essays*, ed. Lindsay Judson and Vassilis Karasmanis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 188–202.

34. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 4.11.80.

35. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 5.11.67.

36. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 1.5.28, alluding to Galatians 3:24; in the image, obscured by the KJV translation, the law is a servant (*paidagōgos*, a "child-leader" or chaperone) conducting the pupil to the teacher, Christ. See Edgar Früchtel, "Eine Bemerkungen zum Sokratesbild bei Clemens Alexandrinus," in Weppen and Zimmermann, *Sokrates im Gang der Zeiten*, 57–76.

month. On the sixth day of Thargelion, two elderly men were paraded through the streets, each wearing a necklace of figs representing the sins of the community. At the end of the day, the two men were driven out of the city as scapegoats, pelted by vegetables in a playful ceremony. (In earlier times in some cities a criminal was chosen as the scapegoat and was first fêted and then executed.)³⁷ This was, in effect, the Athenian Day of Atonement, reminiscent of the ritual of the Israelites in which two goats were chosen, one to be sacrificed and the other, the scapegoat, to be driven out of the camp into the wilderness, carrying the sins of the community.³⁸ Socrates was condemned to death about a month before Thargelion, on the seventh of Munychion. He should have been executed soon after. But on the day of his trial, a sacred boat sailed to the island of Delos for an annual festival. No one could be put to death until it returned. Because of adverse winds the boat took thirty days to return home. Consequently Socrates died, not by design but by chance, or perhaps by divine allotment, on the sixth day of Thargelion.³⁹ He was, then, the Athenian scapegoat, the old man who bore the sins of his city. In later years, Socrates' life was celebrated in Plato's Academy on the sixth day of Thargelion, in a hero cult that saw him as the patron saint of philosophy and a martyr to philosophy and the truth. It seems especially appropriate, then, that the early Church Fathers should see him as a type of the Savior.

In the end, Socrates was not an enemy of religion, of science, of technology, or of moral order, as his critics claimed. But he saw the most important knowledge of humans as human goodness and morality, and he saw himself as having a divine mission to promote human goodness. The proof of piety toward the gods was justice toward men. Science and technology existed for the good they could do for humans. People should not look to some scientific anthropology to tell them where values came from, but should search their own souls. As Cicero

37. On the scapegoat ceremony, see Ludwig Deubner, *Attische Feste*, ed. Bruno Doer, 2d ed. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1966 [1932]), 179–98; Jan Bremmer, “Scapegoat Rituals in Ancient Greece,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 87 (1983): 299–320.

38. Leviticus 16. A similar ceremony was practiced by the Hittites with a ram: Bremmer, “Scapegoat Rituals in Ancient Greece,” 305–6.

39. See Stephen A. White, “Socrates at Colonus,” in *Reason and Religion in Socratic Philosophy*, ed. Nicholas D. Smith and Paul B. Woodruff (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 151–75.

famously put it, "Socrates for the first time called philosophy down from the heavens, set her in cities, introduced her into homes, and taught her to inquire into life and morals, good and evil."⁴⁰ Socrates for the first time made philosophy human and made human affairs the proper study of man—and the welfare of man the concern of deity.⁴¹

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40. Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 5.4.10.

41. This paper grew out of a lecture, Daniel Graham, "The Barefoot Humanist: Socrates and the Science of Man," P. A. Christensen Lecture, College of Humanities, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, February 26, 2015; see also Daniel Graham, "Socrates' Mission," lecture, Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, October 9, 2015. I received valuable comments on both occasions.

Transmitting Religion

A Look at Vern L. Bengtson's *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down across Generations*

Loren D. Marks

Over the past hundred years, social scientists have tended to take one of three approaches with respect to the topic of religion. Approach 1 typically pathologizes and intellectually scorns religious beliefs, practices, and faith communities, although there are now hundreds of empirical studies that link religious involvement with *increased* mental health, relational health, physical health, and longevity.¹ Approach 2 politely ignores, minimizes, or marginalizes religion.² Approach 3 engages in actively studying religion but typically with a cold, arms-length, agnostic-like feel. For nearly thirty years, sociologist Vern Bengtson, the author of *Families and Faith*,³ practiced this third approach.

As Bengtson autobiographically recounts in the book's preface, "I was to become the weak link in [the] chain that had connected generations through faith" (viii). This lived experience brought pain and tension to his family relationships and to his faithful parents. Decades passed, as did his parents. Then, Bengtson reveals to his readers, "On Easter Sunday three years ago, I wandered into a church service. Suddenly I was overwhelmed by the music and beauty, and bowled over by recollections

1. Harold G. Koenig, Dana E. King, and Verna B. Carson, *Handbook of Religion and Health*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

2. Loren D. Marks, "Mental Health, Religious Belief, and 'The Terrifying Question,'" *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 15 no. 2 (2006): 135–41.

3. Vern L. Bengtson, with Norella M. Putney and Susan Harris, *Families and Faith: How Religion Is Passed Down across Generations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

and revelations—utterly ‘surprised by joy,’ as C. S. Lewis described his own later-life religious experience. I came back. So these days I’m in church every Sunday, singing away in the choir” (xi). Bengtson now identifies as a returned prodigal, thereby punching his membership card with a group of social scientists employing Approach 4, which involves researching the data while actively engaging in religious belief, practice, and community. The group taking this approach is very small, due in part to the academy’s deeply rooted skepticism of the devout who research the merits of religion. This uneasiness only complicates matters for those seeking tenure.

From my perspective, Bengtson’s transparency and reflexivity from the outset of the volume were courageous and appreciated. Throughout the work, Bengtson (with his collaborators Norella Putney and Susan Harris) seems to engage in a delicate, artful, and precision-demanding dance between Approach 3 and Approach 4. The careful, measured, systematic work valued in Approach 3 is the *modus operandi* as the reader passes through this landmark, longitudinal study on families and faith spanning more than three decades. The ideals of careful measurement and objectivity permeate the ten chapters that cover a variety of related issues, including interfaith marriage, grandparents, “the distant dad,” and three classifications of children (“rebels,” “zealots,” and “prodigals”). However, the reader occasionally feels warmth from Bengtson’s own rekindled fire of faith that adds a relevance and passion to family-level narratives that are expressed with both numbers and words.

Methods

The featured strength of the book is the authors’ careful and groundbreaking examination of religion across generations—more specifically, across an almost unprecedented three or four generations. To conduct a longitudinal study focused on individuals as a unit of analysis (see Judith Wallerstein’s twenty-five-year study of children of divorce⁴) is an arduous undertaking. To both engineer and execute a three-decade study examining *families across generations* is a comparatively monumental and complex endeavor, nothing less than the work of a lifetime.

I now turn to two pervasive methodological criticisms, offered with regard to previous social science addressing the connection between

4. Judith Wallerstein, Julia Lewis, and Sandra Blakeslee, *The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce: A 25 Year Landmark Study* (New York: Hyperion, 2000).

families and religion. The first, from Gerald Handel,⁵ is the critique that most “family” research is not truly “family” research because it tends to focus exclusively on one relationship (usually the mother-child or marital relationship). Handel further notes that most family research is limited to data from only *one* family member (usually the mother). I have referred to this elsewhere as having only Mom pose for the family portrait.⁶ Handel continues, “No [single] member of any family is a sufficient source of information for that family.”⁷ Annette Mahoney, a leading scholar of religion and family, has noted a similar pattern in social science research on religion—and has also documented a lack of depth in how religion is measured and studied.⁸ Specifically, in a painstakingly detailed decade review of social science addressing religion and families, Mahoney reported that during the first decade of the twenty-first century, seventy-six percent of parenting research studies and seventy-nine percent of marital studies used only one or two items to measure religion variables.⁹ To summarize, most social science on religion and families is woefully narrow in scope: (a) in terms of relying on one participant per family and (b) regarding the lack of depth and detail in which religion is measured or examined.

What Bengtson, Putney, and Harris offer is a study that engages multiple participants from the same families across generations, thereby countering Handel’s criticism of the solitary individual posing for the family portrait. Indeed, not only do Bengtson and colleagues assess *both* parents, they also collect data from a child (or children), as well as data from the grandparents (and sometimes even great-grandparents). As a result, the book ultimately includes a total of more than thirty-five hundred participants. In terms of multigenerational family perspectives and insights, this is perhaps the most expansive study on religion and families to date.

5. G. Handel, “Family Worlds and Qualitative Family Research: Emergence and Prospects of Whole-Family Methodology,” *Marriage and Family Review* 24 no. 3 (1996): 335–48.

6. Loren D. Marks and David C. Dollahite, *Religion and Families* (New York: Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2017).

7. Handel, “Family Worlds and Qualitative Family Research,” 346.

8. Annette Mahoney, “Religion in the Home 1999 to 2009: A Relational Spirituality Perspective,” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 72, no. 4 (2010): 805–27.

9. Mahoney, “Religion in the Home,” 806.

In connection with the lack of depth in assessing religion documented by Mahoney (nearly eight in ten studies have used only one or two items to assess religion), a careful read-through of Bengtson and colleagues' work reveals that *several* aspects of religion were taken into account. These aspects include (but are not limited to) religious denomination, patterns of church/synagogue attendance, family rituals, religious beliefs (for example, biblical literalism), "religious intensity," "civic religiosity," and so forth. Further, an array of U.S. religions is represented and addressed, including Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and Mormon families (with sufficient numbers of each for meaningful and statistically significant cross-group comparisons). Bengtson and colleagues also sampled a substantial group of religious "nones" (those who reported their religious affiliation as "none"), thereby adding richness to the overall project. Finally, in addition to rigorous statistical analyses, interview-based qualitative data have been collected and brought to bear. No study is without flaws (for example, this one has little apparent racial diversity), but a balanced view of the overall project reveals a multifaceted gem in a rare class with no more than perhaps a handful of family and religion studies to date.

Key Findings

What were the key findings of Bengtson and colleagues' efforts? In chapter 1, the authors review several post-World War II changes in American society and in American families and posit: "Throughout Western history, during times of rapid social change, two social institutions have often served to buffer individuals . . . the family and religion" (5). They then pose the question, "Does this hold true today?" Additional questions at the outset include whether the influence of American religion is softening. cursory reports include the "softening" growth of the Mormons, the "fastest-growing Christian community in America" in the 1990s, contrasted with the recent "remarkable . . . increase in the numbers of 'nones' . . . who claim no traditional religious affiliation" (7). For Bengtson and colleagues though, the major questions of their research include:

1. To what extent are families able to pass on their religious faith to the next generation in today's rapidly changing society?
2. How has this changed over the past several decades, in the context of remarkable cultural, familial, and religious change in American society?

3. Why are some families able to achieve their goal of transmitting their faith to their children while others are not? (11)

For many readers of *BYU Studies Quarterly*, this last question is one of *the* questions of life, not merely academically but pragmatically. As parents, as lay leaders, as engaged and concerned members of a faith that matters profoundly to us, how do we successfully give, convey, impart, and transmit to our children and the rising generation that which is most precious to us? After briefly but effectively painting some sociocultural contexts, the authors dive right into this latter and central question in chapter 1. We are introduced to the Poole family, “a four-generation family . . . with a mixed pattern of religious transmission across” thirty-five years (13). A four-generation genogram (14) portrays the religious diversity in this family. Methodist roots in the first generation shift into religious “nones” in the second. The third generation yields a religious “none,” a Christian Scientist, a Nondenominational Christian, two Mormons, and an unknown. The fourth generation includes a mixed bag of “nones,” actively involved Mormons, and disaffected Mormons, with no Methodists. In addition to the genogram, the authors offer six pages of narrative detail, including religious tensions within and across generations (for example, references to Mormonism as a “cult” by an uncle not directly involved in the study). Religious and familial complexity are both captured, but in ways that are coherent instead of dizzying. The reader emerges with a feel for the Poole family as real persons and for the pluralistic options they have pursued. We see several cases where religion was not successfully transmitted, as well as instances where it was, thereby commencing the central conversation of the book.

As *Families and Faith* progresses, the pattern the authors develop for educating the reader seems to be as follows: (1) briefly present relevant socio-religious context using past and present data from a variety of sources, (2) pose difficult related questions, and then (3) offer responses based on their own data set, including rich qualitative case studies (occasionally accompanied by genograms) and descriptive statistics (often assisted by tables, bar charts, and pie charts to assist the visual learners among us). Following variations of this pattern, the authors present textured responses to the overarching questions they pose. This heuristic approach tends to be an effective one, and the created cadence is an intellectually satisfying one.

In chapter 2, context is again offered and the tough question is, How did religion and spirituality change across generations (“age cohorts”)

on a national level over the course of the twentieth century? Here, however, instead of using one multigenerational family, the authors present qualitative data from a religiously diverse smattering of participants (Nondenominational Christian, Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Methodist, Mormon, Christian Scientist, Evangelical, Atheist, “None,” and New Age spirituality). The chapter shows off the richly pluralistic nature of the sample and serves as an effective demonstration of the wide array of belief and practice in the United States (not only across but also within faiths). Bengtson, a leading scholar of life course theory (as developed by Glen Elder and Tamara Hareven)¹⁰ also casts a sensitive eye to national cohorts and captures religious continuity and change across seven twentieth-century age cohorts: World War I (1900–1915); Depression Era (1916–31); Silent Generation (1932–45); Older Boomers (1946–54); Younger Boomers (1955–64); Generation X (1965–79); and Millennials (1980–88). Thirty cross-cohort, compare and contrast findings are captured in a single figure (52). One key documented transformation includes a shifting conception of God as “external” to “internal” after the Depression Era—and an increasingly subjective vision of God among Millennials that “God is whatever you want it to be.” Accompanying this increasingly fluid vision of God is an increasingly fluid and unstructured vision of religious practice and “church” that shifted from a “religious practice equals church” vision among the World War I cohort to a “spiritual practice equals NOT in a church” among the Younger Boomers who came of age during the Age of Aquarius.

The question of chapter 3 is captured in the title “Has Family Influence Declined?” More specifically, given the power of contemporary American culture, is parental religious influence nonexistent, weak, moderate, or salient on the whole? Bengtson, Putney, and Harris attack this question primarily with statistical survey data and present an array of tables that contrast parent-child religious transmission in 1970 (the commencement of the study) with 2005 (the thirty-five-year point of the study). To cite a core question of social science, the response to “has family influence declined?” is “it depends.” For example, the correlations between parents and children on “religious intensity” and “biblical

10. Glen Elder, ed., *Life Course Dynamics: Trajectories and Transitions, 1968–1980* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985); Tamara Hareven, ed., *Aging and Generational Relations: Life Course and Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1996).

literalism” have *increased* moderately (nine and five points, respectively), yet “religious participation” took a nine-point dip between 1970 and 2005 (55). In one of the more striking reports in the book, we see that four of the five major denominations sampled (Evangelical Protestant, Mainline Protestant, Catholic, Jewish) suffered losses with respect to the “percentage of parents whose young adult children have the same religious tradition” (58). The Evangelical and Jewish declines between 1970 and 2005 are significant but moderate (8 percent and 12 percent, respectively), but the Mainline (decline from 59 percent to 26 percent) and Catholic (decline from 84 percent to 43 percent) declines are substantial—both represent a relative loss of roughly half from 1970 to 2005.

The Mormons were the only denomination to increase in retention, moving up 18 points (from 67 percent to 85 percent). However, the Mormon increase in transmission/retention was surpassed by the “nones,” whose effectiveness in transmitting their lack of religious denomination increased 23 percentage points, from 40 percent to 63 percent. Following this increase, “nones” are transmitting their tradition (or abstention from tradition) with more effectiveness than all surveyed denominations except the Jewish (82 percent) and Mormon (85 percent) faiths.

Part 1 of the book (chapters 1, 2, and 3) conveys the message that, in spite of some documented declines, parents *do* continue to be a force in their children’s faith. In part 2, “Family Patterns and Religious Momentum across Generations” (chapters 4, 5, and 6), Bengtson and colleagues shift their attention to *how* and *why* families pass their faith on—or fail to do so. The authors explain that for “many young adults, parents have been the primary influence on their spiritual and religious development.” However, this primary influence can range from profoundly positive to destructively negative, in part because “relations with parents are linked to their first conceptions of God” (71). Chapter 4 invokes detailed qualitative case studies from seven different families to illustrate and animate the reality that the closeness and quality of parent-child relations matters significantly in religious transmission. Specifically, for all religious groups studied, the rate of transmission was at least 9 percentage points higher in “close” parent-child relationships than in those that were “not close.” Although there is mother-father variation of influence across faith and both parents are clearly significant influences, generally, “for religious transmission, having a close bond with one’s *father* matters even more than a close relationship with the mother” (76, emphasis in original). In one of the more important take-home messages from the book, the authors summarize, “in tightknit religious traditions such as

Mormon, Jewish, and Evangelical, the chances of passing on faith are highly dependent on the quality of parent-child relationships. . . . [Even] setting a good example, teaching the right beliefs and practices . . . [are] not sufficient for transmission” without “emotional bonding” (78).

Chapter 5, “The Unexpected Importance of Grandparents (and Great-Grandparents),” is the thinnest chapter in the book (both in terms of page count and in terms of depth and breadth of content). Predictably, grandparents matter significantly less than parents in terms of children’s religious development. However, readers are informed of the important reality that for an occasional child, a grandparent’s religious influence can be profound, consistent with the work of Burr and colleagues.¹¹

Chapter 6 addresses the question of how interfaith marriage and divorce affect religious continuity across generations. This chapter, like most, features an effective blending of quantitative data, visual tables, and qualitative narratives that add color. The brief answer to the interfaith portion of the above question is that “marrying someone from the same faith significantly increases the likelihood of religious transmission across generations. This is particularly true in . . . Judaism, Mormonism, [and] Conservative Protestantism” (121), and in marriages where both spouses are religiously involved together. The supporting data, offered later in the chapter, indicate more than two-thirds of children born to same-faith marriages “followed their parents” faith, while less than one-fourth of children born to mixed-faith marriages followed *either* the mother’s or father’s faith (127). With respect to the question of divorce and religious continuity across generations, the apparent influence is relatively small. Previous research indicates that divorce (and remarriage) both diminish the likelihood of faith being successfully transmitted, but Bengtson and colleagues find a modest overall decrease of only 10 percentage points: 55 percent in intact marriages, 45 percent in families of divorce (117). An interesting point of my own extrapolation is that based on the above data: a child of divorce is still about twice as likely to follow the faith of their parent than a child in an interfaith marriage.

Part 3 (chapters 7–10) of *Families and Faith* addresses the question (and section title) “Will They Leave, or Will They Stay?” The first chapter in this section (7) presents a tripartite typology of “young adults who

11. Wesley Burr, Loren Marks, and Randal Day, *Sacred Matters: Religion and Spirituality in Families* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

have taken a very different spiritual path than a highly religious parent” (132). The three types include (1) rebels, who actively reject their parents’ religious beliefs and practices; (2) zealots, who are significantly more committed to faith than their parents; and (3) prodigals (or boomerangs), who experience a period of life as a rebel but return to their parents’ religious roots. The chapter is intriguing conceptually and presents detailed reconstructed histories of multiple families and three different types of outcomes (142), but this chapter is comparatively weak in terms of support from the quantitative data that buttress most of the book’s findings.

Chapter 8 offers insight into the families of nonreligious youth or “nones.” As in chapter 7, we are offered a typology—this time including (the self-explanatory) designations: (1) atheists, (2) agnostics, (3) religious but unaffiliated, and (4) religiously indifferent (147). These types are not fixed—the authors document some movement between categories—but these nuances help readers to see that not all “nones” are identical. A related note on the growing size of this group is that at the commencement of Bengtson’s project in 1970, 11 percent of participants reported “no religious affiliation.” The 2005 report revealed a 36 percent figure—a “more than 300% increase in just thirty-five years” (149). Four qualitative, family-level narratives reveal varied paths (from Catholic, Jewish, Mormon, and Nondenominational roots) to the “none” end-point for the fourth generation. While variation within the “nones” is acknowledged, the authors emphasize on an implicitly complimentary note that “many of the nonreligious parents were more coherent and passionate about their ethical principles than some of the ‘religious’ parents in our study” (163).

Chapter 9, “The Power of Community: Families of Mormons, Jews, and Evangelicals,” will likely be the most fascinating chapter of *Families and Faith* for many *BYU Studies Quarterly* readers. At the chapter’s outset, the authors offer multiple reasons for this focused, in-depth comparison of these three faiths. Those reasons include: (1) these three religious traditions had “the highest degree of family continuity in religion across generations”; (2) all three groups are, at some level, minorities who have faced “ridicule or oppression”—with Mormons and Jews in particular sharing histories “rife with prejudice and persecution”; and (3) “in each of these religious groups religious practices are highly interconnected with family activities” (166), and high (often pinnacle) value is placed on keeping the faith across generations.

This chapter is based almost solely on qualitative methods but is careful, textured, and thorough in feel. Brief demographics of each faith are offered, but the qualitative data provide deeper insight and reveal that the authors have done their due diligence with the details. In discussing Mormon families, for example, the authors discuss early morning seminary, the LDS missionary program, family home evening, temple work, and the doctrine of eternal marriage and families. The authors also briefly foray into stickier issues including apostasy, the difficulties of prematurely ended missionary service, church discipline (such as excommunication), and children leaving the faith.

A four-page, multigenerational portrait of the Shepherd family does a more than credible job of capturing the vicissitudes of Mormon life in a family that strives hard but, like all of us, falls short of the celestial ideal. The children of the fourth generation prove to be a scattered lot. One family line features family stability and continuity, with thirteen of thirteen grandchildren still reportedly living as active and “practicing Mormons” (169–70). Another family line features reports of atheism, agnosticism, and a tendency toward no religious affiliation. The authors conclude the section on the four-generation Shepherd family by noting a significant rift between these family lines with “no indication of any efforts to reconcile this division” (171). The overall picture of the Mormon (or once-Mormon) Shepherd family exudes bittersweet authenticity. To be more precise, Bengtson and colleagues’ work here is not a snapshot; it is a very costly thirty-five-year motion picture.

Through the Shepherds, the Liebermans and Rosenbergs (the Jewish case study families), and the Wilsons (the Evangelical case study family), we are able to see, at some level, how individual and marital-level decisions often have echoes and influence “unto the third and fourth generation,” to borrow the Old Testament phrase. It is this perspective and vantage that, in my estimation, makes this book a unique and invaluable contribution to the expanding body of research on religion and family—a body based almost exclusively on one-time designs that offer snapshots but little sense of the process of time, much less the effective capturing and reflection of three and a half decades of continuity and change.

The transition from chapter 9 to 10 includes another pastiche of take-home bullet points—a list of top threats to religious transmission, if you will. It includes (1) “Marriage outside the faith or to someone who leaves the faith” (182); (2) parental religiosity—doing too little or

pushing too hard; (3) parental hypocrisy in terms of religious behavior; and (4) “other role models—aunts, uncles, grandparents—who discourage religious transmission” (182). In spite of these and other threats to religious transmission and continuity, the *Families and Faith* data nevertheless indicate that six out of ten young adult children report the same religious tradition as their parents (185).

In addition to summarizing key points from the volume, the concluding chapter delivers on its promised subtitle “What We Have Learned and How It Might Be Useful.” Bengtson, Putney, and Harris offer several pragmatic and application-based points. From a potential list of more than thirty, I feel the most valuable and relevant include the following:

- “Parental warmth is the key to successful [religious] transmission” (186).
- “Interfaith marriage and divorce deter religious transmission” (187).
- “Families *do matter* in determining the . . . religious outcomes of young adults, and they matter a great deal” (195, emphasis in original).
- “Fervent faith cannot compensate for a distant dad” (196). To borrow a phrase from Robert Ingersoll, “It is difficult for a child to find a father in God, unless the child first finds something of God in his father.”¹²
- “The most successful programs fostering intergenerational connections and the nurturing of families have been instituted by the Mormons, of which a prime example is their Family Home Evening” (202).
- “Take a long-range view.” In other words, when things go wrong, “don’t panic” and overcorrect (203). The race is long, which leads us to the final point:
- “Don’t give up on Prodigals, because many do return” (197). As the reader is aware, a living example is that of Vern Bengtson himself.

This book is made up of ten chapters, thirty-five years of quantitative and qualitative sociological field work, thirty-five hundred participants, and a literal lifetime of investment. Does Bengtson, Putney, and

12. Quoted in Marks and Dollahite, *Religion and Families*, 196.

Harris's *Families and Faith* warrant the appellation of *magnum opus*? I will raise the question but leave the judgment to others. Is it a book you should consider reading? Certainly. In my careful and considered judgment as a scholar of families and religion, this volume, as a complete work, represents one of the five most comprehensive and expansive studies yet published at the nexus of religion and family life.

Loren D. Marks is Professor of Family Studies at Brigham Young University. He received a PhD from the University of Delaware in 2002. Focusing his research on religion and family, his published articles include "Religious Faith and Transformational Processes in Marriage," *Family Relations* 62 (December 2013): 808–823; and "A Qualitative Exploration of Why Faith Matters in African American Marriages and Families," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 43, no. 5 (2012): 695–714. He has also contributed to the book *Successful Marriages and Families: Proclamation Principles and Research Perspectives* (2012) published by BYU Studies.

Brian D. Stubbs. *Exploring the Explanatory Power of Semitic and Egyptian in Uto-Aztecan*.

Provo, Utah: Grover Publications, 2015.

Reviewed by Dirk Elzinga

Brian Stubbs, a well-respected linguist with numerous publications on the history of Uto-Aztecan (UA) languages under his belt,¹ has finally released his magnum opus, a compendium of lexical, phonological, and grammatical data that provides evidence for infusions of ancient Near Eastern languages in Uto-Aztecan grammar and lexicon.

The claim for these infusions is based on the linguistic notion of *cognate*. Two words are cognate if it can be demonstrated that they both have a common historical source and that their sound (and meaning) differences are due to normally occurring linguistic change. For instance, the English words *father* and *thin* are cognate with Latin *pater* and *tenuis*. They do not look exactly alike, but the correspondences between the sounds of English and the sounds of Latin are regular and help establish these pairs of words as cognates.

1. See Brian D. Stubbs, "The Labial Labyrinth in Uto-Aztecan," *International Journal of American Linguistics* 61, no. 4 (1995): 396–422; Brian D. Stubbs, "Looking Over vs. Overlooking Native American Languages: Let's Void the Void," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 1–49; Brian D. Stubbs, "More Palatable Reconstructions for Uto-Aztecan Palatals," *International Journal of American Linguistics* 66, no. 1 (2000): 125–37; Brian D. Stubbs, "The Comparative Value of Tubar in Uto-Aztecan," in Eugene H. Casad and Thomas L. Willett, eds., *Uto-Aztecan: Structural, Temporal, and Geographic Perspectives* (Hermosillo, Mexico: Universidad de Sonora, 2000), 357–69; Brian D. Stubbs, "New Sets Yield New Perspectives for Uto-Aztecan Reconstructions," in Luis M. Barragan and Jason D. Haugen, eds., *Studies in Uto-Aztecan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2003), 1–20; and Brian D. Stubbs, "The Velar Nasal ŋ of Uto-Aztecan," in Karen Dakin and José Luis Moctezuma, eds., *Lenguas Yutoaztecas: Acercamiento a Su Diversidad Lingüística* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma, 2014), 177–89.

The richest source of cognates is found in the basic vocabulary of a language: body parts, kin terms, natural phenomena, and so forth. Collecting enough cognate sets eventually yields regular sound correspondences that can be used to reconstruct the ancestor language and provide a rough timeline for the changes that have taken place in each daughter language. In his book, Stubbs presents over 1,500 cognate sets that show regular correspondences between Egyptian and Semitic on the one hand and Uto-Aztecan on the other.

Central to Stubbs's proposal is the division of the Semitic influence into two varieties: "Semitic-kw" and "Semitic-p." The second chapter presents cognate sets that demonstrate Semitic-kw contributions to Uto-Aztecan. Semitic-kw is so-called because of the correspondence between Semitic **b** and Uto-Aztecan ***kw**.² Consider the following examples of this correspondence (67–68):³

- 4 Hebrew **bāšēl** 'boiled' ~ UA ***kwašC**⁴ 'cook, boil, ripen'
- 5 Hebrew **bāšār** 'flesh, penis' ~ UA ***kwasiC** 'tail, penis, meat'
- 6 Hebrew **blʿ** / **bālaʿ** 'swallow (v)' ~ UA ***kwīluC** 'swallow'
- 7 Hebrew **bāmā** (< ***bahamat**) 'back, hill, mountain ridge, high place' ~ UA ***kwahama** 'back'

In each of these sets, Semitic ***b** corresponds to Uto-Aztecan ***kw**. Other correspondences found in Semitic-kw include Uto-Aztecan ***(h)o**, ***(h)u**, and ***w** for Semitic gutturals (**ħ**, **ʕ**, **h**, **ʕ**), and UA ***ts** for Semitic **š** and **ʃ**. This chapter represents the oldest stratum of Stubbs's research. He presented a summary of his initial findings in a FARMS report;⁵ the data in the present work does not differ in their essentials from the earlier summary, and the cognate sets still hold up after all these years.

Chapter 3 discusses the pronouns of Uto-Aztecan. In this chapter, Stubbs tries to make the case for an infusion of pronouns from Semitic and Egyptian into Uto-Aztecan. Since pronouns are typically little words

2. An asterisk indicates a sound or word that has been reconstructed based on the correspondences established through the inspection of cognates.

3. Numbers for the cognate sets are provided by Stubbs and are used for internal reference.

4. The capital C represents a consonant of indeterminate quality.

5. Brian D. Stubbs, "Elements of Hebrew in Uto-Aztecan: A Summary of the Data," FARMS Preliminary Report (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1988), available online at Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, <http://publications.mi.byu.edu/fullscreen/?pub=2839&index=92>.

or even affixes, there is a far greater likelihood that chance resemblances will show up. The following table shows Proto-Uto-Aztec pronouns:⁶

	singular	plural
1st person	* (i-)nī	* (i-)ta(-mī)
2nd person	* ī(-mī)	* ī-mī
3rd human	* pī	* pī-mī
3rd non-human	* a	* a-mī

The plural forms consist of a stem followed by a plural suffix (Stubbs argues that the Uto-Aztec plural suffix is actually ***-ima**, which is a nice match for the early Hebrew masculine plural suffix ***-īma**). Removing the suffix (and the prefixed ***i-**) leaves behind single syllable forms. However, the chances that any two languages will show similarities in such small formatives is fairly high. (It is something of a parlor trick among linguists to find false cognates between any two arbitrarily chosen languages; it is surprisingly easy.) What is needed, then, is to demonstrate that there is a constellation of corresponding forms between the two languages that share form and meaning. While most of the examples in this chapter are easily disputed, Stubbs hits the jackpot with the correspondences between Semitic imperfective prefixes and Classical Nahuatl pronouns (86, reproduced below):

	Hebrew/Semitic sing.	Hebrew/Semitic plur.	Maghrib Arabic	Nahuatl
1st	ʔe-/ʔa- 'I VERB'	ni-/na- 'we VERB'	n- 'I VERB'	neʔ-wa 'I'
2nd	ti-/ta- 'you sg VERB'	ti-/ta- 'you pl VERB'	t- 'you VERB'	teʔ-wa 'you sg'
3rd	yi-/ya- 'he VERBS'	yi-/ya- 'they VERB'	y- 'he VERBS'	yeʔ-wa 'he'

For there to be occasional coincidences in form and meaning is expected. To have a whole array of pronouns agree so closely is much more convincing and strengthens the argument considerably.

Chapter 4 presents Egyptian contributions to Uto-Aztec. There are some interesting grammatical parallels that Stubbs explores in this chapter. Chief among them is the correspondence between the Egyptian perfective/stative suffix **-i** and Uto-Aztec ***-i**, which is final on intransitive, passive, or stative verbs. Other passive and stative markers are shown to correspond as well (87–88).

6. Ronald Langacker, ed. *An Overview of Uto-Aztec Grammar* (Arlington, Texas: University of Texas; Summer Institute of Linguistics 1977).

Sound correspondences between Egyptian and Uto-Aztecan differ somewhat from those of Semitic-kw and Uto-Aztecan. For instance, Egyptian **b** corresponds with UA ***b** or ***p** rather than with ***kw** (93–94):

137 Egyptian **bbyt** ‘region of throat’ ~ UA ***papi** ‘larynx, throat, voice’

138 Egyptian **bšw** ‘spittle, vomitus’ ~ UA ***piso-** ‘vomit’

139 Egyptian **bnty** ‘breasts’ ~ UA ***piCti** ‘breast’

Chapter 5 is by far the longest chapter of the book; in it Stubbs presents almost one thousand cognate sets demonstrating Semitic-p contributions to Uto-Aztecan. The sound correspondences that are attributed to Semitic-p are the same as those attributed to Egyptian. This suggests that speakers of both Egyptian and Semitic-p came into contact with Uto-Aztecan speakers at about the same time and that the Semitic-kw infusion represents a different contact situation or contact at a different point in time.

To Latter-day Saints, a scenario immediately presents itself to explain two separate Semitic infusions, but Stubbs is careful to avoid this sort of speculation and to let the data speak for itself. As with Semitic-kw, the correspondences between Semitic-p and Uto-Aztecan are regular, and the sheer mass of cognate sets is overwhelming. Here’s a short sampling (158–93):

527 Hebrew **bārāq** ‘lightning’ ~ UA ***pīrok** ‘lightning’

528 Hebrew **béged/bāged** ‘garment, covering, clothing’ ~ UA ***pakati** ‘shirt’

534 Hebrew **batt** ‘daughter’ ~ UA ***pattī** ‘daughter’

569 Hebrew **rʔw/rāʔā** ‘see’ ~ UA ***tiwa** ‘find, see’

631 Aramaic **ḥamar**, Hebrew **ḥemēr** ‘wine’ ~ UA ***kamaC** ‘drunk’

711 Hebrew **keleb, kalb-** ‘dog’ ~ UA ***kalop** ‘fox’

Chapters 6 through 8 treat various comparative matters, including how this proposal solves several outstanding problems in Uto-Aztecan historical phonology and some speculation concerning the actual language represented by Semitic-p. Chapter 9 is a brief conclusion. There are four appendices, consisting of a summary of the sound correspondences, an English index to the cognate sets, and Hebrew and Egyptian indices.

This book is intended for linguists, Semiticists, Egyptologists, and Uto-Aztecanists. Stubbs includes an introductory chapter providing

basics of historical linguistics and short summaries of Semitic, Egyptian, and Uto-Aztecan languages intended to help nonspecialists get their bearings in what follows. The scholarship throughout is sound. Stubbs has a good track record of academic publication in Uto-Aztecan studies, and he is just as careful with his treatment of the present material as he is in his more traditional Uto-Aztecan work.

My greatest complaint is that this book did not go through the standard academic editorial and review process. On the first page, Stubbs states that Uto-Aztecanists, Semiticists, and Egyptologists probably will not be receptive to his proposal or take seriously the notion that Old and New World languages could have mixed in such a fashion. He may be right about his peers, which would make standard academic review more difficult. However, the editorial and review process have the benefit of helping authors explain themselves more effectively to those who disagree or do not understand. It is obvious that Stubbs understands perfectly well what he is saying; however, his book fails in many places to say it clearly and directly to others. I was always able to puzzle it out, but the data and the arguments are complicated, and peer review and skilled editorial assistance would have been helpful to readers.

At first glance, this book seems to fall in with the type of linguistic crackpottery that claims Hebrew (or Sanskrit) as the mother tongue for all of the world's languages, or that purports to relate Basque to any number of disparate languages.⁷ The book is dense, self-published, and in sore need of careful editing—none of which immediately commends it to the serious reader. However, Stubbs has something the language eccentrics do not have: the training and experience, together with extensive accurate data, to back up his extraordinary claim of significant Old World linguistic influence in Uto-Aztecan, a New World language family. It is definitely worth the trouble to work through this book.

Dirk Elzinga received his PhD in linguistics at the University of Arizona and is currently Associate Professor of Linguistics and English Language at Brigham Young University. His professional work focuses on the documentation and description of Shoshoni, Goshute, Paiute, and Ute, the Uto-Aztecan languages of Utah and neighboring states.

7. There have been attempts to link Basque to Sumerian, Etruscan, Inuit (!), Quechua (!!), and the Caucasian languages. All have failed to convince serious scholars.

Dave Hall. *A Faded Legacy: Amy Brown Lyman and Mormon Women's Activism, 1872–1959*.

Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2015.

Reviewed by Lisa Olsen Tait

Dave Hall has made a landmark contribution to Mormon history generally, and to Mormon women's history specifically, with *A Faded Legacy: Amy Brown Lyman and Mormon Women's Activism, 1872–1959*. Hall has worked on this project over the course of three decades, and his long and deep familiarity with his subject shows through impressively.¹ I have long called Lyman “the most important Mormon woman you’ve never heard of.” This book, I hope, will help change that.

Hall chronicles Lyman's life: her birth in 1872 in Pleasant Grove, Utah, to a polygamous family; her education at Brigham Young Academy, where she studied under Karl G. Maeser and met her husband, future Apostle Richard R. Lyman; her further training in Chicago and New York, where her interest in the new field of social work was kindled; her service on the Relief Society general board, where she worked with indomitable Mormon women's leaders of several generations and rose to become virtually the managing director of the organization; her vigorous, visionary leadership of social service efforts in the Relief Society, the Church, and the state of Utah; her leadership of women's efforts in the European Mission just before World War II; and, finally, her service as general president of the Relief Society from 1940 to 1945—which should have been the culmination of her life's work but was undermined by institutional dynamics and personal tragedy.

Alongside Lyman's personal story, Hall's most valuable contribution is his insightful narrative of Mormon women's history in the first half

1. In the interest of full disclosure, Dave and I have long been friends and colleagues in the work of Mormon women's history, exchanging sources and ideas. However, I did not read drafts of the biography or otherwise offer substantive assistance in its writing.

of the twentieth century. Hall argues that Lyman and her generation inherited a legacy of activism from their nineteenth-century mothers through which Mormon women claimed a vigorous role in the political and social arenas, legitimized under the umbrella of progressive-era maternalist feminism. Lyman and her colleagues saw their work in the Relief Society and the broader community as necessarily interconnected. The high point for this vision was realized in the 1920s during the presidency of Clarissa Smith Williams, with Lyman as general secretary managing the day-to-day operations of the organization. During these years, the Relief Society Social Service Department (forerunner of several Church welfare programs) was established, and the Relief Society partnered with state and federal agencies in an ambitious, effective effort to improve maternal and child health.

In the 1930s and 1940s, changes in leadership, both in the Relief Society and in the priesthood hierarchy of the Church, along with the expansion of federal programs during the Depression, the development of the Church's Welfare Plan, and shifting gender ideology—compounded by the scandal of Richard R. Lyman's adultery and excommunication in 1943—meant that the activist model under which Lyman and the Relief Society operated during their heyday could not be sustained. The shift away from that vision constitutes the “faded legacy” of the book's title.

One of the things I most appreciated in this book was Hall's ability to summarize large swaths of historical and theoretical analysis to provide concise but rich context. This is a true skill, one that not every historian handles as impressively as Hall does in this book. He sets up the narrative effectively with a brief introductory chapter, “Mormon Women in an American Context,” placing Lyman's story in its appropriate historical and historiographical contexts. He then weaves those contexts effectively into the narrative as it unfolds.

This extensive contextualization of Lyman's life, while vital in its own right, may also have been necessary given the apparent lack of first-person sources. Hall mentions that “comparatively few” of Lyman's personal papers survive (xii). The result is that Lyman's voice is notably absent, her inner life largely unrevealed. Still, we have to wonder how helpful the lost materials would have been, had they been preserved. Though it is clear that Lyman felt things deeply, she does not seem to have engaged in a lot of introspection, at least not in recorded form. Perhaps in this respect the biography does capture a genuine aspect of her life: She was busy living and *doing*, always impressive to those around her but perhaps just slightly out of reach. After all, she did come

of age as a late Victorian, a generation not known for its propensity for emotional disclosure.

Speaking of generations, Hall characterizes Lyman as a member of Mormonism's "second generation," which he defines as Latter-day Saints "born after the Mormon move west in 1847 and before the end of the 1870s." He asserts that her experiences and activities were "representative of an entire generation of Latter-day Saint women," and he writes perceptively of these women's relation to their pioneer forebears (1). Generational analysis is complicated, and Hall does not give any rationale for the generational parameters he proposes.² In biological terms, if we count from Lyman's father (but not her mother), she would, indeed, be part of a second generation of Mormons. However, in terms of distance from the formative experience of settling frontier Utah, I would argue that Amy's birth after the coming of the railroad places her in a distinctive generational cohort that would more properly be characterized as a third generation.³

I raise this point because I think it would help make sense of the conflict between Lyman and Susa Young Gates, her colleague on the Relief Society General Board from 1911 to 1922, and her chief opponent as she began to implement modern social work methods under the auspices of the Relief Society in the early 1920s. Gates feared, as Hall says, that "the spiritual side of the work would be lost in a quest for 'scientific' expertise" (82). As Gates put it in her own journal, she felt that Lyman was "willing to make the Church a tail to the Gentile kite."⁴ She also feared that she and other older women would be marginalized.

In biological terms, Gates could also be characterized as either a second or third generation Mormon (depending on whether we count

2. See the discussion of generational theory in William Strauss and Neil Howe, *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069* (New York: Quill/William Morrow, 1991), 433–53.

3. Elsewhere I have referred to Lyman's generation as the "Railroad generation," following the "Pioneer" and "Frontier" generations. See Lisa Olsen Tait, "The *Young Woman's Journal* and Its Stories: Gender and Generations in 1890s Mormondom" (PhD diss., University of Houston, 2010). In their comprehensive classification of generations in American history, Strauss and Howe call Lyman's generation (born 1860–82) the "Missionary Generation." Strauss and Howe, *Generations*, 233–46.

4. Susa Young Gates, journal, undated entry describing events of "the last week in May, 1922," Susa Young Gates Papers, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

from her father or her mother), and Hall treats her as a member of the same generation as Lyman. But Gates's birth in 1856 meant that she grew up in a more insular community and perhaps identified more strongly with its founding ideals than younger people like Lyman, who came of age under very different circumstances. Furthermore, Gates was just enough older than Lyman to be her mother. Gates did, in fact, marry (at the admittedly young age of sixteen) the same year Lyman was born, and her daughter Leah was only two years younger than Lyman. This means that Gates likely saw Lyman more as a daughter than as a peer, and this perspective could have fueled her opposition to Lyman's approach.

I would have liked to see Hall speak to the generational dynamics on the Relief Society board later in Lyman's life. By the time she became Relief Society general president in 1940, Lyman was sixty-eight years old. Hall points to shifts in the Church, in society, and in government and professional social work that served to push Lyman and her agenda to the side, and he represents this essentially as a lost opportunity due to forces beyond Lyman's control. I could not help wondering if there were ways, by the 1940s, in which Lyman herself, for all her vigor and vision, belonged to a generation whose time had passed—perhaps like Susa Young Gates in the 1920s. And was that vision, no matter how vigorous within Lyman, seen as out of step, especially by other women in Relief Society leadership? Hall notes that Lyman reorganized the general board, releasing older members to allow for recruitment of women from younger generations, and suggests that “not all her board members were fans of Lyman” (149). I wish he had elaborated on this point and perhaps considered Lyman's own ideas a bit more critically in context at the end of her career.

Of course, any author has to make tough decisions about what to include in a book, and the analysis Hall does offer is valuable. His treatment of the dynamics between Lyman and the powerful J. Reuben Clark is particularly insightful. There is no question that Clark acted to curtail the agenda and the prerogatives of Lyman and the Relief Society. Clark “seems to have valued the organization's earlier accomplishments to a lesser degree than many other church leaders,” Hall observes (152). Nevertheless, he resists the temptation to paint Clark as a villain. Hall attributes Clark's actions to a number of factors: his absence from Utah for most of his adult life and his possible unawareness of the scope and benefits of the Relief Society's activities; his traditional view of gender roles, rooted at least partly in the family arrangements required by his demanding career; his top-down managerial style and decisive manner, combined with the gatekeeping role he assumed in the First

Presidency due to the declining health of President Heber J. Grant; and his deep-seated political and cultural conservatism (151–56). While he is even-handed in trying to understand Clark's motivations and in acknowledging the complex cultural circumstances in which Lyman operated, Hall leaves no doubt that he sees the curtailment of the Relief Society's agenda as a net loss.

Hall also had to make careful choices about how to handle the two major tragedies in Lyman's life: the death of her son, Wendell, in 1933, and the adultery and excommunication of her Apostle husband, Richard, in 1943. In the case of Wendell, Hall does not use the term *suicide*, which is how the death has been described in other published sources.⁵ One study cites Wendell's daughter, Amy Kathryn Lyman Engar, as having considered this characterization of her father's death "libelous."⁶ Hall does not wade into the controversy but simply relates the details of Wendell's death as reported at the time and leaves readers to draw their own conclusions (118–19). His emphasis is primarily on how Amy and Richard Lyman responded to this terrible tragedy.

In setting forth an account of the shocking tragedy of Richard Lyman's adultery and excommunication, Hall faced an unenviable task: how to keep the focus on Amy, his primary subject, without being dragged into the details of a case that could easily overtake the narrative? On the whole, Hall handles it well. He deftly lays out the facts of the case and provides insightful and empathetic analysis, noting Amy's decision to discontinue sexual relations and Richard's desire to practice polygamy as likely factors in Richard's behavior (163). However, he mentions only in passing "rumors" about Richard's "unusually affectionate" manner and the discomfort some women leaders felt in his presence (162). Hall probably could have elaborated on these details. I also found it puzzling that he did not mention Richard's apparent continuation of his relationship with his "prospective plural wife" for some time after his excommunication.⁷

In keeping with the purpose of his book, Hall focuses primarily on Amy's reaction and the implications of the scandal for her continued

5. Loretta L. Hefner, "Amy B. Lyman," in *Sister Saints*, ed. Vicky Burgess-Olson (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1978), 108.

6. Gary James Bergera, "Transgression in the Latter-day Saint Community: The Cases of Albert Carrington, Richard R. Lyman, and Joseph F. Smith. Part 2: Richard R. Lyman," *Journal of Mormon History* 37 (Fall 2011): 182 n. 22.

7. Bergera cites several sources on this matter. Bergera, "Transgression in the Latter-day Saint Community," 199–203.

service as Relief Society general president. At first, nearly overwhelmed by the news of this unexpected calamity, Lyman told one of her counselors, “Just pray that I won’t go bitter” (164). Resisting the advice of those who told her to get a divorce and move to California, Hall writes, she “summoned every fiber of her iron will to look ahead” (165). President David O. McKay, of the First Presidency, publicly offered support at key moments, and Lyman soldiered on in her leadership position. But in the summer of 1944, likely due in large part to continued fallout from the scandal, President J. Reuben Clark asked Lyman for her resignation; in 1945, she was released.

Lyman lived another fourteen years, long enough to see the fading of her own legacy. Hall concludes the book with several pages of helpful analysis. He posits that Lyman and her colleagues “stood at the intersection of trends affecting both Mormon society and the larger culture” (179) and then proceeds to examine some of those trends (180). While praising Lyman’s “vision of societal involvement” and the Relief Society’s function as a “pathway to accomplishment” and personal fulfillment, Hall also recognizes that we cannot idealize the past, and that today’s society at large offers women “a more liberal environment” and better professional opportunities than those available to earlier generations (180). Nonetheless, he concludes, “for the present, much of the organization’s potential lies unused, even forgotten” (181). The potential remains for Relief Society to “reveal anew a powerful manifestation of organized womanhood,” in which the example of Lyman and her generation may yet serve as an inspiration (181). For this and many other reasons, Hall’s book deserves a wide readership.

Lisa Olsen Tait is a historian and writer specializing in women’s history at the Church History Department. Her work focuses on Mormon women’s history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and she serves on the executive board of the Mormon Women’s History Initiative Team (MWHIT). She has published articles in several venues, including her award-winning “The 1890s Mormon Culture of Letters and the Post-Manifesto Marriage Crisis: A New Approach to Home Literature,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (2013): 99–124.

Joanna Brooks, Rachel Hunt Steenblik, and Hannah Wheelwright, eds. *Mormon Feminism: Essential Writings*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Reviewed by Camille S. Williams

The editors of *Mormon Feminism* seek to introduce readers to “the Mormon feminist movement through the words of the women who have lived and built it” (1). For the editors’ purposes, “Mormon” is broadly defined to include “anyone who identifies with the Latter-day Saint movement” (2), including those from other faith traditions and those who reject various teachings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. From the outset of the book, “feminism” is defined as “espous[ing] fair and equal treatment for all” persons (3),¹ divorcing the term from aspects of its history that are troubling to many Church members and are in conflict with LDS doctrine, such as the view that elective abortion is central to female autonomy. The book includes sixty-one writings from 1970 to the present, purported to “have played a historic role in developing Mormon feminist history and theology, or have articulated key issues, tensions, and dimensions of Mormon women’s lives” (9). Forty-one authors are included, most of whom are academics or independent scholars; while *Mormon Feminism* is published by a highly respected academic press, the book is written for an educated general audience and frequently departs from a scholarly approach. Consequently, readers will not find here a very deep or methodical exploration of those aspects of feminism that are valued and integrated into the religious lives of many Latter-day Saints around the world.

Despite the initial apolitical definitions of feminism, many of the writers critique the Church, along with its subculture in the United States, via a species of “the personal is political” feminist analysis. Liberal

1. Kent Harrison and Mary Stoval Richards, “Feminism in Light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,” *BYU Studies* 36, no. 2 (1996–97): 195.

feminist² views, such as Elouise Bell's Brigham Young University speech (47–49), are fewer in number than the structural feminist analyses, such as those excerpted in part 2. Structuralist views are illustrated by the editors' comment that "with the consolidation of Church bureaucracy around an all-male priesthood chain of command, dimensions of Mormonism significant to women—including the doctrine of Heavenly Mother and the time-honored woman-centered forms of religious authority and spiritual practice—[have] been diminished or lost" (118). Poststructuralist power analyses included in parts 3 and 4 are characterized as arising from a "critical mass of Mormon feminists . . . who pushed the movement toward new frontiers in consciousness, theology, and action" until a "backlash followed," and those who advocated for new conceptions of priesthood, worship, gender, and Church government were disciplined (171). The proffered minimalist definition of feminism contrasts sharply with structuralist assumptions embedded in many of the writings, most starkly in the invective of Sonia Johnson (73–78) and the womanist intersectional polemic of Gina Colvin (271–73), who opines that correlated Mormonism "has many of us dribbling with boredom" and has "given rise to a tide of viciousness and meteoric cruelty from those thinking they are doing the work of Jesus with their spew of vile recriminations" (272).

Joanna Brooks's general introduction (1–23) is a sociopolitical analysis of Church doctrine, history, policy, and practice, from what might be deemed a poststructuralist feminist perspective, highlighting works that explore what she lists as "aspects of Mormon doctrine and practice that offer mixed or contradictory messages about gender, equality and power." Brooks identifies the major themes of Mormon feminism as: the role of Mother in Heaven in "Mormon liturgy and practice"; "the spiritual value of gender roles" in the family and the Church; the "unresolved issue of polygamy"; "women's access to priesthood"; and the "racial privilege and bias within the LDS Church" (3–4). Some LDS faithful may feel that her introduction evinces a sociopolitical feminist analysis that, when applied to a Church directed by continuing revelation that is neither ahistorical nor merely contingent, does not properly address the fundamental nature and reality of the Church.

2. In general, I have classified types of feminism consistent with Amy Allen, "Feminist Perspectives on Power," in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Archive: Summer 2014 Edition*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/feminist-power/>.

The book includes a timeline titled “Key Events in Contemporary Mormon Feminism, 1940–present” (24–32), followed by selected and often excerpted writings grouped into four parts, ostensibly representing Mormon feminist thought during each decade or so since the 1970s. Included are personal essays, talks, articles, interviews, poetry, plays, excerpts from other anthologies and books, satirical writings of LDS culture and practices, letters and public statements, and blogs and Internet postings.

Most of the writings are briefly introduced with biographical information about the author and some contextual or interpretive commentary by the editors; many are followed by references and a list of additional readings. Also included are a glossary of names and terms (293–301) designed to be helpful to non-Mormon readers and a “Study Group Guide” (307–8) that outlines an approach for groups desiring to raise consciousness about oppression and to marshal support for advocacy efforts.

Anthologies are unavoidably selective, and most of the writers included in this volume struggle against what they view as a socially and politically conservative Church culture, which Laurel Thatcher Ulrich contends “simultaneously enlarges and diminishes women.” She rejects either keeping quiet or picketing the tabernacle because “to do either is to accept the very heresy we want to overcome—the misguided notion that the Church is somehow to be equated with the men at the top” (115). Feminist approaches are represented as minority voices within the Church seeking a more egalitarian organization, often based on the view that Joseph Smith envisioned the ordination of women but was thwarted by Brigham Young and successive leaders. Pitting dead prophets against the living, praising Joseph for his purported plan to ordain women while castigating him for polygamy, is at minimum inconsistent.

The general approach of the editors and most of the writers in this volume is consistent with progressive Mormonism and spirituality.³ Elizabeth Hammond, for example, posits that temple ceremonies reflect pioneer-era perspectives, which mainstream Mormonism itself has rejected and outgrown. She states her intent to help women distressed by “gender messages” (281) they receive in the temple. Her appraisal of temple ordinances, which, granted, was taken from a blog post, might have benefitted from considering relevant scripture, revealed doctrine, and fewer individualistic

3. See *LiberalMormon.net*, <http://www.liberalmormon.net/500ndx.shtml>; and Julienna Viegas-Haws, “What Do Progressive Mormons Want? A Dialogue about Change,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, July 18, 2015; updated February 17, 2016, at <http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/2735147-155/op-ed-what-do-progressive-mormons-want>.

interpretations. Without these, some of her considerations and conclusions about sacred rituals appear inappropriate, strained, or mistaken. As with Hammond, the writers in this volume are skilled at using feminist approaches to analyze the Church, but not enough attention is given to using the restored gospel to critique feminist approaches.

Mormon Feminism does include excerpts that readers may find to be more consistent with LDS doctrine, such as those informed by concepts of gender complementarity. Valerie Hudson Cassler's "The Two Trees" (249–52), which "conveys a confidence that Mormon doctrine is already egalitarian and could reshape Mormon culture if understood correctly" (248), and Neylan McBaine's "cooperative paradigm" foreground Church teachings about the importance of motherhood and the different but equally valued roles of women and men, respectively. McBaine argues that "the Church does not satisfy secular gender-related egalitarian ideals, period. . . . But the Church does not, and should not operate according to secular concepts of power, status, and if we attempt to justify ourselves in [that] paradigm we will not only fail, but betray our own ideals" (261).

Eloise Bell's 1975 acknowledgement that some feminisms include "unwise goals" (49) or that there may be other alternative feminist analyses is not sufficiently explored by the editors. For example, they attribute "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" as a response "to new theological pressures around conventional notions of gender" (18) and part of a "backlash" against "Mormon feminist writers, scholars, and activists more generally" (171). Also, priesthood correlation is noted as "a bureaucratic initiative" in which "all LDS Church programs and operations had been placed under the supervision of the Church's all-male priesthood hierarchy," and the "female leadership of the once-independent Relief Society lost the authority to develop and administer its own programs, finances, and publications" (107).

Such commentary leaves alternative explanations unexplored, such as scriptural and doctrinal reasoning for placing Church organizations directly under the offices and callings holding the various keys of the priesthood. Certainly going back to a more independent, unfunded, "uncorrelated" Relief Society could, under a different feminist interpretation, be seen as evidence that the Church does not value or properly integrate women. It also overlooks the potential for problems related to tax status among related entities, or message confusion among independent entities that each represent "the Church." The editors might have acknowledged the need of the twentieth-century Church to correlate "doctrines . . . [of] fundamental" belief for an international Church that

is expanding so quickly that it needs to “build a chapel a day for the next foreseeable future . . . [and] figure out how to get out of some country or into some country.”⁴ Rather, correlation is viewed as assimilation into the American mainstream culture that contributed to “theological retrenchment, which brought renewed fundamentalism, literalism, conservatism, and for women, a new emphasis in over-the-pulpit messaging on their domestic role” (11). The recommended remedy is not less assimilation but greater assimilation into the contemporary global academic culture (21–23).

These excerpts concerning correlation and the family proclamation illustrate the underlying tension about how to apportion or recognize authority—that of prophets, various general and local authorities, and the individual, and how to negotiate individual and collective callings, responsibilities, burdens, demands, and rewards in the LDS culture, the home, and the Church. *Mormon Feminism* may be most valuable as part of the social history of a group of women who label themselves as Mormon feminists and who want women to be included in “theological decision-making” to promote changes in the Church that would give women “equal say” in shaping all aspects of the Church, from budgets to “articulating prophetic truths” (7–8). However, standard power analysis cannot yield an accurate understanding of the power of God in the Church or the power of the priesthood. The power of the priesthood is far more likely to bring a man—CEO or day laborer—to his knees and to convince him that without God he is nothing, than it is to form the basis for him to dominate others. The same could be said of women who serve with authority under the direction of the priesthood—such callings are likewise not given to satisfy certain notions of control or autonomy.

Mormon Feminism may also be seen as part of an ecumenical feminist movement, in the sense that the editors prepared the book “for a broad audience of non-Mormons and Mormons, scholars and lay people,” seeking to “deepen conversations within Mormonism” about what they see as “the gains and setbacks of the last forty years, and foster conversations and comparisons with people of faith and scholars in other traditions” (9). They suggest that “feminist research now in progress engages how Mormon women of color and LGBT Mormons create meaning and manage such tensions in their religious lives,” and hope to “address points of irresolution and potential within our own

4. See PBS, “The Mormons: Interview with Kathleen Flake,” April 27, 2006, <http://www.pbs.org/mormons/interviews/flake.html>, under the question “What is it like being an intellectual in the church?”

theology and join with other feminist theologians of other faiths in the larger project of analyzing what Rosemary Radford Ruether calls ‘God talk’” (22–23).

In contrast to the LDS suffragists of the nineteenth century who fought against disabilities under the law, the “first generations of Mormon feminists developed analyses of power disparities between Mormon men and women,” and the editors see future “work to be done in analyzing modes of power that have been available to Mormon women.” They observe that Mormon women have availed themselves of the “use of public piety, submission, ostracization, and other forms of microaggression to establish hierarchies among Mormon women and to manage our relationship with the non-Mormon world” (23). This may rightly be seen as a cynical and dismissive view of the way LDS women use power. Such an analysis is—as Daniel Dennett said of evolutionary theory infringing on moral philosophy—a “universal acid” that “eats through just about every traditional concept, and leaves in its wake a revolutionized world-view, with most of the old landmarks still recognizable, but transformed in fundamental ways.”⁵ Some readers might be less sanguine about such a transformation than are the editors.

Those who hope, as I had hoped, to find in this volume a work weaving the best of feminist thought enlightened by commitment to the doctrines of the LDS Church—something akin to *Women, Sex, and the Church: A Case for Catholic Teaching*⁶—will be mostly disappointed by *Mormon Feminism*, which might be more accurately subtitled *Feminist Critiques of the LDS Church, Its Leadership, Policies, and Culture*.

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5. Daniel C. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 63, as quoted in “Daniel Dennett,” <http://bevets.com/quotesd5.htm>.

6. Erika Bachiochi, ed., *Women, Sex, and the Church: A Case for Catholic Teaching* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2010).

Kenneth R. Beesley and Dirk Elzinga. *An 1860 English-Hopi Vocabulary Written in the Deseret Alphabet*.
Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2015.

Reviewed by Brian D. Stubbs

Authors Kenneth R. Beesley and Dirk Elzinga did commendable work and a valuable service in producing the book *An 1860 English-Hopi Vocabulary Written in the Deseret Alphabet*. The volume is of value to persons interested in early Mormon missions, the Deseret Alphabet, the Hopi people, or to linguists interested in the Hopi language or Uto-Aztecan comparative linguistics. Any time that an older recording of a language becomes available, its value as an earlier window to that language makes it a treasured acquisition because all living languages are always changing: sounds change or are lost, words are replaced, and so forth. The recording of Native American languages generally has not enjoyed prolific endeavor due to a shortage of interested linguists and sometimes due to tribal opposition to their language being recorded, inadvertently choosing that the language be lost rather than be written. For example, I produced the largest Tewa dictionary¹ in existence, extracting data from already published sources—bilingual primers and the Tewa New Testament—yet the tribal powers that be prefer that it remain an unused file in my computer. For many tribes, as native speakers pass away, so does the language, never to be known to the descendants who wish they knew something of their ancestors' language. Nevertheless, Hopi, in spite of some internal Hopi opposition, is among the more thoroughly recorded native tongues, especially because of the recent *Hopi Dictionary*,² which is an exceptionally good and sizable dictionary of the Third-Mesa Hopi dialect.

1. Brian D. Stubbs, *Rio Grande Tewa: An Indexed Vocabulary* (in preparation).

2. Kenneth C. Hill, Emory Sekaquaptewa, Mary E. Black, and Ekkehart Malotki, *Hopi Dictionary—Hopiikwa Lavàytutuveni: A Hopi-English Dictionary*

Beesley and Elzinga begin with an outline of the Mormon missions to the Hopi and the recent awareness of an “Indian Vocabulary” written in the Deseret Alphabet, long laid away in the Church History Library—but without names, dates, or language specified.

Chapter 2 reviews the history of the Deseret Alphabet (10–18) and the identification of the manuscript as a Hopi vocabulary (it could have been Ute, Shoshoni, or some other language), and then specifically as the Hopi Third-Mesa dialect. After examining some background of the fifteen missions to the Hopi between 1858 and 1873, a bit of detective work identifies the author of the Hopi vocabulary as Marion Jackson Shelton, of the 1859–60 mission, with a nice biographical outline of this rather remarkable individual. The authors then offer some history of the Mormon interest in Native American languages and provide an overview of other early Hopi vocabularies produced (47–49), though most are not as early or as large as this recently discovered treasure.

Chapter 3 begins with an introduction to Hopi’s place in the larger Uto-Aztecan language family, followed by an excellent analysis of some key aspects of Hopi phonology. It may be the best treatment of Hopi *r* in all the literature, mainly because it brings together and cites all the literature and what each of the various sources says about Hopi *r*. The linguistic analyses of the Third-Mesa dialect’s *p*, *s*, and falling tone are also enlightening.

Chapter 4 introduces the 1860 Hopi vocabulary, which is made available in its entirety. Appendix A illuminates places in Hopi land, and appendix B specifies people and addresses a legend.

The Hopi vocabulary lists the English gloss, its transcription in the Deseret Alphabet followed by the Hopi term in the Deseret Alphabet, and a transcription of that Hopi term in the International Phonetic Alphabet. Also cited are relevant Hopi terms as they appear in the primary Hopi sources published since—the most authoritative being the *Hopi Dictionary*—with some citations from Seaman’s dictionary and Milo Kalectaca’s vocabulary of Second-Mesa Hopi. Besides the Hopi vocabulary, the English index to the Hopi vocabulary is helpful.

As mentioned, the value of such an edited resurrection of early materials is a window into earlier stages of a language, often important for reconstructing earlier forms relevant to other related languages. For

example, the very first entry, *nəkəvü* (“ear”), shows an additional vowel not in the *Hopi Dictionary*’s entry *naqvü* (“ear”), suggesting that the earlier Hopi form was **naqapü*, which agrees well with Proto-Uto-Aztecan **naqapa* (“ear”) (e.g., SP *nanqava-vi* and Sr *qävaa-č* “ear, leaf”).³ Other examples of an older vowel heard by Shelton, but not in later sources, can be found on pages 16, 44, 69, 80, and 88.

Also of interest to Uto-Aztecan specialists are the forms that show **p* changing to *b* in contrast to present *v*- (16, 89, 169). When a voiceless stop like **p* occurs between voiced vowels, a common change is that it becomes voiced *b* and perhaps later a fricative *v*. That process of change from *p* > *b* > *v* or similarly *t* > *d* > *ɖ* happened in Spanish and is a common kind of sound change in many languages’ histories. For example, among Hopi’s relatives, some Numic Uto-Aztecan languages north of Hopi show **-p-* > *-b-* and others show **p* > *b* > *v*. While many words in Shelton’s Hopi vocabulary do show *v* as in the contemporary *Hopi Dictionary*, a number of others show *b*. The difference may be a different speaker from whom Shelton heard *b* versus others who said *v*; or the sound may have been between the two, a slight frication of a near stop, as the *b* of some Spanish dialects can sound like either *b* or *v*; or it may simply be an occasional hearing discrepancy on the part of Shelton. Whatever the case, the Hopi *v* must have been close enough to *b* for Shelton to hear *b* some of the time, which is linguistically intriguing.

I find interesting the transcription of Thales Haskell’s Hopi name Konesoke from *honsoki* (“bear claws”) (28). Most Uto-Aztecan languages have *k* and *h*, but nothing between, except for Hopi’s linguistic relatives in Uto-Aztecan’s Takic branch, wherein some languages (Luiseño, Cahuilla, and Cupeño) show initial *x*-, between *k*- and *h*-, and thus exhibit all three: *k*-, *x*-, and *h*-. However, one specialist sees pre-exilic Israeli Semitic *x* and *ḥ* becoming *k* and *hu* / *ho* in Uto-Aztecan, respectively, though the two later merged to things between *k* and *h* in strength. And **hunap* (> Hopi *hona*) (“bear”) is one such item (from Semitic *ḥnp*)⁴, so to see that particular Hopi *h* understood as *k* is noteworthy.

3. Brian D. Stubbs, *Uto-Aztecan: A Comparative Vocabulary* (Blanding: Rocky Mountain Books, 2011), no. 752; and Brian D. Stubbs, *Exploring the Explanatory Power of Semitic and Egyptian in Uto-Aztecan* (Provo, Utah: Grover Publications, 2015) no. 1070.

4. Stubbs, *Exploring the Explanatory Power*, no. 675.

In summary, the book is a thorough and excellent treatment of what is a valuable contribution to certain fields. Though the book's subject matter may not match *Harry Potter* appeal in numbers, it far exceeds the latter's contribution in knowledge for those interested in early Mormon missions, the Deseret Alphabet, the Hopi people, or Uto-Aztecan comparative linguistics.

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Ignacio M. Garcia. *Chicano While Mormon: Activism, War, and Keeping the Faith*.
Madison, N.J.: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2015.

Reviewed by Jorge Iber

Anyone familiar with the area of Mexican American/Latino history is acquainted with the extensive writings of BYU's Professor Ignacio M. Garcia. Among his many works are important tomes in this field of academic study such as *United We Win: The Rise and Fall of La Raza Unida Party*; *Hector P. Garcia: In Relentless Pursuit of Justice*; *Viva Kennedy: Mexican Americans in Search of Camelot*; and, most recently, *When Mexicans Could Play Ball: Basketball, Race and Identity in San Antonio, 1928–1945*. While all of Garcia's works focus on issues of social justice and Chicano/Mexican American (and, more broadly, Latino) identity, his work on high school hoops in his hometown of San Antonio, Texas, Garcia's most recent effort (prior to the book being reviewed here) sets up effectively much of the philosophical and storytelling underpinning presented in this autobiographical work, *Chicano While Mormon*.

In his sport and social history offering, Garcia examines the significance of Lanier High School (in San Antonio) and the impact of the tremendous success of this basketball team (the Volks), including two state titles, upon the establishment, development, and sustenance of ethnic pride in his neighborhood. In short, he argues, the Volks' victories on the courts of Texas made it possible for barrio-dwellers to challenge the rampant notion of the inferiority of Mexican Americans and to measure themselves against (and more often than not, triumph over) a majority populace that looked down upon this group's intellectual and physical abilities and work ethic. This book shows that sport can be utilized as a vehicle of resistance to the oppression and stereotyping of this particular community.

Likewise, in *Chicano While Mormon*, Garcia demonstrates, through a personal and highly revealing work, how religious affiliation and belief can sustain an individual in trying social (including political)

and personal circumstances. Among the most poignant discussions are those concerning how Garcia's faith helped him navigate his difficult teenage years in Texas and his tour of duty during the Vietnam War, particularly as he reached out to help locals and avoided the pitfalls of drugs and other vices so prevalent among combatants. Fortunately, this enlightening aspect of the book is not new for this genre. For example, I studied several similar cases in my research on Latino Mormons in Utah. Those of us who embrace our faiths sincerely can, and quite often do, enjoy similar results and make similar pronouncements. Devotion to a particular creed can help overcome the difficulties confronted in one's family and neighborhood, in school settings, and even amid the trials and tribulations of time in a war zone. All of these situations Garcia details beautifully and extensively in his work and documents how his Mormon faith served as a bulwark against all manner of depravations and temptations.

The real contribution of *Chicano While Mormon*, however, is Garcia's account of how he has managed to reconcile his affiliation with a mostly "conservative" religious congregation to his activism within various groups of the Chicano Movement of the 1960s and 1970s and beyond. There is no doubt that Garcia embraces his Mormon faith, and there is also no doubt that political activism is simultaneously a crucial component of his faith-life. To be a "liberal" Mormon and likewise a "conservative" Catholic (as this reviewer describes himself) does seem to go against important theological and political grains. Garcia verbalizes the key question presented in this book by stating point blank that he was always concerned about whether "being political [was] becoming of an LDS?" (61). As he notes throughout, the author's life experiences and academic career have been an effort to make the spiritual political, and he fully acknowledges the complexities of what many would consider an intellectual and religious high-wire act. Still, it is made abundantly clear that Garcia believes it imperative to be political in order to be a "good" member of the LDS faith.

The religious institution to which he is attached has been based historically, in large part, upon the notion of brother helping brother, and that is at the core of this Chicano's long track record of activism. Garcia clarifies this idea by stating that "believing in the worth of the human soul makes social activism an inherently righteous endeavor" (35). Indeed, it is his religious faith that not only compels his political activism, but it is what makes the endeavor worthwhile, for through such work he fights not only for a righteous cause but makes it possible

to point out to others (both within the LDS fold and outside of it) where they are not living up to crucial tenets of their respective faiths. Continuously reinforced is the notion that not being in favor of certain social welfare programs is deemed as not being truly in tune with the reality of LDS history, culture, and teaching.

In the book's foreword, Eduardo Obregon Pagan goes even further and chastises Garcia's coreligionists (and others of good faith in other sects, it would seem) for embracing a political philosophy—Reaganism, to be specific—that he does not agree with. It is this tone that creates some dissonance in the mind of this reviewer with *Chicano While Mormon*. If members of a particular faith chose to pursue the quest for greater fairness, equality, and opportunity in other ways, does that make them less religious? While the majority of the work beautifully recounts the movement of a religious spirit in the life of Professor Garcia, this judgmental tone is palpable and created for this reader an unnecessary distraction from an otherwise worthwhile, if not heroic, story.

This is an autobiographical work, and of course the author has the right to express his own views, but it is also necessary to understand that the religious beliefs and life experiences of others (be they white, Chicano, or whatever) also influence them. Thus, how a person perceives social issues and vehicles for their possible resolution is dependent on their beliefs and background. An effective example of this can be seen in an interesting incident Professor Garcia describes about a Chicano colleague's run-in with an unnamed Cuban American administrator at Texas A&I Kingsville (now Texas A&M–Kingsville) in the late 1960s. Garcia notes that this activist had a disagreement with the administrator, most likely because the Cubano did not agree with the positive perspective of the Cuban Revolution held by many naïve Chicanos of the time. Perhaps Dr. Garcia's recollection of this event would have benefitted from embracing the argument he makes later in the book when he states, "Reality is much more nuanced than when seen simply through ideology" (199). In summary, I highly recommend this excellent and revealing book to individuals who are interested in Mormon biography and autobiography as well as the broad and expanding topic of Latino/Chicano biography/history. Readers will find much validation of their faith (Mormon or others) within the pages of *Chicano While Mormon*. There will be those, however, who will encounter some cognitive dissonance in reading this work. If you believe yourself to be a person who cares for others and who wishes to make existence in this nation better for

all but who does not embrace some notions of activist government, be prepared for a direct challenge to your beliefs. While this is what good literature is supposed to do, a less confrontational tone would have been beneficial. As Dr. Garcia notes, his worldview came into focus when “I remembered that life was about developing character, being tested by fire, and forgiving,” and that is the true message presented in his life and careers, as well as in this inspiring autobiography.

Jorge Iber is Professor of History and Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Texas Tech University. He is the author of dozens of scholarly articles and reviews and is author, coauthor, or editor of nine books on a variety of Latino historical topics. Currently, he is working on three projects: a study of the Pittsburgh Pirates, an anthology on Latinos and sports, and a history of Latino participation in American football.

John Gary Maxwell. *The Civil War Years in Utah: The Kingdom of God and the Territory That Did Not Fight*.
Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016.

Reviewed by Kenneth L. Alford

There are few books published about Utah Territory during the American Civil War.¹ John Gary Maxwell's *The Civil War Years in Utah* is the latest addition to that small but growing list. Maxwell is an emeritus professor of surgery at the University of North Carolina and at the University of Utah medical schools, who defines himself as "a revisionist, independent historian."² Maxwell is the author of *Robert Newton Baskin and the Making of Modern Utah* (2013); *Gettysburg to Great Salt Lake: George R. Maxwell, Civil War Hero and Federal Marshal among the Mormons* (2010); and numerous medical research papers.

This book may be of interest to students of the American Civil War and Utah's territorial period, as it includes some previously unpublished material. For example, the author discloses Utah territorial governor Stephen S. Harding's early associations with Latter-day Saints in Palmyra, New York (121–24). Harding claimed to have been present in Palmyra's Grandin building when the first proof sheet of the Book of Mormon came off the press (123). Maxwell also includes an engaging and extended, albeit speculative, reconstruction of events surrounding Governor John W. Dawson's panicked flight from Utah Territory on December 31, 1861, after having served just three weeks in an office for which the U.S. Senate had not yet confirmed him (95–115).

1. Previous books include Margaret M. Fisher, ed., *Utah and the Civil War* (1929); E. B. Long, *The Saints and the Union: Utah Territory during the Civil War* (1981); and Kenneth L. Alford, ed., *Civil War Saints* (2012). Brigham D. Madsen's biography of Patrick Edward Connor, *Glory Hunter* (1990), is largely but not exclusively about war-time Utah, but it is nonetheless useful.

2. John Gary Maxwell, Facebook profile, <https://www.facebook.com/johngary.maxwell>.

An interesting aspect of writing history is that authors can reach very different conclusions based upon an analysis of the same documentary evidence. My chief concern with *The Civil War Years in Utah* is not that Maxwell interprets many Utah Civil War events differently than I do; it is that he relies heavily on conjecture, cherry-picked sources, a one-sided point of view, and a polemical tone to do so.

Maxwell's thesis is that "overt disloyalty and treason blossomed in Utah" (6) during the Civil War. The book claims "indisputable evidence of Southern allegiance among Mormon leaders" and summarizes Utah's Civil War experience as "this dark chapter in Utah history" (jacket).

The author repeatedly asserts (13, 44, 54, 57–58, 171–172, 314, 351–54), but does not adequately substantiate, that a majority of Utah's senior Mormon leaders "openly favored the Confederacy" (13). Maxwell allocates considerable space (33–44) recounting the story of an eccentric, freelancing Walter Murray Gibson—who Maxwell believes was a Confederate agent. After befriending Brigham Young, converting to Mormonism, and cultivating relationships with other Latter-day Saint leaders, Gibson went to Hawaii as a Church emissary (43–44). Far from being a smoking gun of Mormon treason and support for Southern rebellion, Gibson was excommunicated in 1864 after reports of his inappropriate behavior reached Utah (43).

Maxwell quotes Brigham Young as declaring "Nine-tenths of the people of the Territory were southern sympathizers" (314). The quotation appears in Massachusetts newspaper editor Samuel Bowles's 1865 travelogue, *Across the Continent*, which has a distinctly sensational, anti-Mormon point of view. This statement attributed to Young resonates with no other primary source dealing with his political views. While Young did not consider the Civil War a Mormon fight, he was neither anti-Union nor pro-Confederate as Maxwell contends.

At the direction of President Lincoln, Utah Territory mustered into active service one company of cavalry in April 1862, led by Captain Lot Smith, which served 107 days guarding the Overland Trail as well as its mail and telegraph facilities. After the author briefly outlines the service of the Lot Smith company (135–39), readers likely will be confused when Maxwell later asserts Utah was "the only state or territory not to send a single organized unit of volunteers into the Civil War" (350). Maxwell's comment that these Utah volunteers "neither saw nor engaged Confederate troops or Southern sympathizers" (135) ignores the fact that many of the 2.2 million men who served in the Union Army saw no combat, yet they are viewed as contributors to the final victory. Maxwell also brushes aside the arduous nature of Smith's seven-hundred-mile march.

Brigham Young, whom Maxwell categorizes as a “hard-line dictator” (9), receives special, and sarcastic, treatment throughout the book. When Maxwell criticizes Young for not reenlisting Lot Smith’s company in August 1862, for example, he overlooks the fact that the unit was discharged and its troops dispersed over a week and a half before the U.S. government’s request for extended service arrived. Young, who held no governmental position, saw no need to re-enlist (or recruit) Utah soldiers when Colonel Patrick Edward Connor’s California Volunteers were already within Utah’s borders marching unannounced toward Salt Lake City. In chapter 7 (“The Pen, the Sword, Prophecy Unfulfilled, 1865”), Maxwell insinuates Young may have been responsible for the death of Utah Governor James Doty in June 1865 (326–31), an official with whom Young was generally in agreement. “Who benefits from Doty’s death?” (327), Maxwell asks. Through “circumstantial evidence” (327), he answers, “Brigham Young” (327–31).

Maxwell accepts as accurate and authoritative sources critical of Mormon leaders, while ignoring or discounting many relevant and more favorable sources. As a result, the historical narrative that unfolds is consistently lopsided. In his view, Mormons are a “fanatic and radicalized fundamentalist group” (347) who were “ready to fight an all-out war” against the U.S. government (348). An example of an incorrect source is Maxwell’s use of a table from Frederick Dyer’s *Compendium of the War of Rebellion* that lists the “Number of Organizations Mustered by Governments for Service in the Union Army.”³ Dyer’s data do not mention Utah, so Maxwell gratuitously but inaccurately adds a final entry: “Utah, 0” (291). Utah’s small military contribution (one cavalry unit) was actually consistent with that of most other western states and territories, except California. Dakota and Washington Territories both raised only one military unit. Oregon (a state since 1859) and Nevada (a territory in March 1861 and a state in October 1864) mustered only two units each. Arizona, which became a separate territory in February 1863, is not credited with raising any military units.⁴

An important indicator of the Union Army’s view of Utah’s loyalty is found in a letter from Major General Irvin McDowell—Commander, Department of the Pacific—to Utah Governor James Doty. In his October 1864 letter signaling the possibility of a request for Utah troops,

3. Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, Vol. 1 (Des Moines, Iowa: Dyer Publishing, 1908), 39.

4. Dyer, *Compendium*, 39.

McDowell informs Doty that he has received “authority to raise, not to exceed four [military] companies from Utah in case they should be necessary.”⁵ What is important is not that McDowell never acted on this authorization as the war drew to a close, but that he and the governors of California and Oregon were comfortable with such a possibility. Maxwell provides none of this context.

Aside from omissions, this book contains a number of factual errors. For example, Philip St. George Cooke, who commanded the Mexican War’s Mormon Battalion, is referred to as Philip St. *John* Cooke (70), and several dates associated with Cooke’s Utah command and the Lot Smith Cavalry Company’s service are inaccurate (3, 11, 42, 70, 135, 177). More problematic are several unattributed quotations and numerous unsupported assertions throughout the book.

Readers who are likely to select only one book on this topic will be better served by reading *The Saints and the Union*, E. B. Long’s aging but still-excellent 1981 book which presents a balanced and objective history of Utah during the Civil War.

Kenneth L. Alford is Professor of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. After serving almost thirty years on active duty in the United States Army, he retired as a colonel in 2008. While on active duty, Ken served in numerous assignments, including the Pentagon, eight years teaching at the United States Military Academy at West Point, and four years as a professor and department chair at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. He published *Civil War Saints* in 2012. His next book, *Utah’s Official Civil War Records*, an edited documentary history, will be published in 2017 by the Arthur H. Clark Company, an imprint of the University of Oklahoma Press. Ken and his wife, Sherilee, have four children and thirteen grandchildren.

5. “Territorial Militia Records, 1849–1877,” MS 2210, Utah State Archives, Salt Lake City.

Patrick Madden. *Sublime Physick*.
Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016.

Reviewed by Darlene Young

It may be no longer accurate to say that the personal essay is having a “moment.” If we can judge by the increase in publications and writing programs that feature it, the genre is here to stay, and its practitioners are beginning to get the popular and academic attention they deserve. Excitingly, several Latter-day Saint writers are making national names for themselves as important voices (critical and creative) in this genre. One example is Brigham Young University English professor Patrick Madden, whose second collection of essays, *Sublime Physick*, has just been published by University of Nebraska Press. While Madden does not necessarily write as a Latter-day Saint, he essays from a Mormon worldview, gathering scattered knowledge from everywhere and, as he discusses in his earlier collection, finding the sacred in the quotidian.

One cannot review a collection of personal essays without addressing the nature of the genre. Nor, judging by this collection, can an essayist essay for very long on any subject without coming to the subject of essaying itself. As Madden himself points out, an essay is the story of the essayist’s mind at work. Other masters of the genre (many of whom Madden quotes once, twice, or many times each during the course of the book) have variously described essaying as making honey from flowers (Montaigne, 201), the arrangement of a subject (Pascal, 136), new ways of knowing what is known (Martone, 200), the transmutation of a rude world into a finer one (Alexander Smith, 26), and self-analysis via writing (Michael Danko, 53). To these definitions, Madden adds his own: an essay is an observation on the passing of time (241), a deliberate enjoyment of the contact with others’ thoughts (154), a form of writing interested in middles (39), and an abstraction obtained through the concrete (25).

And it seems that this collection's project is as much to define and describe the essay as to explore each essay's given topic. Each essay is a digestion, a recombination of details of the world into art, from which the essay's subject issues (184). But Madden's style is to let the bones show, inviting readers into the essaying experience. We encounter his sundry details, meanderings, sidenotes, and discoveries the way we might encounter a mosaic, noticing close-up how each piece rubs against its neighbors and shines differently in their company, then stepping back to assess what they mean all together.

Take, for example, "Spit," the collection's first essay. Within the confines of this one essay, we get references to, among other things, the scientific formula of saliva, the 1970s cartoon *Wonder Twins*, the University of Illinois school song, Tom Sawyer, the rock band Rush, writer Annie Dillard, and a card game, in addition to several personal and family anecdotes. What do they all have in common? Well, the topic of spitting, of course. But Madden's arrangement of the details and his guiding narration create a sense that the essay is about more than its outward subject. By the end, the piece has become a meditation on what constitutes the essence of an individual, and whether people can actually change and move on from acts they regret. Like all good essayists, Madden resists the temptation to answer the question. He leaves the pieces out on the table in an artistic arrangement that is moving and more than the sum of its parts. The essay simultaneously satisfies and provokes, providing both a destination and an open door—which is, of course, exactly what great art should do.

At times, the wide-ranging meanderings and piling of details can be exhausting. In his sprawling, thirty-thousand-plus-word penultimate piece, "Independent Redundancy," Madden remarks that he is delighted when reviewers point out that his mind "wanders all over the place" (177), but I find myself wondering what Madden's work would be like without his easy access to the Internet. Madden himself admits that most of his writing time is not spent writing (65). But for Madden, essaying is sometimes as much a curating as a producing. He refers, in "Independent Redundancy," to David Cope, whose computer produces music in the style of famous composers. Cope claims that the productions, though assembled by a computer from preexisting ideas, styles, and themes, can be classified as art because a human (artistic) mind "listens to the output, and chooses what's the best" (179). Similarly, much of Madden's material comes from work originally created by others, but

his work achieves its delight and originality through inventive arrangement, framing, and pointing.

Not all pieces in this collection are as variegated and montage-like. Some are shorter, rooted more firmly in anecdote and containing a greater proportion of Madden's own narration in relation to quotes from other sources. An example is "Entering and Breaking," in which Madden describes the hours he spent believing his two young children were missing. Though these pieces still dip into other topics for the sake of juxtaposition—Madden brings quantum theory, for example, to bear on the thoughts of a frantic father—the less scattered narration is a narrower channel, cutting deeper and creating a greater intensity of feeling. I find myself wishing for more essays like this.

But whether Madden is presenting his intricate shadowbox-like montages and nesting-doll observations (about observations on observation), or meditating deeply on a single subject, the essays in this collection never fail to create a sense of journey. Experiencing a Madden essay is experiencing what it is like to be inside a person's mind: we cannot help but feel less alone in the universe, and more aware of the delight of being alive in time. In his final essay, Madden asks, "What good is time if no one is there to observe its passing?" These essays are his way of observing the individual moments of a life, the individual flutterings of a mind. Reading Madden's essays is a way of participating with him in those moments, and the result is a greater ability to notice our own time passing. I can't think of a better reason for reading a book.

Darlene Young teaches creative writing at Brigham Young University and currently serves as poetry editor for *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. She has published poetry and essays in various journals and anthologies, including *Fire in the Pasture: Twenty-first Century Mormon Poets* (El Cerrito, Calif.: Peculiar Pages, 2011) and *The Mother in Me* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008). She lives in South Jordan with her husband and sons. A review of Patrick Madden's first collection of essays, *Quotidiana*, appears in *BYU Studies Quarterly* 50, no. 4 (2011): 169–172.

Hal Robert Boyd and Susan Easton Black, eds., *Psalms of Nauvoo: Early Mormon Poetry* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2015)

In 1888, Orson F. Whitney declared that Mormons “will yet have Miltons and Shakespeares of our own.” This quotation has since become a watchword for serious Mormon writers and poets over the intervening century. Mormons everywhere have a special connection to the arts because of the faith’s encouragement of worship through song. Today, many LDS general conference talks draw from analogies based on some form of artistic expression, reinforcing the impact art and poetics have had on Mormon thought over the past two centuries.

Hal Robert Boyd and Susan Easton Black have gathered just one small piece of this rich LDS literary culture in their *Psalms of Nauvoo*. Boyd is a Brigham Young University graduate and is currently a JD candidate at Yale Law School. Black is an emeritus professor of Church History at Brigham Young University, where she taught for decades. Over the years, Black has spoken and published on a number of topics related to the Nauvoo period of Mormon history. In this collection, Boyd and Black set out to present poetry written “by Latter-day Saints from 1839 to 1846. Preference was given to poetry that focused on the history and citizenry of the city of Nauvoo, especially the events surrounding the life, ministry, and death of the Prophet Joseph Smith” (xvii).

In their introduction, the editors touch on the cultural environment in which these poems came to life. Nauvoo was a time of great art, music, and theatre in the lives of the Saints. Boyd and Black remind us that Emma Smith herself was directed by revelation to

collect “a selection of sacred hymns” in 1831, signifying the importance of song and poetry in the Church at a very early stage in its existence (xxviii; D&C 25:11). The editors review the lasting contributions of Eliza R. Snow, W. W. Phelps, Parley P. Pratt, and others (Joseph Smith himself has some poems in the volume).

The compilation begins with Warren Foote’s “Let Zion and Her Children Mourn,” a poem lamenting the 1838 Extermination Order signed by Governor Lilburn Boggs. The poems then weave a literary narrative of the Saints’ expulsion from Missouri; their taming of the marshlands of Commerce, Illinois; the rise and beauty of Nauvoo and the Mormon Renaissance; and the concluding disenfranchisement of Church members and their somber abandonment of their city and beloved temple. Yet even this closure is heartened by hope, with the final entry in the collection, appropriately William Clayton’s “All Is Well”—now known as the famous anthem “Come, Come Ye Saints”—written in 1846.

The anthology is divided by three chapters denoting distinct historical periods: Flight from Missouri, Nauvoo the Beautiful (which garners the lion’s share of the volume), and Martyrdom and Aftermath. Each chapter is accompanied by a brief sketch of events that shaped the subsequent poetry. The poems themselves, numbering over one hundred, are enriched by illustrations and valuable contextualization provided by the editors. These notes are sometimes lengthier than the poems they introduce.

Aside from the poetry and history, *Psalms of Nauvoo* also includes biographical information on the poets and offers a useful set of author and title indexes for readers searching for a particular poet or poem. The editors also

provide full citations of the originals of each of the poems, as well as a bibliography for further study.

Psalms of Nauvoo will be useful to scholars of Mormon literature for its commentaries and source work, finding a welcomed place alongside other LDS literary anthologies, most notably Cracroft and Lambert's essential *A Believing People: Literature of the Latter-day Saints*. Members of the LDS Church will enjoy the basic history and expressions of faith found in the poetry of some of their most celebrated poets as well as that of others with whom members may be less familiar.

—Gerrit van Dyk

Larry W. Draper and Kent P. Jackson, eds., *A Missionary's Story: The Letters and Journals of Adolf Haag, Mormon Missionary to Switzerland and Palestine, 1892* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2015)

In the early years of the LDS Church's formation, it was common for worthy male members to be called to leave their families and serve a mission. Many of their stories of faith and sacrifice have been published to serve as reminders and examples for Latter-day Saints today. *A Missionary's Story: The Letters and Journals of Adolf Haag* is no exception. However, no two missionaries' stories are alike, and this is a story with unique adventures and lessons of its own.

A Missionary's Story provides a brief but powerful history of the life of Adolf Haag. Divided into five sections, the book tells of Adolf's premission life and includes portions from his mission journals, sent letters, and other articles regarding Haag's service as a missionary. Introduced to the gospel in Germany, Adolf was the first of his family to

immigrate to the United States. He settled in Payson, Utah, where he married and began a family. It wasn't long before he was called to serve a mission to Switzerland and Germany, but when he arrived in the field, he was assigned to be a traveling elder in the Turkish Mission, which included Palestine. Adolf's letters and journal entries describe his travels across the United States to New York and to London, Paris, Switzerland, Turkey, Greece, and Egypt, culminating in his arrival in the Holy Land.

Larry W. Draper (a former Church historian and curator at the L. Tom Perry Special Collections) and Kent P. Jackson (BYU faculty member and associate director at the BYU Jerusalem Center) have compiled Adolf's letters and journals into a valuable text that is gracefully accented with photographs and copies of the original scripts. Through the letters and entries he recorded about his mission experience, we get a glimpse into Adolf's life and character, including the love he had for the people he met and his dedication in doing the Lord's will. Adolf's mission was not short of difficulties by any means. Faced with financial and health burdens, Adolf strived to keep the Lord's work his main priority while still caring for his family back home. His letters are full of hope as he describes these challenges, continually reassuring himself and his wife that the blessings of the gospel come through faithful service and sacrifice. Though he struggled to find people to teach along his journey, he recorded the humbling and infrequent event of watching someone enter the waters of baptism.

Draper and Jackson do a commendable job in organizing the many entries and letters that Adolf wrote throughout his mission. There are small guides to direct the reader between corresponding

journal entries and letters, and these clearly state who Haag is writing to in his letters, with a brief biography of each recipient. Truly, Draper and Jackson provide an experience in which one can feel involved in Adolf Haag's mission and in the lives of those with whom he associated. This memorable compilation is an easy and uplifting read for those who are interested in Church history, especially the missions and trials of the early Saints; however, its inspiration touches all who read its pages.

—Bridget Edwards

Samuel M. Brown, *First Principles and Ordinances: The Fourth Article of Faith in Light of the Temple* (Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute, Brigham Young University, 2014).

Samuel M. Brown's splendid and sensitive meditation on the fourth article of faith, *First Principles and Ordinances*, reveals a mind that is simultaneously restless and faithful, rigorous and compassionate, sensible and sensitive. For Brown, the language of our faith, our talk of a loving Heavenly Father, suggests a social dimension to worship. This language locates devotion in an ongoing dialogue not just between Deity and supplicant, but between worshiper, family, and a larger faith community. As he puts it, "Faith to me is a story about commitment and abiding relationships; we limit the power of faith when we fail to see the role we play in our faith" (1).

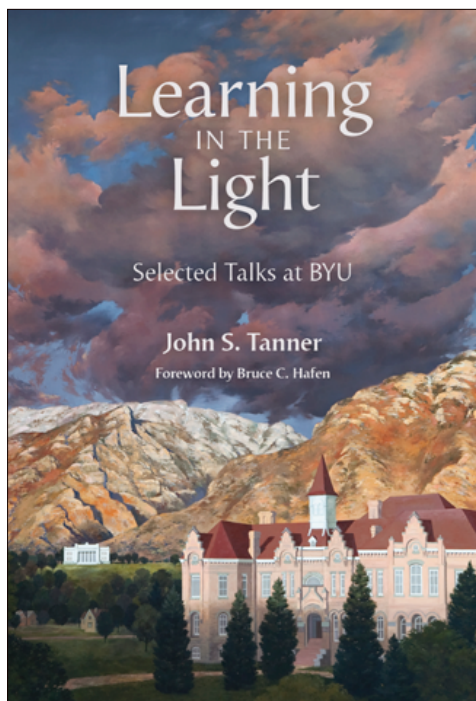
Brown is also a scientist, a medical researcher, and he shares gospel insights drawn from his professional life. He describes the inevitable tension between "grace" and "works" in terms of patients suffering from illnesses relating to blood pressure. Some patients suffer from shock, which depresses blood

pressure; they need adrenaline. Others suffer from hypertension; they need medications that reduce blood pressure. By the same token, some sinners need to be reminded of God's grace; need to be persuaded that, yes, God's love can even extend to them. Others may need to be reminded that that same loving God will be displeased if one does not make the effort to carve enough time from a busy schedule for service. "Grace" and "works" emerge, not as dueling theologies, but as two equally valid spiritual medications, depending on our needs. Doctrines do not exist in some sterile exegetical vacuum; they are meant to be lived and applied to our own interactions within our faith community (47–48).

I found his penultimate chapter, on the gift of the Holy Ghost, particularly meaningful and moving. Mental illness disrupts our ability to discern the Spirit. Mental illness can damage or even destroy our spiritual senses. He cites the familiar poster-wisdom of "footprints in the sand." But then he asks "how could a person's life story be told with only one set of human footprints? The Mormon version of that visionary beach would have so many footprints that it would be hard to find undisturbed sand" (125). And for those of our brothers and sisters who find themselves struggling with the scourge of mental illness, it becomes our obligation and pleasure to join together to carry them along the beach, for as long as they need.

Brown's book is not just thought-provoking, not just wise. It is inspiring, and I found it terribly moving. It is never incompatible with a mainstream, orthodox Latter-day Saint faith, but there was also never a page I did not find provocative. I cannot recommend *First Principles* highly enough.

—Eric Samuelson



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The talks collected in this volume are drawn from John S. Tanner's later years at Brigham Young University, prior to his appointment as president of BYU–Hawaii. They contain a record of how, as an administrator, he tried to keep the dream of BYU alive. More broadly, they speak to a vision of learning that has been central to Latter-day Saint doctrine and practice from the earliest days of the Church. He calls it learning in the light (see Psalm 36:9).

Bruce C. Hafen observes, "Since I began teaching at BYU forty-five years ago, I have heard many talks and read many essays about BYU's spiritual and intellectual mission. I've not heard that mission described more eloquently or with more insight than in John's work. At his best, he is reminiscent of Elder Neal A. Maxwell, with whom he has much in common—intuitive confidence in gospel premises as the best foundation for sound reasoning; a high degree of awareness about cultural context; equally fluent, even native-tongued, in both the language of the scriptures and the language of liberal education; meek, bright, and empathic."

Joseph Smith Chronology

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On This Day

November or December 1825

Manchester, New York—Joseph Smith's family moved into the frame home that Joseph's brother Alvin had begun before his death in 1823. The home was completed sometime after October 25, 1825.

- *A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania*, © Larry C. Porter, p. 27

Tag: **Personal Life**

November 14, 1835

Kirtland, Ohio—Joseph Smith received a revelation calling Warren Parrish as his scribe.

- Joseph Smith, *Journal*, 14 November 1835
- Revelation, 14 November 1835
- *History of the Church*, © Joseph Smith, 2:311-12
- Joseph Smith History 81:442

Events

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1833 October

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Ecclesiastical Duties

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October 20, 1833

Brantford, Upper Canada (now Ontario)—Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon preached in the morning and evening to attentive congregations.

- *History of the Church*, © Joseph Smith, 1:421
- Joseph Smith, *Journal*, 20-25 October 1833

Tag: **Ecclesiastical Duties**

October 23, 1833

Colburn, Upper Canada (now Ontario)—At a candlelight meeting, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were challenged by a Wesleyan Methodist who "exhibited a great lack of reason, knowledge, and wisdom, and gave them no opportunity to reply."

- *History of the Church*, © Joseph Smith, 1:421-22
- Joseph Smith, *Journal*, 20-25 October 1833

Tag: **Ecclesiastical Duties**

October 27, 1833

Mount Pleasant, Upper Canada (now Ontario)—Joseph Smith had great success while preaching in Mount Pleasant; twelve people requested baptism and others desired another meeting for the next day.

- *History of the Church*, © Joseph Smith, 1:422
- Joseph Smith, *Journal*, 27-28 October 1833

Tag: **Ecclesiastical Duties**

October 28, 1833

Mount Pleasant, Upper Canada (now Ontario)—Joseph Smith held another meeting



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Joseph Smith Chronology at

<http://www.jschronology.byustudies.byu.edu>

Joseph Smith's remarkable life is here recorded as a sequence that can be searched by date (year or month) or by category tags (personal life, visions and revelations, writings, ecclesiastical duties, legal events, travels, and political events). The chronology lists events that can be tied to specific days or months. Each entry contains a brief summary along with references for further information.

Joseph's experiences were expansive, and this chronology is evidence of the energetic pace and broad scope of concerns that characterized Joseph's daily activities. We hope that this chronology will be a useful resource that will place events in context of his circumstances and reveal connections and patterns.

The chronology is now updated to reflect new information published by the Joseph Smith Papers project.