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President Spencer W. Kimball spent many hours alone, pondering and praying, as he sought revelation on the priesthood question. Courtesy Church History Library. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Spencer W. Kimball and the Revelation on Priesthood

Edward L. Kimball

No doubt the most dramatic moment of the Spencer W. Kimball administration and probably the highlight of Church history in the twentieth century occurred in June 1978, when the First Presidency announced a revelation allowing worthy men of all races to be ordained to the priesthood and allowing worthy men and women access to all temple ordinances. The history of this issue reaches back to the early years of the Church. Without understanding the background, one cannot appreciate the magnitude of the 1978 revelation.

When the Church was very young a few black men were ordained to the priesthood. But soon such ordinations ceased, and a tradition grew, supported by common Christian beliefs and certain scriptural interpretations, that African blacks bore the burden of a curse levied by God on Cain and his posterity, which precluded them from participating fully in the life of the Church.

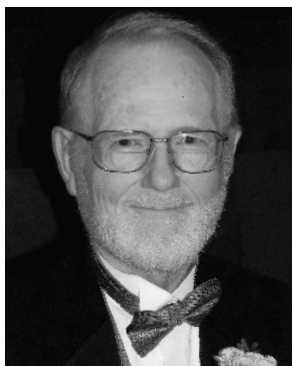
After World War II, the civil rights movement grew powerfully, calling for equal legal and social status for blacks. The movement gained strength through the 1960s, resulting in strong criticism of the Church for its exclusion of blacks from the priesthood and the temple, motivating some Church leaders to brace against attack and others to ask whether the time had come to seek a change.

The Traditional Explanation for Restrictive Policy

The Church in which Spencer W. Kimball grew up in the early twentieth century accepted without question that “colored” or “Negro” members of the Church could not receive the priesthood. They were ineligible

Edward L. Kimball

In 1977, my nephew Andrew and I published *Spencer W. Kimball*, describing the life of my father up to that time. He was then eighty-two years old, and we believed that the story was pretty much at an end. We thought that perhaps when he died we might put out a revised edition with a last chapter finishing his presidency years and summing up his place in Church history. But he not only extended his life another eight years, he also participated in the 1978 revelation on priesthood. It became apparent that a revision was not sufficient. There needed to be a second volume with focus on his presidency, the centerpiece being the revelation, its antecedents and consequences. I put off writing because I was occupied with my professional responsibilities as a law teacher at BYU, but I diligently collected the bits and pieces that would make writing possible. This included interviewing many of the people who were personally involved in the story.



In 1996, I retired and could turn more attention to the book project. It was not until 2002 that I had a full draft, but the manuscript was so voluminous with text and footnotes that it looked too long for normal publication. I wanted the book to serve as a tribute to my father's life and work, and I felt that the widest distribution would come by publication in a shorter form, say four or five hundred pages. One day as I was driving from Salt Lake City to Provo, a solution popped into my mind. It was to make available a reasonably priced, shorter printed version and include in the back of the book a CD containing the longer, footnoted version where it would be readily accessible to anyone who was interested in the more detailed history. A secondary benefit of creating a CD was the ability to include the text of six other out-of-print books, twenty-four articles, additional photographs, and several brief sound clips illustrating my father's voice before and after removal of most of his vocal cords.

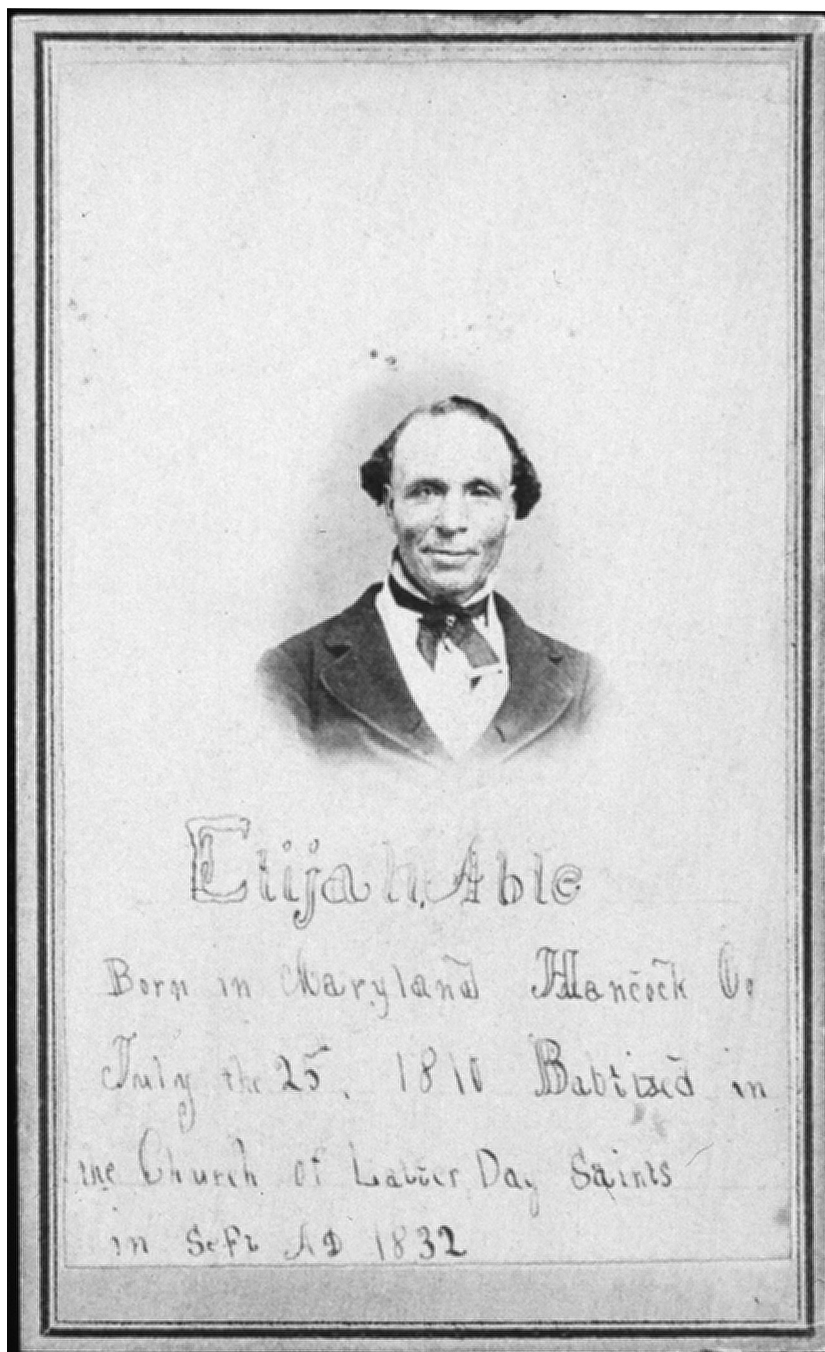
The process of shortening the text, removing most of the footnotes, and creating the CD was undertaken with major help from

the editors and staff of BYU Studies. This effort continued until late 2004 when agreement was reached with Deseret Book to publish the book and the CD in 2005. The chapters concerning the revelation are physically and emotionally the heart of the book, yet until now the fuller version, with its notes, has been available only electronically. I am grateful for BYU Studies' interest in making most of those four chapters along with their notes accessible in hard copy as well.

for missionary service and all priesthood leadership positions. Neither men nor women of African descent could receive the temple endowment, although they could be baptized vicariously for their ancestors. They could receive patriarchal blessings, serve as secretaries (though not as ward clerks), teach classes, and participate in the music program. African American women could be visiting teachers, but men could not be home teachers because it was a priesthood assignment. Skin color was not the issue—blacks from Polynesia or Australia faced no such limitations. “Lineage,” or presumed genealogy, was the problem.

Church policy related only to priesthood, not to personal worth, but many Latter-day Saints shared with other Americans the general social prejudice that relegated blacks to secondary status. A study by Armand Mauss concluded that Mormons were prejudiced, but not more than other religious Americans. “Mormons . . . were no more likely to give anti-Negro responses than were the Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans . . . or Baptists,” although their belief system could provide an easy rationalization for prejudice.¹

1. Armand L. Mauss, “Mormonism and the Negro: Faith, Folklore, and Civil Rights,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 2 (winter 1967): 36 (hereafter cited as *Dialogue*); Armand L. Mauss, “Mormonism and Secular Attitudes toward Negroes,” *Pacific Sociological Review* 9 (1966): 91–99, cited in William A. Wilson and Richard C. Poulsen, “The Curse of Cain and Other Stories: Blacks in Mormon Folklore,” *Sunstone* 5 (November/December 1980): 13. Mormon opinions about race relations (intermarriage, segregation, civil rights, school integration, and so forth) are similar to national opinions. This was true before the 1978 revelation (1972–76), during the period when it was announced (1977–82), and afterward (1983–85). Data came from the annual General Social Surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Corporation under grants from the National Science



Elijah Able, an early black convert, pioneer, and missionary, was ordained an elder on March 3, 1836. Zebedee Coltrin ordained Elijah a Seventy on December 20 that same year. Courtesy Church History Library. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

African-Americans in small numbers had been members of the Church from its days in Nauvoo. At least two black men, Walker Lewis, an elder, and Elijah Abel, a seventy, were ordained to the priesthood during Joseph Smith's lifetime.² Lewis was ordained by Apostle William Smith, brother of the Prophet, in 1843 or 1844 in Lowell, Massachusetts, and continued his involvement in the Church until at least 1852, when he returned to Lowell after a visit to Utah. Elijah Abel continued his activity in the Church in Utah, even though ordination of other blacks ceased.³ By Spencer's day, Church members who were aware of Abel generally believed his ordination did not accurately reflect true doctrine but was either a mistake, an exception, or the result of Joseph Smith's still imperfect understanding. It was not thought impossible that a black man could be ordained, just that it was improper.⁴ Thus, when such ordination errors came to light, the men would be asked to suspend use of their priesthood.

Foundation. Armand L. Mauss, paper presented at Mormon History Association meeting, Logan, Utah, May 7, 1988; Armand L. Mauss to author, March 22, 2003. See also Armand L. Mauss, *Mormonism and Minorities* (Richmond: University of California Press, 1974). When Spencer was stake president in Arizona he observed that prejudice existed not only toward blacks, but also toward Latino members. See also Russell Peek to author, March 27, 1995, and March 14, 1995. In 1976, BYU students elected Robert L. Stevenson, a black man, as student body vice-president. 1977 *Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1977), 23. Spencer met him. Spencer W. Kimball, Journal, September 7, 1976, in possession of the author.

2. Newell G. Bringhurst, "Elijah Abel and the Changing Status of Blacks within Mormonism," in *Neither White nor Black*, ed. Lester E. Bush Jr. and Armand L. Mauss (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1984), 131, 133.

3. Connell O'Donovan, "The Mormon Priesthood Ban and Elder Q. Walker Lewis," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 26 (2006): 48, and particularly pages 82–95. Newell G. Bringhurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks: The Changing Place of Black People within Mormonism* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981). Reportedly some persons of mixed heritage received the endowment before 1907. Henry J. Wolfinger, "Jane Manning James: A Test of Faith," in *Worth Their Salt: Notable but Often Unnoted Women of Utah*, ed. Colleen Whitley (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1996), 268 n. 60. Jane Manning James was not endowed during her lifetime. Jessie L. Embry, *Black Saints in a White Church: Contemporary African American Mormons* (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1994), 40. Compare Roger D. Launius, *Invisible Saints: A History of Black Americans in the Reorganized Church* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1988). Mormon converts from the South brought a few slaves to the Utah Territory. Black slavery, though legal in Utah Territory until 1862, occurred rarely. Ronald G. Coleman, "African Americans in Utah," in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, ed. Allen Kent Powell (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 2.

4. In 1908, Joseph F. Smith stated his understanding that Joseph Smith himself declared Abel's ordination "null and void." Excerpt from Council minutes,

By the twentieth century, the origin of the restriction had receded far enough into the past that it carried the sanctity of long-established tradition. Most Mormons felt satisfied that it had a scriptural basis, even though the cited passages were at best ambiguous. Spencer knew that the restriction did not come from explicit scriptures but rather from interpretations by various Church leaders. The reasoning, as often constructed, ran this way: If (as attributed to Joseph Smith and Brigham Young) God disapproved of blacks holding the priesthood, and if (in God's justice) individuals are accountable only for their own shortcomings, the withholding of priesthood from blacks who have lived worthily in mortality must reflect some kind of failure on their part before they were born.⁵

Proposed Scriptural Basis

Looking for scriptural support, Church leaders found statements in the Bible and the Pearl of Great Price that allowed the conclusion that after the Flood the Pharaoh of Egypt was both black and cursed as to the priesthood, inviting the inference that Pharaoh was cursed as to the priesthood *because* he was black. The gaps in logic were bridged with supposition.

- God cursed Cain for killing Abel and placed a mark on him.
- Cain's descendants were black. (The mark, therefore, is assumed to be blackness.)
- Blackness came upon the Canaanites. (They are assumed to be descendants of Cain.)
- Pharaoh, descended from Ham and his wife, Egyptus, had Canaanite blood. (Thus Cain's bloodline survived the Flood.)
- Pharaoh, although blessed by Noah for righteousness, was cursed as pertaining to the priesthood. (Thus denial of

August 26, 1908, Kimball Papers; these papers are in possession of the author but will eventually be donated to the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (hereafter cited as Church History Library). President Smith offered no basis for that assertion. Abel did not believe that his ordination had ever been nullified. And twenty-nine years earlier, in 1879, Joseph F. Smith noted that Elijah Abel had two certificates identifying him as a seventy, one of them issued in Utah. Embry, *Black Saints in a White Church*, 39.

5. It is noteworthy that Joseph Smith, who translated the Book of Abraham, probably in 1835, drew no connection between premortal life and priesthood curses. Jay M. Todd, *The Saga of the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1969), 228, 264, 320–24.

priesthood is independent of righteousness in mortality and must derive from a premortal cause.)

- Some premortal spirits were noble and great (Abr. 3:22). (Thus some premortal spirits were less than noble and great. Without any injustice, these lesser spirits were sent to earth through the lineage of Cain to experience mortality, but without priesthood.⁶)

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6. There were and are, however, holes in this line of reasoning. For example:
- Cain's scriptural punishment was personal, that the earth would not yield its strength to his tillage and that he should be "a fugitive and a vagabond" (Gen. 4:12). Nothing was said in the scriptures about denial of priesthood.
 - The mark placed on Cain is not specified and, whatever the mark, it is not identified as a curse, since its purpose was to keep Cain from being killed (Moses 5:39–40).
 - No scripture says that either Cain's punishment or the mark placed on him would pass to his descendants.
 - Although it is said that Cain's descendants were black and shunned by others (Moses 7:22), their blackness is not identified as the mark placed on Cain.
 - The scriptures say of the Canaanites that "a blackness came upon all the children of Canaan" (Moses 7:8), and they provide a plausible explanation for the blackness in that they slaughtered the people of Shum (Moses 7:7–8). The scriptures do not identify the Canaanites as descendants of Cain, despite the fact that both groups were in some way "black." If the mark of Cain were blackness and Canaanites were descended from Cain, as supposed, it does not make sense to speak of blackness "coming upon them" as though it were a new event. Further, there is no reference to priesthood with respect to these Canaanites. Enoch was told not to preach to the Canaanites, but this, too, is in the context of their having slaughtered the people of Shum. Ham's wife apparently belonged to the Canaanite people (Abr. 1:21–22), because Pharaoh, a descendant of Ham and his wife, Egyptus, was "a partaker of the blood of the Canaanites by birth . . . and thus, from Ham, sprang that race which preserved the curse [of blackness] in the land" (Abr. 1:21, 24).
 - The Book of Abraham speaks of Pharaoh, a king of Egypt, as belonging to a "lineage by which he could not have the right of Priesthood" (Abr. 1:27). The traditional explanation was that this lineage was the black lineage, but an alternate explanation may be that in a patriarchal society Pharaoh came through a female line, and it was this lineage that deprived him of the right to priesthood. We are told that Pharaoh descended from Noah, through Ham, but his lineage is further described only as coming through Ham's daughter by Egyptus (Abr. 1:21–25). As Pharaoh claimed a right to priesthood through Ham, he sought to skip the gap in his genealogy, but he could not. In contrast, when Abraham makes claim to priesthood he is careful to trace his own paternal line back to Noah. He says that by his righteous

In the modern Church, these ambiguities and gaps in logic did not in themselves refute the traditional explanation of priesthood restriction, but they showed how tenuous the reasoning was.

For Brigham Young, the matter was uncomplicated. It was simply a matter of lineage, a hierarchy of races.⁷ So far as we know he did not ever rely on the notion of premortal misconduct as explanation. Indeed, the Pearl of Great Price, in which the teachings about premortal existence principally appear, was not published in the United States until 1878, a year after Brigham Young's death, and not canonized until 1880.⁸ He saw the

living "I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers . . . even the right of the firstborn . . . through the fathers, unto me" (Abr. 1:2–3). See Hugh Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 425–28, 578–87 (see 1st ed. at 134–37).

7. He said, for example, "Why are so many of the inhabitants of the earth cursed with a skin of blackness? It comes in consequence of their fathers rejecting the power of the Holy Priesthood, and the law of God." Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 11:272 (August 19, 1866). To him denial of priesthood to the descendants of Cain was no more puzzling than denial in the Bible of priesthood to Israelites not descended from Levi and Aaron. See also Armand L. Mauss, "In Search of Ephraim: Traditional Mormon Conceptions of Lineage and Race," *Journal of Mormon History* 25 (Spring 1999): 131–73, especially 163–71.

8. The Pearl of Great Price was published in Great Britain in 1851. The portions relevant to this discussion had previously appeared in *Times and Seasons*, so Young undoubtedly had knowledge of them. Perhaps the first person to speculate in print on a lack of premortal valiancy on the part of blacks was B. H. Roberts, who expressed his belief that the descendants of Cain are those who were "not valiant in the great rebellion in heaven." B. H. Roberts, "To the Youth of Israel," *Contributor* 6 (May 1885): 297. Joseph Fielding Smith relied on Roberts and became the major source of teaching about the issue in the twentieth century. He himself was fairly cautious, but others following him took a much more definitive stand. As early as 1931, he said that the Bible cannot answer the question about why Negro men cannot have the priesthood, but that the Pearl of Great Price and the teachings of early Church leaders offer some information. "It is generally believed," he said, that Ham's wife brought the curse of Cain through the Flood. In addition to quoting B. H. Roberts's conjecture, he also quoted Brigham Young as saying that Negroes were not neutral in heaven, but "the posterity of Cain are black because he (Cain) committed murder. He killed Abel and God set a mark upon his posterity. But the spirits are pure (i.e. innocent; see D.C. 93:38) that enter their tabernacles." Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection*, 5th ed. (Independence, Mo.: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1943), 105. ("Innocent" need not mean that men are born free from all consequences of premortal choices.) This statement appears to reject the "war in heaven" explanation and rely instead on the notion that blacks are punished for the sin of their fathers, a principle difficult to reconcile with teachings about individual responsibility. See Article of Faith 2;

enslaved condition of blacks in the United States as proof that they were under a curse.⁹ His teaching—that the priesthood restriction on blacks could not be lifted until after the resurrection—came to be seen, in hindsight, as unwarranted.

In the twentieth century, doctrinal emphasis on blood and inheritance declined while emphasis on individual responsibility increased.¹⁰ A belief

Deuteronomy 24:16; Jeremiah 31:30; Ezekiel 18, especially verse 20; and Doctrine and Covenants 124:50.

Elder Smith renewed these teachings in later editions; and when Eugene England asked him in a 1963 private interview whether it was necessary for a faithful Latter-day Saint to believe that black men were denied priesthood because of their activities in the premortal existence, Elder Smith said, “Yes.” But when England asked for scriptural substantiation, Elder Smith reread the relevant passages, reflected, then finally stated, “No, you do not have to believe that Negroes are denied the priesthood because of the pre-existence. I have always assumed that because it was what I was taught, and it made sense, but you don’t have to believe it to be in good standing, because it is not definitely stated in the scriptures. And I have received no revelation on the matter.” Elder Smith added that logically no blacks would receive the priesthood in this life, because that would be inconsistent with God’s perfect justice to those who had previously been denied it in this life. Eugene England, “Are All Alike unto God? Prejudice against Blacks and Women in Popular Mormon Theology,” *Sunstone* 14 (April 1990): 20–21. Elder Smith’s logic seems to require that spirits who would have been Abel’s descendants were deprived of mortal experience until at least the Millennium and could not come to earth through another ancestor. Although Brigham Young originally indicated that blacks would receive the priesthood only after all others had had a chance to receive it, later prophets changed from “last of all” to “sometime.” President McKay answered a reporter, “Not in my lifetime.” “Mixed Messages on the Negro Doctrine: An Interview with Lester Bush,” *Sunstone* 4 (May/June 1979): 13. The McKay statement is illuminated in Robert F. Smith, “President McKay and Reporter,” *Sunstone* 4 (December 1979): 4. These shifts softened the policy a little, since it is easier to accept “not yet” than “at the end of time” or “never.”

9. Young criticized slavery but was content to continue the practice as lawful in Utah. And he said of slavery: “Another curse [in addition to blackness] is pronounced upon the same race—that they should be the ‘servant of servants;’ and they will be, until that curse is removed; and the Abolitionists cannot help it, nor in the least alter that decree. How long is that race to endure the dreadful curse that is upon them? That curse will remain upon them, and they never can hold the Priesthood or share in it until all the other descendents of Adam have received the promises and enjoyed the blessings of the Priesthood and the keys thereof.” Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 7:290 (October 9, 1859).

10. See, for example, Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:184 (February 18, 1855) and 7:289–91 (October 9, 1859). The interpretation relying on book of Abraham scriptures began after canonization of the Pearl of Great Price in 1880. The Article of Faith that “men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam’s transgression” emphasized individual responsibility, and Ezekiel 18:20 is

that God is just led to a belief that when God sent spirits to a lineage to which he denied the priesthood, it must have been for some shortcoming of those spirits in the premortal world. Men reasoned that if there were “noble and great” spirits before mortality (Abraham 3:22–26), there must also be spirits of all degrees of lesser quality. But if, in the long run, men and women of all races would be blessed in accordance with their deserts, race is seen to be essentially irrelevant, except perhaps as a test.¹¹

critical of guilt by lineage. See also 2 Nephi 26:33 (black and white are all alike unto God); Moroni 8:12 (little children who die without baptism are alive in Christ). Still, the idea of a blessed or cursed lineage is not foreign to the scriptures. Notable examples are the descendants of Abraham, a blessed lineage (Gen. 22:17–18), and the Lamanites in the Book of Mormon, a cursed lineage (2 Ne. 5:21).

11. A puzzle was posed by the teaching of Joseph Smith that all children of all races who died too young to be morally accountable were heirs of the celestial kingdom, saved through Christ (D&C 137:10) because “they were too pure, too lovely, to live on earth.” Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974), 196–97. The Prophet also said “they will there enjoy the fullness of that light, glory and intelligence, which is prepared in the celestial kingdom.” Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet*, 200. It would seem that “to inherit the *fullness* is to have exaltation.” Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 675. Apparently such children do not need the testing, probationary experience of mortality. This idea would certainly not seem to square with the view that black infants who die were among the least valiant in the premortal world.

In light of the fact that individual black Latter-day Saints might be as faithful and deserving as any other Church members of the blessings of priesthood and temple, Church leaders were confident that at some future point (often thought of as in or after the Millennium) all faithful black Church members would, in person or through vicarious ordinances, have all priesthood and temple blessings that others might enjoy. If faithful, they would suffer no disadvantage in the eternal world. See also Smith, *Teachings of Joseph Smith*, 200. On December 3, 1854, Brigham Young said the curse would be removed from the posterity of Cain after all others had been redeemed and resurrected. Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 2:143. George Q. Cannon understood that the time would not come until Abel could beget spirit children and they obtain a body. Excerpt from Council minutes, March 11, 1900, Kimball Papers. For Church leaders, the issue was not whether, but when. A First Presidency statement in 1949 quoted Wilford Woodruff as having made the following statement: “The day will come when all that race will be redeemed and possess all the blessings which we now have.” Bush and Mauss, *Neither White nor Black*, 221.

Origins of the Policy

Historically, the earliest race issue for the Church concerned slavery (see Doctrine and Covenants 134:12). In Missouri, Mormons avoided challenging their slaveholding neighbors' position that blacks were descendants of Cain, rightly held as slaves, even though the scriptural basis was fragmentary. Noah is said to have cursed his grandson Canaan that he would be "a servant of servants" (Gen. 9:25), but even in its strongest interpretation this merely predicts slavery, it does not justify it.

During the Nauvoo years, Joseph Smith announced his opposition to slavery and proposed emancipation by government purchase. This position did not necessarily repudiate the concept of a cursed lineage, but it did repudiate slavery as a justified consequence of lineage. He apparently held the widespread view of his time that blacks as a race had been degraded by slavery, but he also asserted that they could as individuals rise above others if given opportunity.¹² Thirty-five years later, Zebedee Coltrin and Abraham O. Smoot implied that Joseph Smith originated the priesthood restriction,¹³ but it is clear that from 1836 on, Elijah Abel, a black man, served as an elder and then a seventy in Nauvoo, with Joseph's full knowledge.

The first known direct statement by a Church President that blacks were denied the priesthood came from Brigham Young in February 1849 when he said of "the Africans": "The curse remained upon them because Cain cut off the lives of Abel. . . . The Lord had cursed Cain's seed with blackness and prohibited them the Priesthood."¹⁴ In 1852, Wilford Woodruff reported that Brigham Young, speaking to the Utah territorial legislature, took personal responsibility for articulating the restriction: "Any man having one drop of the seed of Cane [*sic*] in him Cannot hold the priesthood & if no other Prophet ever spake it Before I will say it now in the name of Jesus Christ. I know it is true & they know it."¹⁵

12. Joseph Smith, "History of Joseph Smith," *Millennial Star* 20 (May 1, 1858): 278; Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 5:217–18; (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

13. Lester E. Bush Jr., "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," in Bush and Mauss, *Neither White nor Black*, 79. Smoot's statement seems to relate particularly to the question of ordaining slaves.

14. Journal History of the Church, February 13, 1849, Church History Library; microfilm copy in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. See Journal History of the Church, June 2, 1847, William Appleby to Brigham Young, raising the question.

15. Wilford Woodruff, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898, Typescript*, ed. Scott G. Kenney, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983), 4:97

Thus Brigham Young consistently attributed priesthood denial to a man's ancestry, not to color, appearance, or premortal delinquency, and he held that any Negroid ancestry, however remote, tainted and disqualified a man for priesthood.

By the early twentieth century, when Spencer Kimball came to adulthood, members widely accepted that Joseph Smith originated the restriction (even though there was no substantial evidence to that effect). Many concluded, therefore, that it was the will of God, not a policy subject to human change; that it was explained by conduct during the premortal existence; that it applied to those with the slightest degree of African ancestry; that blacks would be eligible to receive priesthood after everyone else had had a chance—presumably at the end of time; and that any ordination of a black man by mistake would result in denying him use of that priesthood.¹⁶

Implementation of Policy

Although the priesthood ban deeply disturbed many members of the Church, particularly as the civil rights movement heightened awareness about the historical horrors of racism, the issue remained abstract for most. So few blacks joined the Church that most white members never had

(January 4, 1852). Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," 70 n. 85, attributes responsibility to Brigham Young; see also Lester E. Bush Jr., "Whence the Negro Doctrine? A Review of Ten Years of Answers," in Bush and Mauss, *Neither White nor Black*, 193–220. Newell G. Bringham, "An Ambiguous Decision: The Implementation of Mormon Priesthood Denial for the Black Man—a Re-examination," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 46 (Winter 1978): 45–64, agrees. Ronald K. Esplin, "Brigham Young and Priesthood Denial to the Blacks: An Alternate View," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 3 (1979): 394–402, suggests that the restriction was already accepted in Joseph Smith's day and that the 1849 pronouncement by Brigham Young assumes a pre-existing practice. He also knows of no Joseph Smith statement on the subject. Marvin Hill, while agreeing that documentation is not available, suggested in private correspondence that Joseph Smith "was more susceptible to changing moods and changing policies or doctrines than Brigham Young could ever be. . . . But Brigham was committed as part of his role as successor to Joseph to not making changes but following the Prophet's lead." He further suggests that Joseph Smith was simply adopting the prejudice of the times. "The people themselves are fiercely prejudiced and that actually dictates what the leadership does." Lester E. Bush Jr., "History of My Research and Publications on Mormonism and Blacks," 1997 draft, 161, copy in Kimball Papers, quoting Marvin Hill to Lester Bush, June 5, 1976.

16. Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," 79–85. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith laid out this view in his widely read 1931 work, *Way to Perfection*, 97–111.

to deal with the effects of the ban. Those blacks who did accept baptism implicitly accepted their restricted status. Having sought membership in the Church and believing in its prophetic leadership, they found it unseemly to challenge the Church's settled practice. In the face of sometimes insensitive treatment by other members, faithful black members demonstrated amazing patience. In 1974 the First Presidency reiterated that black male members could attend elders quorum meetings in the same way that prospective elders could, and while it would be permissible for black members to hold leadership positions in the auxiliary organizations, preference should be given to calling them to teaching or clerical positions so as to avoid any misunderstanding.¹⁷

World War II and its aftermath began a cascade of changes that would continue in American society through the rest of the century. Black military units proved their competence and valor, and they expected to take advantage of postwar prosperity and the G.I. Bill. The decade of the 1950s was a period of great ferment that would lead to the next decade's explosion of civil rights action, with both moral and legal challenges to segregation in the South and social inequality elsewhere. Thus, during Spencer's apostleship, the issue of racism was never far from his mind.

In 1947, the First Presidency assigned Heber Meeks, president of the Southern States Mission, to explore the possibility of proselyting in Cuba. Meeks asked his knowledgeable LDS friend, sociologist Lowry Nelson of the University of Minnesota, about the mixed racial picture in Cuba and whether missionaries would be able to avoid conferring priesthood on men with some Negroid ancestry. Nelson sent his reply to both Meeks and to the First Presidency, expressing sharp dismay at the policy. The Presidency responded, "From the days of the Prophet Joseph even until now, it has been the doctrine of the Church, never questioned by any of the Church leaders, that the Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel." Its explanation, they said, was to be found in the premortal existence.¹⁸ In 1952, Nelson, still unable to reconcile this Church policy with his understanding of the gospel, published an article critical of the

17. First Presidency (Kimball, Tanner, Romney) to Ezra Taft Benson, May 7, 1974, Kimball Papers.

18. Armand L. Mauss, "The Fading of the Pharaoh's Curse: The Decline and Fall of the Priesthood Ban against Blacks in the Mormon Church," *Dialogue* 14 (Fall 1981): 11; Bringhurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks*, 183–84, 190; John J. Stewart, *Mormonism and the Negro* (Provo, Utah: Bookmark, 1960), 46–47. Special attention is given to the role of David O. McKay in Gregory A. Prince, "David O. McKay and Blacks: Building the Foundation for the 1978 Revelation," *Dialogue* 35 (Spring 2002): 145.

policy in *The Nation*, drawing national attention.¹⁹

In 1949, George Albert Smith's administration began sending out a consistent statement in response to inquiries. It followed the pattern set in earlier private correspondence by the First Presidency and by David O. McKay, who had been a counselor in the First Presidency since 1934: "It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord, on which is founded the doctrine of the Church from the days of its organization, to the effect that Negroes . . . are not entitled to the priesthood at the present time,"²⁰ based on "some eternal law with which man is yet unfamiliar"



President David O. McKay. Courtesy Church History Library. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

and by which men's place and condition of birth and rights to priesthood must be explained; accordingly, "the conduct of spirits in the premortal existence has some determining effect upon the conditions and circumstances under which these spirits take on mortality."²¹ The statement went beyond the evidence both in claiming a "direct commandment" from the Lord and in saying that the doctrine came "from the days of [the Church's] organization."

When McKay became Church President in April 1951, he continued to respond to queries with this same statement.²² But behind the scenes, application of the policy was changing to some degree. In 1948, during the George Albert Smith administration, priesthood leaders in the Philippines

19. Lowry Nelson, "Mormons and the Negro," *The Nation* 174 (May 24, 1952): 488.

20. David O. McKay, letter dated November 3, 1947, published in Llewelyn R. McKay, *Home Memories of President David O. McKay* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1956), 226–31. See also August 17, 1949, statement, quoted in Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," 221 (127 n. 199 for proper date).

21. McKay, *Home Memories*, 230.

22. In 1951, by President McKay, with his counselors Richards and Clark, and again between 1959 and 1961, by McKay, Clark, and Moyle. Quoted in Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," 46–47, and various other sources.

were authorized by the First Presidency to ordain Negrito men to the priesthood. These were native men with black skin who had no known African ancestry.²³ Descent from black Africans only—not skin color or other racial characteristics—became the disqualifying factor.²⁴

In 1954, President McKay is said to have appointed a special committee of the Twelve to study the issue. They concluded that the priesthood ban had no clear basis in scripture but that Church members were not prepared for change.²⁵

In 1954, in an administrative decision, President McKay discontinued the practice in South Africa of requiring converts to trace all lines of their ancestry out of Africa as a way of establishing they had no Negroid forebears.²⁶ Four years later, in 1958, he authorized Church leaders to ordain

23. Joseph Fielding Smith, in the Philippines to dedicate the land for proselyting, observed native peoples who appeared Negroid. Despite this he said, in the dedicatory prayer, “I bless the *native* inhabitants both black and white with the blessings of the gospel and the Priesthood—Amen.” When asked about it then, he responded, upset, “That is what the Lord required me to do.” He confirmed several years later that the event occurred and said, “I would not want it to be supposed that I gave the Priesthood to the negroes.” H. Grant Heaton to Spencer Palmer, June 11, 1975, Kimball Papers.

24. Mauss, “Fading of the Pharaoh’s Curse,” 36 n. 14; Bush, “Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine,” 68 n. 209.

25. Leonard J. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 183, based on Arrington hearing a 1954 talk by Adam S. Bennion, a member of the committee. The Bennion Papers collected First Presidency minutes and letters relating to the priesthood policy, apparently as part of that review of the subject. The Kimball Papers include such a collection, not identified as to source. Compare Bush, “History of My Research,” 26; and Lester E. Bush, “Writing ‘Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview’ (1973): Context and Reflections, 1998,” *Journal of Mormon History* 25 (Spring 1999): 245. G. Homer Durham, son-in-law of Apostle John A. Widtsoe, had mentioned such an investigating committee to Nicholas Udall, although Udall’s memory is that the committee convened during the George Albert Smith administration. Nicholas Udall, interview by author, July 6, 2001.

26. Prince, “David O. McKay and Blacks,” 146; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 840 (January 17, 1954); Mary Lythgoe Bradford, *Lowell L. Bennion: Teacher, Counselor, Humanitarian* (Salt Lake City: Dialogue Foundation, 1995), 165; Bush, “History of My Research,” 9 n. 27: “He thought that unless the requirement was changed the increasing inability of converts to accomplish this genealogical task would eventually leave the Church without sufficient men to assume the necessary leadership roles. He also thought that in the overwhelming majority of South African cases there was no black ancestry, and that errors subsequently discovered could simply be corrected.” Leonard J. Arrington, *Diary*, June 12, 1978, 17, cites that President McKay made the change “without consulting anyone.” Leonard J. Arrington

Fijian men to the priesthood based on his understanding that, despite their blackness, they were not related to Africans.²⁷ In 1965, that principle of assuming a male convert qualified to receive the priesthood unless there was evidence to the contrary was applied specifically in Brazil and soon afterward applied generally.²⁸ Candidates were no longer required to provide pedigrees. This policy was an accommodation to Brazilian culture. While American missionaries had traditionally treated race as a matter of genealogy, Brazilians identified race with appearance. In some areas of Brazil, 80 percent of the population was thought to have at least some traces of Negro ancestry,²⁹ but records often failed to provide evidence one way or the other. Consequently, as the Church grew, the native local leaders who took over from the missionaries were increasingly less concerned with genealogy. They resolved uncertainty about lineage when there was no strong Negroid appearance by ascertaining whether a patriarchal blessing designated the person to be “of Israel” or by obtaining a decision from

Papers, Leonard J. Arrington Historical Archives, Utah State University Libraries, Logan Utah. These diaries are sealed until 2010. Information cited here and in notes 53, 118, 166, 180, 189, 194, 196, 203, 206, and 230 comes from photocopied pages of the diaries sent by Arrington to the author. Prince, “David O. McKay and Blacks,” 147 n. 6, says that McKay notified his counselors and the Twelve after the fact and received their endorsement. David O. McKay to Stephen L Richards and J. Reuben Clark Jr., January 19, 1954; and David O. McKay, Diaries, November 4, 1965, Special Collections, Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, photocopies provided by Prince.

27. Lester Bush to the editor, *Dialogue* 18 (Fall 1985): 4–6 (Fijians had been in and out of the category earlier); R. Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 502 (missionaries first went to Fiji itself in 1954; McKay 1958 decision); Norman Douglas, *Latter-day Saint Missions and Missionaries in Polynesia, 1844–1960* (PhD diss., Australian National University, 1974), 363–79 (appendix A); and see Norman Douglas, “The Sons of Lehi and the Seed of Cain: Racial Myths in Mormon Scripture and Their Relevance to the Pacific Islands,” *Journal of Religious History* 8 (June 1974): 90–104. According to Mauss, “Fading of the Pharaoh’s Curse,” 12 n. 14, West Irians (indigenous inhabitants of the western half of the island of New Guinea) were allowed priesthood by 1971–72. It appears that the decision was made group by group.

28. Mark L. Grover, “Religious Accommodation in the Land of Racial Democracy: Mormon Priesthood and Black Brazilians,” *Dialogue* 17 (Fall 1984): 31 n. 18, says that the abandonment of genealogical proof was intended to be Church-wide in 1954 but was applied in Brazil only in 1965 and announced more generally in 1967. See also Bush to the editor, 4.

29. “Racism at Carnival Ignites Cultural and Legal Fireworks,” *Deseret News*, February 6, 2000, A17.

the stake president or First Presidency, case by case.³⁰ These techniques followed President McKay's approach, evincing more concern that no eligible person be excluded than that no ineligible person be ordained.³¹

Prospects for Change

Most General Authorities tried to avoid public discussion of the topic.³² Hugh B. Brown, counselor to President McKay from 1961 to 1970, appears to have been the leader most open to change. He urged that the priesthood restriction could be dropped as a matter of Church administrative policy without requiring a specific revelation. He reasoned that if the restriction had not come by revelation,³³ it could be vacated without revelation. But despite his strongly held views and powerful influence, President Brown's position did not then prevail.³⁴

30. Grover, "Religious Accommodation," 32.

31. Grover, "Religious Accommodation," 28. W. Grant Bangert, former mission president in Brazil, said: "We knew many people had received the priesthood who, perhaps if we had known the full facts, would not have been ordained." Vern Anderson, "Priesthood Ban Was Nearly Lifted Nine Years Earlier," *Provo Daily Herald*, June 5, 1988, 20.

32. In 1962, President Brown suggested to the First Presidency that perhaps blacks could be given at least the Aaronic Priesthood. Bush, "History of My Research," 2 n. 2, citing McKay, Office Journal, January 9, 1962, and June 7, 1963, copy in possession of author; Prince, "David O. McKay and Blacks," 148 n. 15, cites McKay, Office Journal, October 11, 1962, for a similar reference. In June 1963, a few months after the decision to send missionaries to Nigeria, the *New York Times* quoted President Brown as saying, "We are in the midst of a survey looking toward the possibility of admitting Negroes [to the priesthood]. . . . Believing as we do in divine revelation through the President of the church, we all await his decision." Wallace Turner, "Mormons Consider Ending Bar on Full Membership for Negro," *New York Times*, June 7, 1963, 17. The statement created a flurry of excitement and anticipation. President Brown afterward said he had been misquoted, but Church media representative Ted Cannon, who had been present, thought not. President Brown may have been referring to his private suggestion that Nigerian male converts might be ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood, or he could have been overly optimistic that President McKay would receive inspiration to change the policy. Besides Elder Brown, one of the few General Authorities to comment publicly was Joseph Fielding Smith, who stated on October 22, 1963, that he expected no change. Bush, "History of My Research," 2; Spencer W. Kimball to author, June 15, 1963, and about June 21, 1963.

33. There has never been any suggestion that the restriction was based on an unpublished revelation. Bush, "History of My Research," 26; Bush, "Writing 'Mormonism's Negro Doctrine,'" 245.

34. Bush, "History of My Research," 118.

President McKay sometimes said in private conversations that the restriction on priesthood was not a doctrine but was a policy and subject to change.³⁵ Although one might assume that this “policy rather than doctrine” distinction would make change easy, President McKay himself apparently meant only that the rule or practice was not established by direct revelation. He did not mean that change could come by the simple administrative decision of Church leaders. He maintained the position that the long-established policy was inspired and that change would require divine intervention.³⁶ President McKay desired and sought such revelation, but he did not receive it. He told Elder Marion D. Hanks that “he had pleaded and pleaded with the Lord but had not had the answer he sought.”³⁷ Leonard Arrington reported a statement by Elder Adam S. Bennion in 1954 that President McKay had prayed for change “without result and finally concluded the time was not yet ripe.”³⁸

Even so, with the concurrence and encouragement of his counselors, President McKay took several important steps toward establishing missionary work in black Africa and made more liberal the interpretation

35. Sterling McMurrin reported that President McKay made such a statement to him in 1954. Sterling M. McMurrin and L. Jackson Newell, *Matters of Conscience: Conversations with Sterling M. McMurrin on Philosophy, Education, and Religion* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 199–201. McMurrin had made the same report in 1968. Llewellyn McKay in 1968 confirmed this as his understanding of his father’s position. Bush, “History of My Research,” 6. About May 1964, Paul Dunn asked President McKay, “What about the blacks?” President McKay replied, “Paul, that has never been a doctrine, but always a policy.” Paul H. Dunn, interview by author, August 8, 1996; Paul Dunn, interview by Gregory Prince, May 21, 1996, copy in Kimball Papers.

36. Bush, “History of My Research,” 7, 13; Bush, “Writing ‘Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine,’” 236–39. President McKay never expressed doubt about the disqualifying effect of black African ancestry and about its justification in the premortal existence. Bush, “History of My Research,” 8 n. 20; Bush, “Writing ‘Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine,’” 240. President McKay said to a meeting of missionaries in South Africa, January 17, 1954, that blacks could not be ordained “until the Lord gives us another revelation changing this practice.” Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 840; McKay, Office Journal, September 10, 1969, photocopy of entry provided by Gregory A. Prince in which Alvin R. Dyer referred to a 1961 statement by David O. McKay that priesthood denial could only be changed by revelation. Prince, “David O. McKay and Blacks,” 153 n. 39, cites an interview with Paul H. Dunn, February 18, 1995, in which Dunn said he asked President McKay whether blacks might, in his lifetime, hold the priesthood and received the reply, “The question sounds like I make the decision. When the Lord tells me, then we’ll do it.”

37. Marion D. Hanks to author, January 30, 1997.

38. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian*, 183.

and application of the priesthood policy.³⁹ In individual cases of genuine uncertainty, he believed in erring on the side of compassion. However, he held consistently to the policy that Negroid ancestry, once established, was disqualifying.

Interest in the Church by Black Africans

The first LDS missionaries in South Africa arrived in 1853 and proselytized largely among the British settlers, although a few blacks were baptized.⁴⁰ The mission closed in 1865 and reopened in 1903 after the Boer War and again concentrated on teaching white settlers.⁴¹ While in South Africa there was a Church presence but very little interest among blacks, Ghana and Nigeria had no Church organization but produced a stream of letters begging for missionaries to come and teach large numbers of blacks already converted to the Restoration message.

In 1960, Glen G. Fisher, newly released president of the South African Mission, stopped in Nigeria to visit groups that were using the Church's name. He reported to the First Presidency that their faith was genuine. He urged sending missionaries to baptize believers and to organize branches.⁴² LaMar Williams, who as secretary to the Church Missionary Committee answered letters that came from Africa, was sent to Nigeria in 1961. He was met at the airport by ten pastors he had been corresponding with and discovered that they were unaware of one another. Williams returned with the names of fifteen thousand unbaptized converts who were waiting for the Church to come to them.⁴³ No further action was taken until

39. Edwin B. Firmage, ed., *An Abundant Life: The Memoirs of Hugh Brown* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books 1999), 142–43, aligns President Brown with these changes.

40. Kate B. Carter, *The Story of the Negro Pioneer* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1965), 49, refers to at least four blacks.

41. Newell G. Bringhurst, "Mormonism in Black Africa: Changing Attitudes and Practices, 1830–1981," *Sunstone* 6 (May/June 1981): 15–21.

42. E. Dale LeBaron, "Black Africa: Prepared and Waiting for the Glorious Day," *Mormon Heritage Magazine* 1, no. 1 (March/April 1994): 20; E. Dale LeBaron, "The Dawning of a New Day in Africa," *Utah County Journal*, May 27, 1989, 12, also published as E. Dale LeBaron, "Revelation on the Priesthood," in *Out of Obscurity: The LDS Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 177.

43. R. Scott Lloyd, "Revelation Rewarded Those Who Waited," *Church News*, published by *Deseret News*, December 18, 1999, 4–5; E. Dale LeBaron, "African Converts without Baptism: A Unique and Inspiring Chapter in Church History," *Brigham Young University 1998–99 Speeches* (Provo, Utah: BYU Publications and Graphics, 1999), 58.

Christmas 1962, when newly ordained Apostle N. Eldon Tanner spent two weeks in the Lagos area, visiting three groups using the Church's name, one of which claimed four thousand baptized adherents. When he reminded them that they did not have authority to baptize, their leader said he understood that, but he wanted the people to feel they belonged to the Church while they waited for the proper authority. Elder Tanner reported "cautious optimism" to the First Presidency.⁴⁴

Despite their misgivings about proselyting in an area where the lack of priesthood leadership would create a serious problem, the First Presidency felt keenly that they could not deny the Restoration message to those openly yearning for it. In early 1963, President McKay called LaMar and Nyal B. Williams and four other couples to serve missions in Nigeria. He set Williams apart as presiding elder of Nigeria with tentative plans to establish Sunday Schools headed by Nigerians but supervised by white missionaries who would teach and administer ordinances. They hoped eventually to set up schools and medical facilities.⁴⁵ The plan, however, foundered when a March 1963 editorial in the newspaper *Nigerian Outlook* condemned the Church as racist and the Nigerian government denied visas to the missionaries.⁴⁶

Williams visited Nigeria in 1964 and 1965 to negotiate for visas, but during the second trip, a telegram recalled him to meet with the First Presidency. They informed him that they did not know why, but they felt it right to discontinue the effort for the present.⁴⁷ Spencer Kimball, then serving on the Missionary Executive Committee, asked Williams to "keep

44. G. Homer Durham, *N. Eldon Tanner: His Life and Service* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982), 193–94; Edward L. Kimball, Journal, September 6, 1979; James P. Bell, *In the Strength of the Lord: The Life and Teachings of James E. Faust* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 122, says there were four groups in Nigeria and one in Ghana with 456 members. Alexander B. Morrison, *The Dawning of a Brighter Day* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1990), 84, says Ralph Walker also visited Nigeria.

45. James B. Allen, "Would-Be Saints: West Africa before the 1978 Priesthood Revelation," *Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 229.

46. Bringham, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks*, 190; Bringham, "Mormonism in Black Africa," 18.

47. President Tanner reportedly told Williams that the First Presidency did not know why he had been recalled, but they soon would know. Williams brought the names and addresses of fifteen thousand Africans in some sixty congregations who had expressed an interest in the Church. E. Dale LeBaron, "Mormonism in Black Africa," in *Mormon Identities in Transition*, ed. Douglas J. Davies (New York: Cassell, 1996), 81; LeBaron, "African Converts without Baptism," 59.

in touch” with the believers.⁴⁸ Almost immediately, in January 1966, the Biafran War broke out. For the next five years, civil strife kept Nigeria in turmoil. Even after the war ended, political instability continued until a peaceful military coup in July 1975.⁴⁹

Developments in Ghana closely paralleled those in Nigeria. In fact, the International Mission received more letters from Ghana than from any other country without active missionary proselyting.

Civil Rights Movement

As awareness of the priesthood policy grew, many white potential investigators found the priesthood ban offensive and refused to listen to the missionaries. The escalation of the civil rights movement during the 1960s sensitized Americans to racial bigotry, and they found it difficult to see the Church’s prohibition on black ordination as anything else.

Protest against the Church policy took many forms—rejection of missionaries, public demonstrations, even sabotage. In 1962, a small bomb damaged the east doors of the Salt Lake Temple and blew out some windows.⁵⁰ While no one claimed responsibility, many people assumed it was motivated by opposition to the priesthood policy. The Utah chapter of NAACP threatened to picket October general conference in 1963 but dropped the plan when President Hugh B. Brown indicated in a meeting with NAACP leaders that he would read a statement supporting full civil rights.⁵¹

48. Allen, “Would-Be Saints,” 239.

49. Allen, “Would-Be Saints,” 237.

50. “Police Checking for Leads in Temple Blast,” *Deseret News*, November 14, 1962, B1; “Blast Damages Salt Lake Temple—Believed Work of Vandals,” *Deseret News*, November 15, 1962, B1.

51. The matter was complicated by Elder Benson’s worries in a time of Cold War tensions that the civil rights movement was used by the Communists to promote revolution and eventual takeover of America. Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 78, 81, 83–85, 98–100, 449 n. 141; Russell Chandler, “Mormons: New Test of Their Faith, Change Is in the Wind,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1983, 3 (1967 statement); Ezra Taft Benson, in *Official Report of the 135th Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 121–25; Bringham, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks*, 169–70, quotes Elder Benson’s 1967 talk as it appeared in “President McKay Emphasizes Individual,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 7, 1965, A5. Passages referring to “the dangerous Civil Rights agitation in Mississippi” and to “traitors in the Church” do not appear in either the April conference report or the issue of the *Improvement Era* reporting the talk.

Congress adopted the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The march from Selma, Alabama, to the state capitol occurred in 1965, and that same year three hundred protesters paraded to the Church Office Building demanding that the Church endorse a civil rights bill then languishing in the Utah legislature. The Church did not make a public statement, but the legislation passed.⁵²

Between 1968 and 1970 at least a dozen demonstrations or violent acts occurred when BYU athletic teams played other schools. Opposing players refused to participate or wore black armbands. One spectator threw acid, and another threw a Molotov cocktail that failed to ignite. Stanford severed athletic relations with BYU.⁵³

52. Bringham, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks*, 181; Jerome K. Full, "House Okehs First Utah Rights Move," *Salt Lake Tribune*, February 5, 1965, A1; O. N. Malmquist, "Utah Senate Passes Rights Bill on Accommodations," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 29, 1965, A1; M. DeMar Teuscher, "Racial Bill Goes to Governor," *Deseret News*, March 10, 1965, A1.

53. These athletics-related demonstrations generated enormous negative publicity for the school and the Church. Gary James Bergera and Ronald Priddis, *Brigham Young University: A House of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1985), 299–301; Bringham, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks*, 181–82. Jeffery O. Johnson, "Change and Growth: The Mormon Church and the 1960s," *Sunstone* 17 (June 1994): 28; *Evans v. State Bd. of Agriculture*, 325 F. Supp. 1353 (D. Colo. 1971); *Williams v. Eaton*, 333 F. Supp. 107 (D. Wyo. 1971) (to let players at state university protest during football game religious practice of opponents would be impermissible mixing of state and religion), affirmed 443 F.2d 422 (10th Cir. 1972). Bruce Blumell reported acid incident at University of Washington in early 1970. Arrington, *Diary*, June 12, 1978, 10. See also Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 857, 859. Brian Walton, "A University's Dilemma: B.Y.U. and Blacks," *Dialogue* 6 (Spring 1971): 35, reports that a fact-finding group from the University of Arizona found BYU students neither more nor less racist than other schools.

Heber G. Wolsey, BYU's public relations director, visited several universities where demonstrators planned protests and defused the situation, in most cases, by explaining the Church's position on civil rights more fully. Heber G. Wolsey, "PR Man for a Prophet," unpublished manuscript, 1994, in Wolsey's possession. He took with him Darius Gray, a black Church member. BYU ran a full-page ad, "Minorities, Civil Rights, and BYU," in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, April 5, 1970, A18, to publicize its stand in favor of civil rights for all citizens. The protests motivated a meeting in New York in February 1970 of President Lee and four Apostles with several advisers that led to the creation in the summer of 1972 of an External Communications Department, later called the Department of Public Communications, to deal proactively with publicity and protest. Wendell Ashton served as the first director. Francis M. Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball: Resolute Disciple, Prophet of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 262; L. Brent Goates, *Harold B. Lee: Prophet and Seer* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 433–35.

Changing Perceptions of the Policy in the Church

The possibility for changing the policy increased subtly as scholarly efforts to trace the restriction to its source showed no certain beginnings and shaky reasoning in support of the practice. A 1967 article by Armand L. Mauss pointed out the speculative nature of the explanations based on premortal conduct and the “curse of Cain.” He concluded that the policy rested on tradition, not on scriptural mandate.⁵⁴

A 1970 book by University of Utah student Steven Taggart proposed that the policy began in Missouri in the 1830s as an expedient for dealing with the slavery question among slaveholders.⁵⁵ Lester E. Bush responded in 1973 with an exhaustive monograph-length study, concluding that the earliest clear evidence of priesthood denial dates only to Brigham Young.⁵⁶

As the doctrinal foundations of the policy grew increasingly problematic, members focused on its social aspects. Armand Mauss, Eugene

54. Mauss, “Mormonism and the Negro,” 19–39.

55. Steven Taggart, *Mormonism’s Negro Policy: Social and Historical Origins* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1970). This book grew out of an article for *Dialogue* that Taggart shelved in favor of the book, published by his family after his untimely death in 1969. The First Presidency discussed the Taggart article draft September 10, 1969. Bush, “History of My Research,” 12–14; and Bush, “Writing ‘Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine,’” 238–40; both quote from and cite President McKay’s diaries. President Brown firmly believed this “Missouri hypothesis.” Edwin B. Firmage, “Hugh B. Brown in His Final Years,” *Sunstone* 11 (November 1987): 7–8.

56. Lester E. Bush Jr., “A Commentary on Stephen Taggart’s *Mormonism’s Negro Policy: Social and Historical Origins*,” *Dialogue* 4 (Winter 1969): 86–103; Bush, “Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine,” 11–68, 75. Bush suggests also that the Church should feel no embarrassment that a nineteenth-century prophet held nineteenth-century secular views about race. Bush, “History of My Research,” 108. Bush suggests that even if Joseph did not believe in racial equality, he did not carry that view so far as to deny all black men priesthood. Bush, “History of My Research,” 162.

Bush further points out that Brigham Young did not use the premortal-conduct rationale that later Church leaders saw as crucial to the “justice” of the policy. Bush, “Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine,” 75.

General Authorities knew of these publications. Lester Bush sent Marion Hanks, Hartman Rector, and President Brown copies of his review of Taggart’s work. Elder Packer received a draft of the 1973 article. Bush, “History of My Research,” 48, 52–53; Bush, “Writing ‘Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine,’” 250–55, 266. And Edward Ashment, then a Church employee, told Bush that he saw Elder McConkie reading the *Dialogue* issue featuring the Bush article. Bush, “History of My Research,” 133 n. 2; Bush, “Writing ‘Mormonism’s Negro Doctrine,’” 267.

England, and Elder Marion D. Hanks, among others, hypothesized that change in the policy perhaps depended on LDS members' willingness to accept black men and women in true fellowship.⁵⁷ Lowell Bennion, charismatic Institute of Religion teacher at the University of Utah, felt that members could properly pray for change. In 1963, he pointed out: "God's revelations . . . depend upon our minds, our eagerness, upon our search, upon our questions, upon our moral disturbances, if you will, upon our needs. . . . It may be that the Lord can't get through to us sometimes on things. Therefore we ought to be thinking and searching and praying even over this Negro problem."⁵⁸ This position accepted that God allows people—even Church leaders—to make mistakes.

But others thought it presumptuous for members to do anything but wait patiently and faithfully defend the Church's position. Spencer Kimball, to whom loyalty was an article of faith, placed himself in this latter group. In two letters to his son Ed in 1963, he explained: "These smart members who would force the issue, and there are many of them, cheapen the issue and certainly bring into contempt the sacred principle of revelation and divine authority." Continuing the dialogue a few days later, he added:

The conferring of priesthood, and declining to give the priesthood is not a matter of my choice nor of President McKay's. It is the Lord's program. . . . When the Lord is ready to relax the restriction, it will come whether there is pressure or not. This is my faith. Until then, I shall try to fight on. . . . I have always prided myself on being about as unprejudiced

57. Mauss, "Mormonism and the Negro," 38: "Perhaps . . . the chief deterrent to a divine mandate for change is not to be found in any inadequacy among Negroes, but rather in the unreadiness of the Mormon whites, with our heritage of racial folklore; it is perhaps we whites who have a long way to go before 'the Negroes will be ready' for the priesthood." Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian*, 183, reports a 1954 talk by Adam S. Bennion suggesting that Church members were not ready. Eugene England, in "The Mormon Cross," *Dialogue* 8 (spring 1973): 82–85, urged that God was waiting for the general membership of the Church to change. See also Eugene England, "Becoming a World Religion: Blacks, the Poor—All of Us," *Sunstone* 21 (June/July 1998): 57. Marion D. Hanks said, much later, "For me it was never that blacks [were unqualified but that] the rest of us had to be brought to a condition of spiritual maturity . . . to meet the moment of change with grace and goodness." Marion D. Hanks to author, January 30, 1997. In 1964, President McKay explained that to change the policy then would be divisive in the Church, like the question among early Christians of preaching to the Gentiles. Dunn, interview by author, August 8, 1996. Matthew 19:8 explained that Moses prescribed divorce "because of the hardness of your hearts." And God gave Israel a king because of the people's insistence, not because it was a good thing to do (1 Sam. 8:18–22).

58. Bradford, *Lowell L. Bennion*, 249.

as to race as any man. I think my work with the minorities would prove that, but I am so completely convinced that the prophets know what they are doing and the Lord knows what he is doing, that I am willing to rest it there.⁵⁹

Church leaders felt themselves under attack, unable to change a policy that left many of them deeply uncomfortable. In January 1970, after several years of physical incapacity, President McKay died. During these last years, Presidents Brown and Tanner discussed with University of Utah philosophy professor Sterling McMurrin, who was actively associated with the NAACP, whether the First Presidency should make another statement supporting civil rights for blacks that would go further than the 1963 statement. President Brown was dubious, believing that a few of the Brethren would resist another statement.⁶⁰ Brown also reportedly urged the Twelve to make an administrative decision to change the priesthood policy but was thwarted.⁶¹ As an Apostle, Spencer was undoubtedly involved in discussions of these issues, but his journal makes no reference to them. He would have been aware of their divisiveness, leading him to strive hard for unity when the question came up during his presidency.

Elder Lee, convinced that the ban was doctrinally fixed and wishing to reaffirm the traditional Church position, persuaded Presidents Brown and Tanner to send a letter to that effect on December 15, 1969, to bishops and stake presidents.⁶² After news of the in-house statement became

59. Spencer W. Kimball to author, June [21?] 1963. The letter is dated only June 1963 but responds to a letter of June 18. The ellipses within the McMurrin quotation are by Spencer W. Kimball. Compare Juan Henderson, "A Time for Healing: Official Declaration 2," in *Out of Obscurity*, 151–160.

60. President Brown mentioned by name only Harold B. Lee. McMurrin, interview by author, January 17, 1989.

61. The policy change was thwarted primarily because of Harold B. Lee's strong opposition. President Brown's grandson says that when Elder Lee was away President Brown had persuaded the Twelve to his point of view. But Elder Lee, on his return, obtained reconsideration of and withdrawal from such agreement. Firmage, "Hugh B. Brown in His Final Years," 8; Firmage, *Abundant Life*, 142–43. However, L. Brent Goates, biographer of President Lee, expressed doubt that any such agreement was reached. L. Brent Goates, interview by author, February 9, 1998. Prince, "David O. McKay and Blacks," 151 n. 27, cites Ernest L. Wilkinson, *Journal*, October 27, 1969, which mentions he was told by N. Eldon Tanner that President Lee was inflexible in opposing change and that in any meeting on the issue "others, regardless of their feelings, would go with Brother Lee." Copy provided by Prince. The meeting minutes that could answer this question are not available.

62. "Letter of First Presidency Clarifies Church's Position on the Negro," *Improvement Era* 73 (February 1970): 70–71 (signed only by the two counselors,

widely known, the full First Presidency and Twelve jointly signed the statement and released it publicly on January 10, 1970, just a week before President McKay's death. Like the 1949 statement, it attributed the policy to Joseph Smith and explained that the reason for the exclusion "antedates man's mortal existence." Both statements also asserted that the ban would someday be terminated. But while the 1949 statement said that blacks would receive the priesthood "when all the rest of the children [of God] have received their blessings in the holy priesthood," the 1969 statement omitted this idea and pointed out that the Church is founded in "the principle of continuous revelation" that could change the policy. The 1949 statement referred to a "curse on the seed of Cain," while the 1969 statement said only that the restriction was "for reasons which we believe are known to God, but which He has not made fully known to man." In commenting on the statement, President Brown was quoted in the *Salt Lake Tribune* as saying that the policy "will change in the not too distant future."⁶³

Despite the now-official, public "we don't know" position, most leaders still privately stood by the traditional twentieth-century explanation that a spirit's premortal conduct justified priesthood restriction in mortality.⁶⁴ Joseph Fielding Smith, who succeeded President McKay, was among those most consistently supporting the traditional views, as was Harold B. Lee, who became his First Counselor.

In June 1971, three black Mormons in Salt Lake City, Ruffin Bridgeforth, Darius Gray, and Eugene Orr, petitioned the Church for help in keeping and reactivating the relatively small number of black members in the city. A committee of three Apostles, Elders Gordon B. Hinckley, Thomas S. Monson, and Boyd K. Packer, met with them a number of times. They suggested organizing an auxiliary unit, assigned to the Salt Lake

Hugh B. Brown and N. Eldon Tanner). President Brown signed reluctantly and then only after insisting that it include a statement about civil rights. Firmage, "Hugh B. Brown in His Final Years," 8; Firmage, *Abundant Life*, 142–43; Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 379–80; Goates, interview; Prince, "David O. McKay and Blacks," 150–52.

63. "LDS Leader Says Curb on Priesthood to Ease," *Salt Lake Tribune*, December 25, 1969, 4D; Bush, "History of My Research," 17. President Brown later qualified the statement as only his personal opinion. Bush, "Writing 'Mormonism's Negro Doctrine,'" 241; Bush, "History of My Research," 15 n. 38. He also said, "As to the consensus, the Brethren are all united now that the time has not come until the President speaks on it." Richard D. Poll, "Apostle Extraordinary—Hugh B. Brown (1883–1975)," *Dialogue* 10 (Spring 1975–76): 70.

64. Bush, "History of My Research," 45.

Liberty Stake.⁶⁵ In October, Bridgeforth, a member for eighteen years, was set apart as the president of the Genesis Group, with Gray and Orr as his counselors. Genesis members attended sacrament meeting in their geographical wards but met together monthly to hear speakers and bear testimony and weekly for Relief Society, Primary, and youth meetings. Genesis served important social and religious functions, providing opportunities to serve and lead that were otherwise unavailable.⁶⁶

Spencer and Camilla happily accepted an invitation to attend a Genesis picnic, visiting with the adults and holding little children on their laps.⁶⁷ While Spencer was President of the Twelve, he personally took Christmas fruit baskets to the homes of the Genesis presidency.⁶⁸

When Harold B. Lee succeeded Joseph Fielding Smith in July 1972, in his first press conference he took the position on the priesthood ban articulated in the 1969 statement he had drafted: “For those who don’t believe in modern revelation there is no adequate explanation. Those who

65. The first meeting took place on October 19, 1971, with 175 in attendance. Leitha Orr, Journal excerpts, in possession of Darius Gray. Margaret Blair Young and Darius Aidan Gray, *The Last Mile of the Way* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 2003), 376–80, 388–90, 397–404. Lloyd, “Revelation Rewarded Those Who Waited,” 4–5. George M. McCune, *Gordon B. Hinkley: Shoulder for the Lord* (Salt Lake City: Hawkes, 1996), 466, notes that Elder Hinckley was a member of a “Special Committee on Church Activities for African Races,” presumably this committee.

66. Darius Gray, in *Utah’s African-American Voices*, KUED-TV, October 19, 1998; Darius Gray to author, September 24, 2000; Joseph Freeman, *In the Lord’s Due Time* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 101; Bradford, *Lowell L. Bennion*, 254; Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 380; Embry, *Black Saints in a White Church*, 182–85. The idea for something like the Genesis Group had been suggested in the Quorum of the Twelve at least as early as 1954. Statement of Spencer W. Kimball to Twelve, December 17, 1954, Kimball Papers. Joseph Fielding Smith, as President of the Twelve, transmitted such a recommendation in a letter to President McKay and counselors, March 30, 1955, copy in Kimball Papers. The letter reported that a survey in the Salt Lake area showed about fifteen active black members and perhaps 130 others who were inactive or were family of members. After a brief lapse in interest after the 1978 revelation, the group resumed its activity. Ruffin Bridgeforth led the group until his death in 1997, when Darius Gray was called by the First Presidency to succeed him and served until 2003. Genesis meets monthly and has Primary and Young Adult activity programs, as well as Relief Society compassionate service.

67. Ruffin Bridgeforth, interview in unreleased video, “General Authority Interviews,” Bonneville, March 27, 1980, transcript in Kimball Papers; Young and Gray, *Last Mile*, 371–72, 381.

68. Darius Gray, interview by author, October 9, 1996; Darius Gray to author, June 16, 2000. He was counselor to Bridgeforth. The date would be 1971. Young and Gray, *Last Mile*, 408.

do understand revelation stand by and wait until the Lord speaks.”⁶⁹ A few months later at another media interview, he gave a more positive response: “It’s only a matter of time before the black achieves full status in the Church. We must believe in the justice of God. The black will achieve full status, we’re just waiting for that time.” He proposed no time schedule and reiterated that change would have to come through revelation.⁷⁰

The issue unquestionably occupied President Lee’s mind.⁷¹ For example, he asked Marion D. Hanks to describe what answer he gave as president of the Temple Square Mission and elsewhere when asked about the Church policy on race and priesthood.⁷² Like the Presidents before him, President Lee responded to specific issues as they arose. He approved a general policy that black children could be sealed to nonblack adoptive parents. President McKay had previously approved such sealings on an individual basis.⁷³

Doctrine aside, practical problems persisted—how to respond to letters arriving from Nigeria and Ghana year after year pleading for missionaries, how to deal with the widespread charge of racial bigotry, and how to respond to investigators.

69. Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 465.

70. Goates, *Harold B. Lee*, 506, quoting UPI interview published November 16, 1972. AP religion specialist George W. Cornell, “Remembering a Brother,” in *He Changed My Life*, ed. and arr. L. Brent Goates (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 216, quoted Elder Lee as saying on the issue that “it was going to change when God willed it. He always attached that qualification.” Repeatedly he added that “the barrier would be removed.” Bruce R. McConkie, the one new Apostle President Lee called, had articulated in strongest terms the traditional view in successive editions of his book *Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1958), 476; 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1979), 108, 114, 343, 526, 616.

71. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian*, and Arrington to author, February 10 and June 15, 1998, assert that President Lee, shortly before his death, sought the Lord’s will on the question of blacks and priesthood during “three days and nights [of] fasting in the upper room of the temple, . . . but the only answer he received was ‘not yet.’” Arrington relied on an unidentified person close to President Lee, but President Lee’s son-in-law and biographer found no record of such an incident and thought it doubtful. Goates, interview.

72. Marion D. Hanks to author, January 30, 1997. President Lee did not comment on Elder Hanks’s response, which was that change awaited whites’ coming “to a condition of spiritual maturity” and would come “when the President of the Church felt the strength of the Lord to direct him.” Marion D. Hanks to author.

73. Bush, “History of My Research,” 135, quoting Hartman Rector. However, the policy seems not to have been fully settled because President Kimball also later approved such sealings individually. Spencer W. Kimball, Journal, November 30, 1976 and June 2, 1977.

In December 1973, President Lee died unexpectedly. The thorny issue of black restriction passed on to his successor, Spencer W. Kimball.

Spiritual Premonitions of Others

After the revelation, a number of people identified unusual experiences that in retrospect signaled the change to come. In a 1973 patriarchal blessing, Oscar L. McFarland, patriarch of the stake in Covina, California, promised Theodore Britton, a black Sunday School superintendent, that if he remained faithful he would one day enjoy all the blessings of the priesthood. It was clear from context that by “one day” he meant in mortality. Frightened by what he had said, the patriarch called his stake president, who told him, “Send me a copy. I’ll send it on to President Kimball.” The blessing transcript later came back with a red question mark by the passage in question but no annotation. The cover note from President Kimball said only, “A fine blessing.”⁷⁴

A number of other blessings received by black male members indicated that they would have opportunities not presently available to them—promises that included priesthood, missions, or temple blessings. People generally accepted these promises as things that would occur in the next life or in the Millennium, not a prophecy of imminent change.⁷⁵

In 1973, Helvécio and Rudá Martins and their son Marcus (see essay on page 79) received extraordinary patriarchal blessings that promised things that seemed impossible. The patriarch told Helvécio and Rudá that they would be privileged to live on the earth in the joy of an eternal covenant. He also promised their son Marcus that he would preach the gospel, and the language the patriarch used suggested to them a full-time mission.

74. Oscar L. McFarland, interview by author, Provo, Utah, January 12, 1994; Catherine Britton Hoffman to Oscar L. McFarland, March 11, 1994. McFarland did not designate lineage in this case.

75. There is no way of knowing whether the frequency of such promises increased in the time just before the revelation or whether the promises were merely reported more often in light of their quick fulfillment. In a solemn assembly in December 1975, President Kimball instructed: “One of our patriarchs in a blessing promised a Black man the priesthood. The patriarch made a mistake. The man should be treated with full respect, but he cannot have the priesthood.” Kyle Probst, interview by author, February 21, 2002. In the Kimball Papers, there is an undated sheet with a list of subjects to be mentioned in a solemn assembly. Among the subjects is “Patriarch Black.”

Despite uncertainty about the blessing, the Martinases opened a mission savings account for Marcus.⁷⁶

Black college student Mary Frances Sturlaugson, shortly after her baptism in 1975, received a blessing from a seminary teacher in South Dakota that asserted she would serve a mission. He said afterward he didn't know how it would happen. When she received her patriarchal blessing in 1977, patriarch Rodney Kimball (the son of Spencer's cousin), said, "I feel strongly impressed to tell you that if there is something you greatly desire that is not said at this time in this blessing, write it on the back of your blessing and it will become binding, depending on your faithfulness." She wrote down that she wanted to serve a mission. Another blessing told her, "The desire of your heart will be granted unto you."⁷⁷ She became the first black woman missionary after the revelation.

In 1976, Bishop Fujio Abe, a high councilor in Greensboro North Carolina Stake, heard a knock late one evening. He found black member Joseph Freeman and his wife, Isapella, standing on his doorstep, carrying their one-year-old son, Alexander, who had a high fever that would not respond to medicine. While Brother Freeman held the child, Bishop Abe administered a blessing. Halfway through he felt impressed to say that the child would one day hold the priesthood and serve a mission for the Church. Both men felt the fever leave the child as the blessing was pronounced. His temperature dropped to normal.

The bishop had scarcely said, "Amen," before Sister Freeman asked, "Do you realize what you just said?"

"Yes," Brother Abe replied, "I do. Those were not my words. I suggest that it be something private and sacred, between us. Others would not understand."⁷⁸

In the spring of 1978, shortly before the revelation announcement, F. Briton McConkie was in Manila by assignment giving patriarchal

76. Helvécio Martins with Mark Grover, *The Autobiography of Elder Helvécio Martins* (Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1994), 56–57; John L. Hart, "Eager to Serve on Lord's Timetable," *Church News*, May 26, 1990, 6, 12; "Elder Helvécio Martins of the Seventy," *Ensign* 30 (May 1990): 106.

77. Mary Frances Sturlaugson, *A Soul So Rebellious* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 65–68.

78. Fujio Abe to author, April 21, 1991; Freeman, *In the Lord's Due Time*, 96–97. In 1978, Joseph Freeman was believed to be the first black man to be ordained to the priesthood after the announcement of the revelation. Edward L. Kimball, Journal, April 21, 1979, reporting Joseph Freeman talk in Provo temple. In March 1987, Alexander became a deacon, and the same day his father was set apart as a counselor in the elders quorum presidency in Denver. Isapella Freeman to Fujio Abe, March 16, 1987, photocopy in Kimball Papers.

blessings. To a woman of African descent, he promised she would receive the blessings of the temple. To Alonzo Harris, a black man, he promised that he would receive the priesthood and the blessings of the temple in his lifetime. Upon his return to Utah, Briton told his brother Elder Bruce R. McConkie about the unusual blessings, and Bruce responded noncommittally, "I am glad to know you have given those blessings."

In only a few days, these otherwise mystifying events would be seen as part of a foreshadowing.

The Questioner

In his first press conference, held immediately after his ordination, President Kimball faced a number of predictable questions. In response to the restriction on priesthood for blacks, he answered straightforwardly:

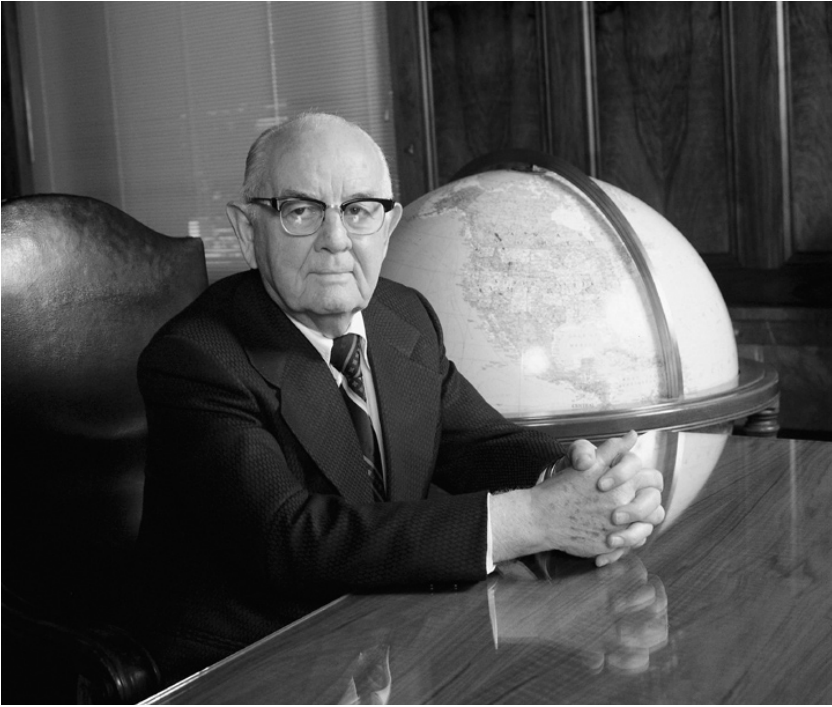
[I have given it] a great deal of thought, a great deal of prayer. The day might come when they would be given the priesthood, but that day has not come yet. Should the day come it will be a matter of revelation. Before changing any important policy, it has to be through a revelation from the Lord. But we believe in revelation. We believe there are yet many more things to be revealed from the Lord. . . . We are open to the Father on every suggestion that he gives us, to every direction he gives us, to every revelation of desire for change.⁷⁹

At the time, no one saw this statement as a harbinger of change; similar statements had been made before and been seen as a kind of hedge: Change could come, but it would take a miracle, so don't count on it.

Less than four months later, when an interviewer for a national telecast asked, "Do you anticipate a change in the racial policy?" President Kimball gave a similar answer: "No, I do not anticipate it. If it should be done the Lord will reveal it and we believe in revelation. We believe that the leader of the Church is entitled to that revelation. And that it would come if it is necessary and if it is proper."⁸⁰

79. Charles J. Seldin, "Priesthood of LDS Opened to Blacks," *Salt Lake Tribune*, June 10, 1978, 1A; compare David Mitchell, "President Spencer W. Kimball Ordained Twelfth President of Church," *Ensign* 4 (February 1974): 6, quoting him as saying, "I am not sure that there will be a change, although there could be. We are under the dictates of our Heavenly Father, and this is not my policy or the Church's policy. It is the policy of the Lord who has established it, and I know of no change, although we are subject to revelations of the Lord in case he should ever wish to make a change."

80. Bush, "History of My Research," 139, quoting President Kimball on NBC *Today Show*, March 12, 1974.



A primary emphasis of Spencer W. Kimball's presidency was taking the gospel and its blessings to the whole world. Courtesy Edward L. Kimball.

It is difficult to know President Kimball's inner feelings as he made these statements, whether he was putting the best face on a policy he supported or expressing a deepening hope and desire that the time for change had come. While he was sensitive to the concerns and needs of minorities and while he showed no personal denigration of blacks, he also gave no encouragement to others who pressed for change. "I decided long ago," he said, "that I would be loyal to the Brethren."⁸¹ He reacted especially

81. Spencer W. Kimball, interview by author, June 1978. In his personal copy of the October 1956 Conference Report, in possession of author, Spencer heavily marked up a J. Reuben Clark talk about priesthood, which concluded that from the beginning priesthood was never universal and "our rights [to priesthood] depend upon our course before we came here, and our course since we arrived." J. Reuben Clark, in *127th Semi-Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1956), 82–86. Although Clark made no direct reference to race, Spencer wrote "Negro" in the margin.

negatively to militant protests against the Church and coercive methods, particularly when those protesting had themselves no interest in becoming priesthood holders. Spencer believed that external pressures made revelation even less likely to come.⁸²

During his life in Arizona, Spencer had few personal contacts with blacks. Inevitably, he absorbed general social prejudices against blacks, but they were vague, based upon assumptions and other people's attitudes, not on his own experience, because there were very few blacks in his community.⁸³ Of his youth he said, "I had grown up with the belief that Negroes should not have the priesthood."⁸⁴ As an adult in Arizona, he showed no personal bias toward the Mexicans and Native Americans with whom he dealt. In fact, his twenty-five years as an Apostle working closely with North and South American native peoples gave Spencer a degree of comfort with ethnic and racial diversity that some other Church leaders lacked.⁸⁵

His response to individuals was generous and compassionate. As stake president in Arizona, he approved the use of the Lebanon Ward chapel for graduation ceremonies of a black school, despite some member opposition.⁸⁶ In 1959, he recorded in his journal meeting a member in Brazil who had a remote Negro ancestor, giving him about 5 percent Negroid heritage. "My heart wanted to burst for him."⁸⁷ He sympathized with and admired Monroe Fleming, who worked at the Hotel Utah for many years and had suffered with patience and dignity the scorn of other blacks for his faithfulness to the Church.⁸⁸

82. But compare the 1890 Woodruff Manifesto that gives as its reason the government's imminent threat to confiscate the Church's property, including the temples.

83. Susan Turley, "The Legacy," *Latter-day Sentinel*, November 16, 1985, 32.

84. Gerry Avant, "President Kimball Says Revelation Was Clear," *Church News*, January 6, 1979, 15. In the back of the copy of the Pearl of Great Price that Spencer took to the mission field in 1914, he listed citations to the several scriptural passages used to support the restriction on priesthood.

85. Leonard J. Arrington, "The Long-Promised Day," in *Adventures of a Church Historian*, 176. Arrington expressed the personal opinion that of all General Authorities Spencer was the most personally inclined to disregard race.

86. Edward L. Kimball and Andrew E. Kimball, *Spencer W. Kimball: Twelfth President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1977), 173.

87. Spencer W. Kimball, Journal, March 10, 1959; Kimball and Kimball, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 317, 349.

88. Kimball and Kimball, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 345.



Spencer W. Kimball with Native American children in front of a school. Courtesy Edward L. Kimball.

In 1964, when Spencer visited the Church exhibit at the New York World's Fair, he noted with regret the absence of black faces in the murals and wondered whether black members should have been included as guides at the exhibit.⁸⁹ That same year as Spencer toured the South American missions, Fernandez, an eighteen-year-old church building missionary in Rivera, Uruguay, embraced him and smiled radiantly. "I felt impressed to promise him blessings beyond his fondest imagination if he remained totally true to the Cause," Spencer wrote in his journal. The young man was "working against great odds but still sweet and unembittered."⁹⁰

Spencer's personal position toward blacks was the uneasy and ultimately unsatisfactory one of "separate but equal." Even though he was in favor of equality, he strongly opposed integration because the partners in a mixed marriage could not be sealed in the temple and their children would be similarly limited. In contrast, while advising prospective couples about

89. Spencer W. Kimball, *Journal*, October 12, 1964; Kimball and Kimball, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 345.

90. Spencer W. Kimball, *Journal*, May 21, 1964; see also May 27, 1964.

other interracial marriages (most often it was of a Native American with a Caucasian), he frankly pointed out the social and psychological risks for the couple and their children but reassured them that the decision was personal and involved no theological issues.⁹¹

On occasion, though, Spencer did specifically raise the question about the priesthood ban. In 1967, when he reorganized a stake presidency in Salt Lake City, he called Arvil Milne as counselor to the new stake president. Brother Milne, expecting questions about his worthiness, was startled when Spencer's first substantive question was, "Brother Milne, what do you think about black people receiving the priesthood?"

Milne reflected for a moment and then responded: "I suppose when the Lord decides it is time he'll let the prophet know. Until then they'll have to get along without it."

Elder Kimball said, "Thank you." That ended the curious interview.⁹²

In April 1969, while interviewing James Polve for employment as a professor of engineering at BYU, Spencer asked him only one question, "What do you think about whether the Negroes should receive the priesthood?" Surprised, Polve assumed the question was a test of his orthodoxy and knowledge of Church teachings. He responded with a traditional answer. The interview so mystified him that he did not dare write it in his journal.⁹³ Perhaps such questions were intended only to probe loyalty; more likely they reflected Spencer's personal concerns.⁹⁴

91. In a discussion of racially mixed marriages, President McKay expressed the same view, that people should be urged to marry within their own race, but we should not condemn them if they fail to do so. Meeting notes, October 6, 1966, Kimball Papers. In 1977, "it was the sense of the discussion that while the brethren will counsel against interracial adoptions for the same reasons they counsel against interracial marriages, there will be no prohibition against Church adoption agencies arranging interracial adoptions where there appears to be good reason for doing so." Memo, June 2, 1977, Kimball Papers.

92. Audiotape from Arvil Milne, made about March 20, 1998, Kimball Papers.

93. James H. Polve, interview by author, January 7 and 9, 1989. In 1966, when a stake was first organized in Brazil, Antonio Camargo was called as counselor in the stake presidency. In the interview, Spencer asked him, "What do you think about polygamy?" Antonio Camargo, interview by author, November 17, 1999.

94. In 1970, Spencer obtained a number of letters exchanged between LaMar Williams of the missionary committee and black correspondents in Nigeria and Ghana. Church History Library.

The Presidential Years before 1978

Spencer always responded to questions about policy and doctrine with traditional, orthodox explanations, even within his family. But it is clear that inwardly he struggled with the priesthood issue and wished the Lord would permit a change. He felt compassion toward those excluded and perhaps guilt that faithful men were banned from a responsibility and blessing he himself prized.

From his statements to the press at the time he became president, few expected any such revelation.⁹⁵ Probably he himself did not. But one huge factor had changed: the ultimate responsibility for the policy fell to him. His duty was no longer that of the loyal supporter. He had the direct, personal responsibility to ascertain the Lord's will by study, faith, and prayer, and he was determined not to be motivated by earthly pressures. He had a hundred other things that demanded his immediate attention, but the matter of priesthood continued to hang heavy in the air.⁹⁶

Spencer maintained a notebook full of correspondence and clippings about blacks and priesthood. The range and extent of the notebook's content show that the matter concerned him greatly. But the latest item is dated about 1975, well before the 1978 revelation. Perhaps his accelerating presidential schedule did not allow him to maintain the notebook, or perhaps he turned more to internal seeking.

By the time Spencer became President, external pressures to change the priesthood policy had slackened greatly, but they did not disappear.⁹⁷ In 1974, the NAACP sued the Boy Scouts of America over the policy in LDS Church-sponsored Boy Scout troops of having deacons quorum presidents serve also as senior patrol leaders. The Church quickly changed the policy.

In April 1976, Douglas A. Wallace, an elder living in Vancouver, Washington, took it upon himself to baptize and ordain a black man in defiance of Church policy. He was soon after excommunicated. The publicity surrounding the incident brought hidden divisions in the Genesis Group to the fore. Some members openly criticized Church leaders for failing to revoke the priesthood restriction and drew up a petition. The document asked President Kimball to "modify previous statements on interracial marriage and make a firm commitment" about when black men

95. "Smooth Succession?" *Time*, January 14, 1974, 41.

96. Avant, "President Kimball Says Revelation Was Clear," 15.

97. Bringhurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks*, 182–83; "Marketing the Mormon Image: An Interview with Wendell J. Ashton," *Dialogue* 10 (Spring 1977): 16.

could be ordained.⁹⁸ A significant minority of the group signed. People on both sides—both those pressing for change and those who abhorred the contention—withdrew from Genesis. The leaders persisted faithfully despite the difficulty. After the split, Genesis slowly regained strength.⁹⁹

Wallace continued his protest by storming down the Tabernacle aisle with two associates at the April 1976 general conference, yelling, “Make way for the Lord! Don’t touch the Lord!” Ushers swiftly escorted him and two companions from the Tabernacle. Outside he announced to news representatives that he was trying to put President Kimball “on trial.”¹⁰⁰ Since President Kimball had reason to believe that Wallace intended to confront him again, the Church obtained a temporary restraining order to prevent Wallace from disrupting subsequent conferences.¹⁰¹ Although Wallace obeyed the restraining order keeping him out of the Tabernacle, he held a news conference at Temple Square criticizing the Church for its racial restriction.¹⁰²

When in 1975 President Kimball announced the construction of a temple in São Paulo, Brazil, there was concern about how to determine who, in such a racially mixed country, would be eligible to enter the completed temple. He later said that at the time he “was not thinking in terms of making an adjustment.” He thought, rather, that the Church would simply have to inquire even more carefully into the racial background of members seeking recommends.¹⁰³

98. Freeman, *In the Lord’s Due Time*, 103.

99. Freeman, *In the Lord’s Due Time*, 102–3; Bringham, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks*, 185; Joe Costanzo, “Group Marks 20 Years of Black Priesthood,” *Deseret News*, June 8, 1998, B2.

100. “LDS Dissident ‘to Attend,’” *Salt Lake Tribune*, March 25, 1977, C3. Language is from *Corporation of the President v. Wallace*, 573 P.2d 1285 (Utah Supreme Court, 1978).

101. “LDS Dissident ‘to Attend,’” C3; “The Mormon Media Image,” *Sunstone* 3, no. 1 (November/December 1977): 25; “Ordination of Black Declared Null,” *Deseret News*, April 6, 1976, A4. Wallace unsuccessfully sued the Church in both state and federal courts. “Update,” *Sunstone* 3 (March/April 1978): 6. See *Corporation of the President v. Wallace* (restraining order against Wallace properly issued).

102. “Security Department Yearly Activity Report” (1977): 7, Kimball Papers. Wallace also circulated a list of subjects on which he offered to lecture against the Mormon “menace”: the Church’s plan to set up an earthly government, the Council of Fifty, Mormon economic tentacles, the Mormon infiltration of federal agencies, and the ways in which a doctrine of blood atonement would be used to justify assassination. Spencer W. Kimball, *Journal*, August 3, 1977.

103. Spencer W. Kimball, interview by author, July 1978.

In about 1976, a lawsuit was initiated in Costa Rica by a black lawyer seeking to disenfranchise the Church in that country for violating laws prohibiting racial discrimination in its proselyting. The man was offended by the missionaries' use of a "genealogical survey" as a technique for ascertaining whether contacts had Negroid ancestry. President Kimball sent attorney F. Burton Howard, a future member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, to deal with the situation. When Howard returned to report a successful conclusion to the lawsuit, Spencer confided "his concern for giving the priesthood to all men and said that he had been praying about it for fifteen years without an answer, . . . but I am going to keep praying about it."¹⁰⁴

As President, Spencer consistently sought to grant the priesthood when circumstances were unclear. The family of John L. Pea, for example, came to October general conference in 1976 to be sealed in the temple after the First Presidency rescinded an earlier denial. Spencer recorded:

Forty-three years ago Brother Pea was judged by the mission president to have some possible Negro lineage. As a result he and 4 sons never had the Priesthood and none have been to the temple. Recently the Genealogical Society investigated the circumstances and the First Presidency then reviewed the facts and determined that there was no justification for withholding the Priesthood from Brother Pea and authorized the bishop and stake president to ordain the brethren and give approval for temple recommends for those worthy.

Thirty members of the family came for conference and to be sealed. The whole group met with the First Presidency and sang for them.¹⁰⁵

President Kimball, in a 1971 devotional address given at BYU, spoke of the Apostle Peter and specified that Peter "announced a major policy change in the church whereby gentiles might be accepted." In hindsight, he could be seen as reminding the Church that change can come by revelation.¹⁰⁶

In the fall of 1977, President Kimball, visiting with LDS economist Jack Carlson, asked, "What do you think would happen if we changed the policy? Give me a scenario." President Kimball expressed his own concerns

104. F. Burton Howard to author, June 15, 1995; F. Burton Howard, interview by author, July 30, 2002. Caroline Miner is reported to have asked President Kimball, her brother-in-law, some years earlier whether he sought revelation on the issue and he said, "Every day." Devery S. Anderson, "A History of *Dialogue*, Part Two: Struggle toward Maturity, 1971–1982," *Dialogue* 33 (summer 2000): 62 n. 297.

105. Spencer W. Kimball, *Journal*, October 4, 1976.

106. Spencer W. Kimball, "Peter, My Brother," *Speeches of the Year* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1971), 7 (July 13, 1971).

about internal dissent, particularly from members in the American South or even from the Quorum of the Twelve.¹⁰⁷

Setting the Stage

The days leading up to June 1978 offer a classic illustration of the pattern leading to much of revelation—an urgent question, an intense consideration, a prayerfully formulated tentative answer, and a spiritual confirmation.¹⁰⁸

Many factors set the stage for change, although it is impossible to determine how much each contributed:

- Requests for missionaries continued to come from individuals and groups in Africa, particularly Nigeria and Ghana. How could the Church deny gospel teaching to sincere seekers? And how would they function without priesthood?
- The American conscience was awakening to the centuries of injustice against blacks; the balance had tipped decisively

107. Renee Pyott Carlson, interview by Gregory A. Prince, Potomac, Md., June 2, 1994, referring to a time he was present. He recalled also that President Kimball said, “I don’t know that I should be the one doing this, but if I don’t my successor won’t.”

108. A major source of information concerning the 1978 revelation is a July 5, 1978, interview by author with Spencer W. Kimball, a month after announcement of the revelation. On July 8, Spencer W. Kimball and Camilla Kimball read and amended a description by the author of events based on that interview. Additions were made on July 12, after interviews with President Romney and Elders Packer and Hinckley. This document will be hereafter cited as “1978 Draft.” Nearly four years later, on May 12, 1982, the author met with Elder McConkie and Francis M. Gibbons, secretary to the First Presidency, to discuss the 1978 Draft. Neither pointed out any errors. Gibbons provided additional information by reading from the council minutes of June 1978 in his possession. This composite document is found in Edward L. Kimball, *Journal*, May 12, 1982. Another important recital is a document by Bruce R. McConkie, “The Receipt of the Revelation Offering the Priesthood to Men of All Races and Colors,” June 30, 1978, Kimball Papers, which he sent to Spencer W. Kimball with a cover letter stating, “Pursuant to your request I have prepared the attached document. . . . It summarizes what I said in the home of Dr. LeRoy Kimball in Nauvoo on Wednesday, June 28, 1978.” This document appears to be the source of the information in Joseph Fielding McConkie, *The Bruce R. McConkie Story: Reflections of a Son* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003), 373–79. On the document, Spencer W. Kimball made minor editorial changes on nearly every page, suggesting that he agreed with the text, as amended. Six times he added “temple blessings” to “priesthood” as having become available to all worthy men. This document is cited here as McConkie, “Receipt of the Revelation.” See also Oscar W. McConkie Jr., interview by author, June 15, 1978.

against racism and toward egalitarianism, preparing whites to accept blacks as both legal and social equals. This consciousness did not happen at once, nor did it reach everyone, but it prepared white Mormons to welcome blacks as full participants.

- This new ethos also created social pressure. Many Americans scorned Mormons as bigots, and the perception may have affected missionary efforts.
- The Church's commitment to missionary work—always high—had achieved unprecedented heights under President Kimball's vision of missionary work sweeping the earth. Both leaders and members continually confronted the logical consequence: missionary efforts had to include black Africa.
- Study by General Authorities and independent scholars had weakened the traditional idea that Joseph Smith taught priesthood exclusion and cast a shadow on the policy's purported scriptural justifications.¹⁰⁹
- The Church's surging growth in Brazil and the temple there, rapidly moving toward completion, created an insoluble dilemma. In such a racially mixed society, many people had remote Negroid ancestry but did not know it. Application of the policy would be accompanied by the near certainty of error.
- And finally, the person responsible for directing the Church had changed. President Hinckley said, "Here was a little man, filled with love, able to reach out to people. . . . He was not the first to worry about the priesthood question, but he had the compassion to pursue it and a boldness that allowed him to act, to get the revelation."¹¹⁰

Seeking Revelation

As a follower, Spencer had proved loyal and conservative. He did not come to leadership intending to be a reformer, but he was not afraid of

109. According to Leonard Arrington, as early as 1954 a committee of the Twelve concluded that denial of priesthood was not soundly based on scripture. Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian*, 183.

110. Sheri Dew, interview by author, September 18, 1995 (President Hinckley's biographer, reporting her understanding of his views).



President Kimball with his counselors, President N. Eldon Tanner (*middle*) and President Marion G. Romney (*right*). Courtesy Edward L. Kimball.

change. His only desire was to push the work of the Church forward. If doing so required changes, he stood prepared to make them.

President Kimball felt that his predecessors had sought the Lord's will concerning the priesthood policy, and for whatever reason "the time had not come."¹¹¹ But Spencer had to ask anew. He wanted urgently "to find out firsthand what the Lord thought about it." It was not enough just to wait until the Lord saw fit to take the initiative: the scripture admonished him to ask and to knock if he wanted to know for himself. He prayed, trying not to prejudge the answer: Should we maintain the long-standing policy, or has the time come for the change? He received no immediate answer to his prayers.¹¹²

111. Avant, "President Kimball Says Revelation Was Clear," 15. Gordon B. Hinckley says that the question had "become a matter of particular concern to Spencer W. Kimball." Gordon B. Hinckley, March 15, 1988, at a Church-wide fireside commemorating restoration of the priesthood, "Priesthood Restoration," *Ensign* 18 (October 1988): 69–70.

112. 1978 Draft.

In May 1975, President Kimball referred to his counselors various statements by early Church leaders about blacks and the priesthood and asked for their reactions.¹¹³ Wary of ways in which the question had been divisive during the McKay administration, he asked the Apostles to join him as colleagues in extended study and supplication.¹¹⁴ Francis M. Gibbons, secretary to the First Presidency, observed special focus on the issue in the year before the revelation.¹¹⁵ Ten years after the revelation, Dallin H. Oaks, president of BYU in 1978, recalled this time of inquiry: “[President Kimball] asked me what I thought were the reasons. He talked to dozens of people, maybe hundreds of people . . . about why, why do we have this.”¹¹⁶

Years earlier, talking about revelation in general, Spencer had written in a letter to his son:

Revelations will probably never come unless they are desired. I think few people receive revelations while lounging on the couch or while playing cards or while relaxing. I believe most revelations would come when a man is on his tip toes, reaching as high as he can for something which he knows he needs, and then there bursts upon him the answer to his problems.¹¹⁷

In June 1977, Spencer invited at least three General Authorities to give him memos on the implications of the subject.¹¹⁸ Elder McConkie wrote a long memorandum concluding that there was no scriptural barrier to a change in policy that would give priesthood to black men.¹¹⁹ Considering Elder McConkie’s traditional approach to the topic during the Lee

113. Edward L. Kimball, Journal, May 12, 1982, discussion with Francis M. Gibbons and Bruce R. McConkie.

114. In a prayer, Elder Packer “pleaded with the Lord that the way be opened for those from whom the priesthood is withheld.” John Forres O’Donnal, *Pioneer in Guatemala: The Personal History of John Forres O’Donnal, Including the History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Guatemala* (Yorba Linda, Calif.: Shumway Family History Services, 1997), 223–24.

115. Boyd K. Packer, interview by author, July 12, 1978 (Spencer W. Kimball raised the issue with him two years earlier); Breck England, “Elder Marvin J. Ashton,” *Ensign* 16 (July 1986): 10; Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 292–96.

116. “Apostles Talk about Reasons for Lifting Ban,” *Provo Daily Herald*, June 5, 1988, 21.

117. Spencer W. Kimball to author, March 11, 1963.

118. Arrington, Diary, June 27, 1978, copy in Kimball Papers, relying on Jay Todd, memo, naming specifically Packer, Monson, and McConkie. Arrington, Diary, June 9, 1978, indicates that in late 1977 or early 1978, Neal Maxwell of the Seventy inquired of the Church Historian about a statement Joseph Fielding Smith had made about blacks.

119. Edward L. Kimball, Journal, May 12, 1982, discussion with Bruce R. McConkie and Francis M. Gibbons.



The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the time of the priesthood revelation. *Front row, left to right:* Mark E. Petersen, Ezra Taft Benson, Delbert L. Stapley. *Back row, left to right:* Boyd K. Packer, Thomas S. Monson, LeGrand Richards, Marvin J. Ashton, Howard W. Hunter, Bruce R. McConkie, Gordon B. Hinckley, L. Tom Perry, David B. Haight. Courtesy Church History Library. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

administration, this conclusion explains why, according to Elder Packer, “President Kimball spoke in public of his gratitude to Elder McConkie for some special support he received in the days leading up to the revelation on the priesthood.”¹²⁰ Although minutes of quorum meetings are not available and participants have not commented in detail, the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve discussed the issue repeatedly, at length, and over a period of months.¹²¹

120. Boyd K. Packer, *Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991), 264.

121. Bruce R. McConkie, “The New Revelation on Priesthood,” in Spencer W. Kimball and others, *Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 127, appearing also in Mark L. McConkie, ed., *Doctrines of the Restoration: Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 159. On two occasions in 1978, Spencer W. Kimball invited written memos from members of the Twelve. McConkie, “Receipt of the Revelation,” 2.

Elder James E. Faust, head of the International Mission, which included nearly all of Africa, conferred with President Kimball a number of times in early 1978 about the priesthood issue.¹²² At one meeting, Elder Faust displayed a stack of letters received from Africa during just the previous month. Asked to read a sample, Elder Faust chose a letter from a boy whose “greatest hope was to one day sit in the Salt Lake Tabernacle and there hear the Lord’s prophets speak.”¹²³

During the months leading up to June 1978, President Kimball spoke with the Twelve repeatedly about the question, asking them to speak freely.¹²⁴ He invited associates who had not expressed themselves in the group setting to talk with him in private.¹²⁵ He seemed so intent on solving the problem that others worried about him. A neighbor of the Kimballs, Richard Vernon, had noticed that Spencer seemed somewhat withdrawn. Normally relaxed and comfortable with friends in his ward, Spencer responded to one inquiry that he was not feeling well and changed the topic. Many in the ward had noticed the difference and felt concerned. Many also noticed that Camilla was anxious and worried about Spencer. Elder Packer, concerned at President Kimball’s inability to let the matter rest, said, “Why don’t you forget this?” Then Elder Packer answered his own question, “Because you can’t. The Lord won’t let you.”¹²⁶

Spencer later described:

Day after day, and especially on Saturdays and Sundays when there were no organizations [sessions] in the temple, I went there when I could be alone.

I was very humble . . . I was searching for this . . . I wanted to be sure. . . .

I had a great deal to fight . . . myself, largely, because I had grown up with this thought that Negroes should not have the priesthood and I was prepared to go all the rest of my life until my death and fight for it and defend it as it was.¹²⁷

122. See James E. Faust, “The Doctrine and Covenants and Modern Revelation,” in *Hearken, O Ye People: Discourses on the Doctrine and Covenants* (Sandy, Utah: Randall Press, 1984), 287–97. President Kimball’s journal for January through May 1978 shows that Elder Faust came eight times, four times for an identified purpose and four for unspecified purpose.

123. James P. Bell, *In the Strength of the Lord: The Life and Teachings of James E. Faust* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 122–23.

124. 1978 Draft.

125. Lucile C. Tate, *David B. Haight: The Story of a Disciple* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 279.

126. Packer, interview.

127. Avant, “President Kimball Says Revelation Was Clear,” 15; Lloyd, “Revelation Rewarded Those Who Waited,” 4–5.

On returning from the airport in February 1978 after one of his trips, Spencer asked the driver to let him off at the temple and sent Camilla home alone. “I want to go to the temple for a while,” he said. “I’ll get a way home.”¹²⁸ Some days he went more than once, often alone.¹²⁹ Sometimes he changed into temple clothing; he always took off his shoes. He obtained a key that gave him access to the temple night or day without having to involve anyone else. Few knew, except the security men who watched over him. One of them mentioned it to President Kimball’s neighbor, who told Camilla. So she knew that much, but she had no idea what problem so occupied Spencer. She worried that one of the Brethren might be involved in serious transgression. Spencer gently suggested to the security supervisor that his men should be careful about what they disclosed, even to his wife.¹³⁰

Camilla called Arthur Haycock to ask what was making Spencer so distressed and concerned. The only answer Arthur felt free to give was that something was troubling the President but everything would be all right.¹³¹

On March 9, 1978, as the First Presidency and Twelve met in the temple, the Apostles unanimously expressed their feeling that if the policy were to change, any change must be based on revelation received and announced by the prophet. President Kimball then urged a concerted effort from all of them to learn the will of the Lord. He suggested they engage in concerted individual fasting and prayer.¹³²

Over time, through the many days in the temple and through the sleepless hours of the night, praying and turning over in his mind all the consequences, perplexities, and criticisms that a decision to extend priesthood would involve, Spencer gradually found “all those complications and concerns dwindling in significance.” They did not disappear but seemed to decline in importance. In spite of his preconceptions and his allegiance to the past, a swelling certainty grew that a change in policy was

128. Edward L. Kimball, Journal, February 27, 1985, quoting Camilla Kimball.

129. Spencer W. Kimball, “The Savior: The Center of Our Lives,” *New Era* 10 (April 1980): 36.

130. Spencer W. Kimball, interview.

131. Heidi S. Swinton, *In the Company of Prophets: Personal Experiences of D. Arthur Haycock* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993): 83.

132. Francis M. Gibbons, interview by author, May 12, 1982, recorded in Edward L. Kimball, Journal, May 12, 1982, as Gibbons referred to council minutes.

what the Lord wanted.¹³³ “There grew slowly a deep, abiding impression to go forward with the change.”¹³⁴

This answer had become clear in Spencer’s mind as early as late March, but he felt unity within the leadership was important, and he continued to discuss the matter with others. He sensed resistance from some, which he fully understood. He did not push, lobby, pressure, or use his office to seek compliance. Instead, he increased his visits to the temple, imploring the Lord to make his will known, not only to him but also to the Twelve, to these good men who all their lives had quoted other Presidents of the Church that it was not yet time. In a sense, the past prophets of the Church stood arrayed against this decision. The wisdom of the dead often seems loftier than the word of an imperfect living spokesman. Spencer wanted more than anything to have his fellow servants share with him a witness of the Lord’s will. Camilla noted that in their prayers together, where he had always asked for “inspiration” or “guidance,” he began to plead for “revelation.” She also noticed that he read the scriptures even more intently than usual during that spring.¹³⁵

On March 23, Spencer reported to his counselors that he had spent much of the night in reflection and his impression then was to lift the restriction on blacks. His counselors said they were prepared to sustain him if that were his decision. They went on to discuss the impact of such a change in policy on the members and decided there was no need for prompt action; they would discuss it again with the Twelve before a final decision.¹³⁶

Francis Gibbons, secretary to the First Presidency, had the impression that President Kimball had already come to know God’s will and was now struggling with how to resolve the matter in a way that the entire leadership would stand behind.¹³⁷

On April 20, President Kimball asked the Twelve to join the Presidency in praying that God would give them an answer. Thereafter he talked with

133. Spencer W. Kimball, interview.

134. Spencer W. Kimball, interview.

135. Spencer W. Kimball, interview. Camilla Kimball, interview by Andrew E. Kimball Jr., January 18, 1979, transcript in Kimball Papers.

136. Edward L. Kimball, Journal, May 12, 1982, reporting discussion with Francis M. Gibbons. See also Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 293.

137. Edward L. Kimball, Journal, May 12, 1982. Elder Gibbons has confirmed that his description of “events leading up to and surrounding the Revelation on Priesthood are based upon personal, eye witness knowledge and are supported by my diary entries made soon after they occurred.” Francis M. Gibbons to author, November 6, 1995.



Over time, President Kimball felt a swelling certainty that a change in policy was what the Lord wanted. As early as late March 1978, the answer had become clear to him. Courtesy Edward L. Kimball.

the Twelve individually and continued to spend many hours alone in prayer and meditation in the Holy of Holies, often after hours when the temple was still.¹³⁸ He described the burden of his prayers in an extemporaneous talk to missionaries in South Africa several months later:

I remember very vividly the day after day that I walked over to the temple and ascended up to the fourth floor where we have our solemn assemblies, where we have our meetings of the Twelve and the Presidency. And after everybody had gone out of the temple, I knelt and prayed. And I prayed with such a fervency, I tell you! I knew that something was before us that was extremely important to many of the children of God. And I knew that we could receive the revelations of the Lord only by being worthy and ready for them and ready to accept them and to put them into place. Day after day I went and with great solemnity and seriousness, alone in the upper rooms of the Temple, and there I offered my soul and offered our efforts to go forward with the program¹³⁹ and we wanted to do what he wanted. As we talked about it to him, we said, "Lord, we want only what is right. We're not making any plans to be spectacularly moving. We want only the thing that thou dost want and we want it when you want it and not until."¹⁴⁰

On one occasion during this time, a temple administrator brought an organ tuner into the room where the Presidency and Twelve met. They interrupted President Kimball at prayer and withdrew, flustered.¹⁴¹ Another time Spencer found one of the temple workers standing guard outside the room to protect him from interruption. Spencer thanked him for his vigil but protested that it was unnecessary.¹⁴²

At the end of the joint meeting of the Presidency and Twelve on May 4, when the priesthood policy was discussed, LeGrand Richards asked permission to make a statement. He then reported:

138. Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 293–94; Gordon B. Hinckley, "Priesthood Restoration," *Ensign* 18 (October 1988): 70; F. Burton Howard, *Marion G. Romney: His Life and Faith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 239.

139. President Kimball often used the word "program" to mean an idea or concept, rather than a plan or agenda or design. He might say, "That's the program," meaning, "That is a good idea."

140. Spencer W. Kimball, remarks, Johannesburg, South Africa, October 23, 1978, transcript of tape by Duane Cardall, Kimball Papers.

141. Spencer W. Kimball, interview; Jack Purser, temple recorder, interview by author, June 19, 1989, describing the experience of another.

142. Spencer W. Kimball, interview. Spencer might stay from a half hour to three hours. Geraldine Bangerter interview by author, February 2000, reflecting her notes of President Kimball's remarks at the dedication of the São Paulo temple, October 30, 1978.

I saw during the meeting a man seated in a chair above the organ, bearded and dressed in white, having the appearance of Wilford Woodruff. . . . I am not a visionary man. . . . This was not imagination. . . . It might be that I was privileged to see him because I am the only one here who had seen President Woodruff in person.¹⁴³

Late on Saturday, May 6, 1978, a friend of President Kimball, Bryan Espenschied, met him walking alone as they both left the temple. Brother Espenschied had the impression that Spencer was greatly worried or distressed. Later Spencer explained that he had on that occasion been in the temple, praying about the question of priesthood.¹⁴⁴ Spencer's counselors shared his anxieties. President Tanner's family saw him during this time seeming "greatly concerned, as though he carried the burdens of the world."¹⁴⁵

Spencer continued to receive many letters from Church members concerning the issue. Some writers criticized and demanded; others expressed faith and hope. A letter dated May 19 from Chase Peterson, then a Harvard University administrator and soon to be president of the University of Utah, urged a "present opportunity," while external pressures had slackened, to open the priesthood to black men. After thoughtful expression of this view, he concluded:

Could it be that the Lord has been both preparing us to accept the black man into full Priesthood fellowship and preparing the black man for Priesthood responsibility? . . . [Perhaps the Lord] is waiting for us to be ready, and if we fail to demonstrate our readiness, there may not be a [right] time again [soon].¹⁴⁶

A few days later Spencer replied, "I thank you very much for your delightful letter and for the suggestions you have offered. Please accept my sincere thanks and best wishes."¹⁴⁷

143. Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 294; Gibbons, interview; F. Gibbons at Mormon History Association Annual Meeting, Snowbird, May 18, 1996. See also Lucile Tate, *LeGrand Richards: Beloved Apostle* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 291–92, quoting Elder Packer's recollection.

144. Bryan A. Espenschied, interview by author, September 3, 1997. Espenschied later became mission president of the first formal mission in West Africa.

145. Ruth Tanner Walker, interview by author, August 19, 1998.

146. Chase Peterson to Spencer W. Kimball, May 19, 1978.

147. Spencer W. Kimball to Chase Peterson, dated May 30, postmarked June 2, 1978. A letter of June 28 followed: "Since I wrote my last letter to you and thanked you for your great interest, you know what has happened and I assume that you are pleased with the move." Spencer later mentioned to his grandson Miles S. Kimball that Chase Peterson's letter was "very helpful" in thinking about the priesthood question. Miles S. Kimball to author, October 31, 1993.

On May 25, Mark E. Petersen called President Kimball's attention to an article that proposed the priesthood policy had begun with Brigham Young, not Joseph Smith, and he suggested that the President might wish to consider this factor.¹⁴⁸

On May 30, Spencer read his counselors a tentative statement in long-hand removing racial restrictions on priesthood and said he had a "good, warm feeling" about it.¹⁴⁹ They reviewed past statements and decided to ask G. Homer Durham, a Seventy supervising the Historical Department, to research the matter further.¹⁵⁰ They also concluded to alter the pattern of their next Thursday morning meeting with the Twelve by canceling the traditional luncheon in the temple and asking the council members to continue their fasting.¹⁵¹

Confirmation of Revelation

On Thursday, June 1, Spencer left home early, as usual, so engrossed that he left his briefcase behind and had to send back for it. His journal for the day records, with striking blandness:

After meeting with my counselors for an hour this morning from eight until nine o'clock, we went over to the temple and met with all of the General Authorities in the monthly meeting we hold together [on the first Thursday].

Returned to the office for a few minutes and then went over to Temple Square for the dedication services of the new Visitors Center South, which was scheduled to commence at 3:00 p.m.

The services lasted for about an hour, after which we returned to the office where I worked at my desk until six o'clock.

The day proved rather more significant than this entry suggests. On this first Thursday of the month, the First Presidency, Twelve, and Seventies met in their regularly scheduled monthly temple meeting at 9:00 a.m., fasting. There they bore testimony, partook of the sacrament, and participated

148. The article almost surely was the 1973 article by Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," 11; Anderson, "History of *Dialogue*, Part Two," 64 (possible influence of Bush article). Mark E. Petersen, "Discussion Re: Utah Historical Quarterly," memo, Kimball Papers, notes that at the time, President Kimball considered taking on the subject of blacks and the priesthood prayerfully.

149. Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 294.

150. Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 294. Events overtook that request, for confirmation of the rightness of change came just two days later. G. Homer Durham, memo to Spencer W. Kimball, June 29, 1978, Kimball Papers, noting that the assignment was "now moot."

151. Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 294–95.

in a prayer circle.¹⁵² The meeting lasted the usual three and a half hours and was not notably different from other such meetings until the conclusion, when President Kimball asked the Twelve to remain. Two had already left the room to change from their temple clothing in preparation for the regular business meeting of the First Presidency and the Twelve that normally followed. Someone called them back. Elder Delbert L. Stapley lay ill in the hospital, and Elder Mark E. Petersen was in South America on assignment. Ten of the Twelve were present.

As was later recalled, President Kimball said:

Brethren, I have canceled lunch for today. Would you be willing to remain in the temple with us? I would like you to continue to fast with me. I have been going to the temple almost daily for many weeks now, sometimes for hours, entreating the Lord for a clear answer. I have not been determined in advance what the answer should be. And I will be satisfied with a simple Yes or No, but I want to know. Whatever the Lord's decision is, I will defend it to the limits of my strength, even to death.¹⁵³

He outlined to them the direction his thoughts had carried him—the fading of his reluctance, the disappearance of objections, the growing assurance he had received, the tentative decision he had reached, and his desire for a clear answer. Once more he asked the Twelve to speak, without concern for seniority. “Do you have anything to say?” Elder McConkie spoke in favor of the change, noting there was no scriptural impediment. President Tanner asked searching questions as Elder McConkie spoke. Then Elder Packer spoke at length, explaining his view that every worthy man should be allowed to hold the priesthood. He quoted scriptures (D&C 124:49; 56:4–5; 58:32) in support of the change.¹⁵⁴ Eight of the ten volunteered their views, all favorable. President Kimball called on the other

152. There was “a particularly high spiritual tone.” McConkie, “Receipt of the Revelation,” 3.

153. This is a composite of Gerry Avant’s report of President Kimball’s description, David B. Haight’s recollection of President Kimball’s introductory statement, and Bruce R. McConkie’s recollection four weeks later. McConkie, “Receipt of the Revelation,” 3–4: “He [President Kimball] hoped for a clear affirmation of this [blacks receiving the priesthood] so there would be no question in anyone’s mind.”

154. Lucile C. Tate, *Boyd K. Packer: A Watchman on the Tower* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995), 225–26. President Kimball had also mused about the curse on idolaters (Ex. 20:5 and Num. 14:18) that ran to the third and fourth generation. This suggested to him that curses were not endless and that further descendants would be judged on their worthiness, not on their ancestry. Spencer W. Kimball, interview by author, July 5, 1978.

two, and they also spoke in favor. Discussion continued for two hours.¹⁵⁵ Elder Packer said, a few weeks later, “One objection would have deterred him, would have made him put it off, so careful was he . . . that it had to be right.”¹⁵⁶ The decision process bonded them in unity. They then sought divine confirmation.

President Kimball asked, “Do you mind if I lead you in prayer?” There were things *he* wanted to say to the Lord. He had reached a decision after great struggle, and he wanted the Lord’s confirmation, if it would come. They surrounded the altar in a prayer circle. President Kimball told the Lord at length that if extending the priesthood was not right, if the Lord did not want this change to come in the Church, he would fight the world’s opposition.¹⁵⁷ Elder McConkie later recounted, “The Lord took over and President Kimball was inspired in his prayer, asking the right questions, and he asked for a manifestation.”¹⁵⁸

During that prayer, those present felt something powerful, unifying, ineffable. Those who tried to describe it struggled to find words. Elder McConkie said:

[It was as though another day of Pentecost came.] On the day of Pentecost in the Old World it is recorded that cloven tongues of fire rested upon the people. They were trying to put into words what is impossible to express directly. There are no words to describe the sensation, but simultaneously the Twelve and the three members of the First Presidency had the Holy Ghost descend upon them and they knew that God had manifested his will. . . . I had had some remarkable spiritual experiences before, particularly in connection with my call as an apostle, but nothing of this magnitude.

All of the Brethren at once knew and felt in their souls what the answer to the importuning petition of President Kimball was. . . . Some of the Brethren were weeping. All were sober and somewhat overcome. When President Kimball stood up, several of the Brethren, in turn, threw their arms around him.¹⁵⁹

Elder L. Tom Perry recalled: “While he was praying we had a marvelous experience. We had just a unity of feeling. The nearest I can describe it is that it was much like what has been recounted as happening at the

155. Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 295; McConkie, “Receipt of the Revelation,” 4.

156. Packer, interview.

157. Avant, “President Kimball Says Revelation Was Clear,” 15.

158. McConkie, “Receipt of the Revelation,” 5: “It was one of those occasions when the one who was mouth in the prayer, prayed by the power of the Spirit and was given expression and guided in the words that were used.”

159. McConkie, “Receipt of the Revelation,” 6.

dedication of the Kirtland Temple. I felt something like the rushing of wind. There was a feeling that came over the whole group. When President Kimball got up he was visibly relieved and overjoyed.”¹⁶⁰

Elder Hinckley said soon afterward that the experience defied description: “It was marvelous, very personal, bringing with it great unity and strong conviction that this change was a revelation from God.”¹⁶¹ Ten years later he said:

There was a hallowed and sanctified atmosphere in the room. For me, it felt as if a conduit opened between the heavenly throne and the kneeling, pleading prophet. . . . And by the power of the Holy Ghost there came to that prophet an assurance that the thing for which he prayed was right, that the time had come. . . .

There was not the sound “as of a rushing mighty wind,” there were not “cloven tongues like as of fire” as there had been on the Day of Pentecost. . . .

. . . But the voice of the Spirit whispered with certainty into our minds and our very souls.

It was for us, at least for me personally, as I imagine it was with Enos, who said concerning his remarkable experience, “. . . behold, the voice of the Lord came into my mind.”

. . . Not one of us who was present on that occasion was ever quite the same after that.¹⁶²

Elder David B. Haight recalled, “The Spirit touched each of our hearts with the same message in the same way. Each was witness to a transcendent heavenly event.”¹⁶³ He spoke of the event again eighteen years later: “I was there. I was there with the outpouring of the Spirit in that room so strong that none of us could speak afterwards. We just left quietly to go back to the office. No one could say anything because of the heavenly spiritual experience.”¹⁶⁴ Elder Marvin J. Ashton called it “the most intense spiritual impression I’ve ever felt.”¹⁶⁵ Elder Packer said that during the prayer all present became aware what the decision must be.¹⁶⁶

160. L. Tom Perry, interview by author, June 15, 1978.

161. 1978 Draft.

162. Hinckley, “Priesthood Restoration,” 70.

163. Tate, *David B. Haight*, 280.

164. David B. Haight, “This Work Is True,” *Ensign* 26 (May 1996): 23. See John L. Hart, “Make Giants Out of All Missionaries,” *Church News*, January 24, 1998, 4.

165. Breck England, “Elder Marvin J. Ashton,” *Ensign* 16 (July 1986): 10.

166. Arrington, Diary, June 19, 1978, quoting Gill Warner, who confirmed the statement to the author in interview, September 25, 2000.

President Ezra Taft Benson recorded in his journal: “Following the prayer, we experienced the sweetest spirit of unity and conviction that I have ever experienced. . . . Our bosoms burned with the righteousness of the decision we had made.”¹⁶⁷ He also said he “had never experienced anything of such spiritual magnitude and power.”¹⁶⁸ Each who felt this powerful spiritual experience confirming the decision proposed by President Kimball perceived it as a revelation.

Elder Howard W. Hunter said, “Following the prayer . . . comments were made about the feeling shared by all, that seldom, if ever, had there been greater unanimity in the council.”¹⁶⁹

Elder Perry said, “I don’t think we’ve had a president more willing to entreat the Lord or more receptive since the Prophet Joseph. We knew that he had received the will of the Lord.”¹⁷⁰

As the prophet arose from his knees, he first encountered Elder Haight, the newest Apostle, and they embraced. Elder Haight could feel President Kimball’s heart pounding and could feel his intense emotion. The President continued around the circle, embracing each Apostle in turn.¹⁷¹ Others spontaneously embraced, also.

Spencer felt that the reaction evidenced his brethren’s acceptance of the policy change and, at the same time, their acceptance of him. Elder Perry said,

It was just as though a great burden had been lifted. He was almost speechless. It was almost impossible for him to contain his joy. Nothing was said or had to be said. We sensed what the answer was, the decision was made. There was a great feeling of unity among us and relief that it was over. As I have talked with other members of the Twelve since then, they felt the same as I did. I don’t think the Twelve will ever be the same again. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.¹⁷²

167. Sheri L. Dew, *Ezra Taft Benson: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 457.

168. McConkie, “New Revelation,” 128, quotes Ezra Taft Benson.

169. Eleanor Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 235–36, quoting his journal.

170. Perry, interview. Spencer later said, “Finally we had the feeling, we had the impressions from the Lord who made them very clear to us that this was the thing to do to make the gospel universal to all worthy people.” Kimball remarks, Johannesburg, October 23, 1978, from Cardall recording in Kimball Papers. “But this revelation and assurance came to me so clearly that there was no question about it.” Susan Turley, “The Legacy,” *Latter-day Sentinel*, November 16, 1985, 32; Avant, “President Kimball Says Revelation Was Clear,” 15.

171. Tate, *David B. Haight*, 280.

172. Perry, interview.

President Kimball also later said, “I felt an overwhelming spirit there, a rushing flood of unity such as we had never had before.” And he knew that the fully sufficient answer had come.¹⁷³

Emotion overflowed as the group lingered. When someone reminded President Kimball of the earlier appearance of Wilford Woodruff to LeGrand Richards in the room, Spencer said he thought it natural: “President Woodruff would have been very much interested, because he went through something of the same sort of experience” with the Manifesto.¹⁷⁴ The Brethren expressed their elation at the events, pleasing President Kimball by the depth of their feeling. They felt greatly relieved that the decision was made and pleased with the outcome. They had yearned for this change but had needed the confirmation of the Spirit to reassure them. After their experience—so sacred that some would not discuss it and the thought of it capable of bringing tears—every man stood resolute in support of the action. Elder McConkie felt that

this was done by the Lord in this way because it was a revelation of such tremendous significance and import; one that would reverse the whole direction of the Church, procedurally and administratively; one that would affect the living and the dead; one that would affect the total relationship that we have with the world; one . . . of such significance that the Lord wanted independent witnesses who could bear record that the thing had happened.¹⁷⁵

The Announcement and Reactions

Ordinarily after the weekly meeting the group would change out of temple clothing and conduct Church business. One suggested that because of the experience they had just had, they adjourn for the day. But President Kimball, intent on moving the Church forward, asked them to continue. They did so, but because their intense feelings continued they were reluctant to bring forward any business that could wait.

Among the undecided business was how to announce the decision. President Kimball asked Elders Packer, McConkie, and Hinckley each to propose in writing a course of action.¹⁷⁶

173. Avant, “President Kimball Says Revelation Was Clear,” 15; Spencer W. Kimball, interview.

174. Spencer W. Kimball, interview.

175. McConkie, “New Revelation,” 134; McConkie, “Receipt of the Revelation,” 10–11.

176. Tate, *Boyd K. Packer*, 226.

Though the decision had been made and the Twelve had agreed, President Kimball continued to go to the temple, praying that the rest of the General Authorities would accept this momentous change. During the next days, Camilla thought him as agitated as she had ever seen. But she still had no idea what was causing him such concern.

On Wednesday, June 7, President Kimball advised his counselors in their meeting that he had decided the time had come to announce the removal of priesthood restrictions on black male members and that he had asked three of the Twelve to propose drafts of an announcement. Francis Gibbons had constructed from the three memoranda a composite draft. The First Presidency revised this draft, spending a good deal of time on the exact wording.¹⁷⁷

On Thursday, June 8, the Presidency presented to the Twelve the proposed announcement.¹⁷⁸ All of the Twelve present had a chance to comment, and minor editorial changes were made.¹⁷⁹ They discussed timing. Some thought it best to wait for October general conference. Others suggested making the announcement at the mission presidents' seminar the next week. But Elder McConkie urged immediate release: "It will leak, and we have to beat Satan. He'll do something between now and then to make it appear that we're being forced into it." Despite tight security, employees at the Church Office Building sensed that something important was afoot, though no one knew exactly what.¹⁸⁰ Rumors had already begun to spread.

After discussion, the First Presidency and Twelve adopted Elder Packer's suggestion that they make the announcement in the form of a letter to local Church leaders throughout the world. Before sending the letter, they would release it through the media, making the new policy known to the whole world simultaneously (after presenting it first to the other General Authorities).¹⁸¹ After the meeting, President Kimball

177. Edward L. Kimball, Journal, May 12, 1982, discussion with Francis M. Gibbons; Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 295. According to Swinton, *In the Company of Prophets*, 83, "President Kimball dictated the declaration [in final form] to Arthur [Haycock], who took it down in shorthand and transcribed it."

178. Hinckley, "Priesthood Restoration," 69–70.

179. Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 29; McConkie, "Receipt of the Revelation," 8, says that during this process he felt a renewed assurance of the rightness of the change.

180. Arrington, Diary, June 27, 1978, recording Bruce R. McConkie and family memo to Jay Todd, June 26, 1978; Arrington, Diary, June 12, 1978.

181. With this important business and more routine matters, the meeting lasted longer than usual. Elder Hinckley was scheduled to host the wife of the British ambassador—a significant public relations opportunity—but he remained

felt tremendously weary but pleased at the sense he had of continuing unity. He knew that others did not always fully share his views,¹⁸² and he may have feared that this change in policy would be seen by some as his personal objective. He seems to have carefully laid the groundwork for consensus with the Twelve by consultation, discussion, and full inclusion in the crucial temple meeting when he prayed for the Lord's will to be known.¹⁸³

The significance President Kimball attributed to unanimity can be seen in how President Tanner presented the matter to the Church at the next general conference:

President Kimball has asked that I advise the conference that after he had received this revelation, which came to him after extended meditation and prayer in the sacred rooms of the holy temple, he presented it to his counselors, who accepted it and approved it. It was then presented to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, who unanimously approved it, and was subsequently presented to all other General Authorities, who likewise approved it unanimously.

He then proposed acceptance as "the word and will of the Lord."¹⁸⁴

Two of the Twelve had not attended either meeting. Elder Mark E. Petersen was on assignment in South America, and Elder Delbert L. Stapley was seriously ill in the LDS Hospital. Later in the day of June 8, Spencer telephoned Elder Petersen in Quito, Ecuador, informed him what

in the temple for the meeting and sent his apologies for missing the reception being held for her.

182. For example, the Church Indian programs had sometimes been referred to condescendingly as "Brother Kimball's programs," as though they were his and not the Church's. Espenschied, interview; Kimball and Kimball, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 366, 377.

183. It is alleged that Wilford Woodruff signed the Manifesto alone because his counselors would not join him. He had not presented it to the whole Quorum of Twelve because he expected they would not fully support a decision that he considered his responsibility. Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 48-49; see also Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 140, 143.

184. N. Eldon Tanner, "Revelation on Priesthood Accepted, Church Officers Sustained," *Ensign* 11 (November 1978): 16. Curiously, the only further reference in the conference (four months after the announcement) was one oblique sentence by Bruce R. McConkie, "bearing testimony of the great and wondrous outpouring of divine knowledge that came to President Spencer W. Kimball." Bruce R. McConkie, "Thou Shalt Receive Revelation," *Ensign* 11 (November 1978): 61. The announcement was added to the Pearl of Great Price, later shifted to the Doctrine and Covenants as Official Declaration-2, following the 1890 Manifesto on plural marriage.

had happened, had Francis Gibbons read him the announcement about to be published, and received his approval. Elder Petersen later recalled, “I was delighted to know that a new revelation had come from the Lord. I felt the fact of the revelation’s coming was more striking than the decision itself. On the telephone I told President Kimball that I fully sustained both the revelation and him one hundred percent.”¹⁸⁵

All three of the First Presidency visited Elder Stapley. He responded, “I’ll stay with the Brethren on this.” Thus, support from the Twelve was unanimous.¹⁸⁶

On the afternoon of June 8, the First Quorum of the Seventy held its regular monthly meeting. President Kimball sent a message that the First Presidency wanted to meet with all available General Authorities the next morning in the Salt Lake Temple’s fourth-floor council room, and all were to come fasting. They were asked to postpone travel if possible and cancel any conflicting appointments without advising their secretaries or anyone else of the meeting. Some had trouble figuring out how to manage that. The regular monthly meeting of all the General Authorities had been held in the temple just a week before, so the purpose of this special meeting generated much speculation on subjects such as the Second Coming, authorization to ordain blacks to the priesthood, and building a temple in Missouri.¹⁸⁷

185. Peggy Barton, *Mark E. Petersen: A Biography* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 176. Elder Petersen continued to disapprove of interracial marriage and expressed low expectations for the first mission in black Africa. Espenschied, interview. The June 17 issue of the *Church News* that ran the revelation announcement also ran, reportedly at the instance of Elder Petersen, the article “Interracial Marriage Discouraged,” which quotes three Spencer W. Kimball statements originally directed to Indian-white marriages: Although unwise, “there is no condemnation” (January 1965); stability in interracial marriage is more difficult (January 1965); and “we recommend that people marry those who are of the same racial background generally, and of somewhat the same economic and social and educational backgrounds, and above all, the same religious background, without question” (September 1976). *Church News*, June 17, 1978, 4; Quinn, *Extensions of Power*, 870. Quinn, at 840, quotes a 1954 Petersen statement that intermarriage between any races is contrary to the Lord’s plans. As late as 1983 Elder Petersen was also highly critical of Lester Bush’s research into the origins of the priesthood policy and asked Bush’s stake president to call him in. Bush, “History of My Research,” 199; Kimball Papers, May 15, 1983. But note also that Elder Petersen is apparently the one who suggested that President Kimball consider the Bush article.

186. Spencer W. Kimball, interview. Elder Stapley died six weeks later.

187. Henry Dixon Taylor, *Autobiography of Henry Dixon Taylor* (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 1980), 286.

Also on Thursday, June 8, Heber Wolsey, managing director of Public Communications, went home early because he felt ill. About four o'clock, President Tanner came to Heber's office and asked the secretary to have him come back. After a brief meeting with President Tanner, Heber told his associate that they should be standing by at 7:30 the next morning prepared to handle "an important announcement."

That afternoon, Bill Smart, editor of the *Deseret News*, attended an unrelated meeting with Elder Monson, who quietly told him, "Reserve space for an important announcement tomorrow."

"What is it?"

"I can't say anything now; it is confidential."

"Can you tell me whether to put it on the front page or on B-1 [the first page of the local news section]?"

"You'll know when you see it!"¹⁸⁸

On Friday, the meeting commenced at 7 a.m., with all dressed in their temple clothing.¹⁸⁹ After the hymn "We Thank Thee, O God, for a Prophet," President Benson offered the prayer. Elder Maxwell later said, "I had no inkling what was going on. And as we knelt down to pray, the spirit told me what it was going to be . . . and after that prayer, President Kimball began the description. I began to weep."¹⁹⁰

As Elder Paul H. Dunn recalled, President Kimball said:

Thank you for making the necessary arrangements to be here. I want to tell you about some important things. As a boy in Arizona I wondered why the Indians were so poor and looked down upon. I asked my father, who was kind and never too busy to answer my questions, and he told me about the Book of Mormon and its connection with the Indians and their condition. My father never lied to me. Later I asked him about blacks and the priesthood. My father said that the time would come when they would receive the priesthood. I believed him, although it troubled me. I was called as a stake president. When one of the Twelve

188. William B. Smart, "From the Editor," *This People* 9 (Summer 1988): 6; William B. Smart, interview by author, winter 1988.

189. Description of the June 9 meeting is a composite of many sources, including 1978 Draft; Taylor, *Autobiography*, 287–88; Marion G. Romney, interview by author, July 12, 1978; Dunn, interview, August 8, 1996; Gibbons, discussion; Arrington, Diary, April 9, 1979, recording his interview with Henry D. Taylor; Arrington, Diary, June 27, 1978, recording Jay Todd memo. Shorter versions of these events are found in Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 295–96; Hinckley, "Priesthood Restoration," 70; and Knowles, *Howard W. Hunter*, 236.

190. "Apostles Talk about Reasons for Lifting Ban," 20; Bruce C. Hafen, *A Disciple's Life: The Biography of Neal A. Maxwell* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 417 ("the waves of the Spirit washed over us like surf").

came I asked him. He said, “I don’t know, but the time will come.” I became a General Authority and asked President Grant, “If I am to represent you and the Lord, I need to be able to answer questions about race and priesthood.” He said that the time would come when that restriction would change.¹⁹¹

By now, the Seventies realized where President Kimball was going; they were first stunned, then ecstatic.¹⁹²

According to Elder Dunn, President Kimball continued:

Then one day the mantle fell on me. Brethren, you will never know how many times when you have gone home at night, instead of going home I have come to this room and poured out my heart. Now the Lord has answered me, and the time has come for all worthy men to receive the priesthood. I shared that with my counselors and the Twelve, and after getting their response I present it to you. But I won’t announce it to the world without first counseling with you. We are not in a hurry. I want to hear from you.¹⁹³

He had Frances Gibbons read the text of the proposed announcement and asked for comments. The Apostles led the way. Elder McConkie, among the first to speak, gave an impassioned extemporaneous lecture on the relevant scriptures.¹⁹⁴ President Benson confirmed that he had never experienced so remarkable a manifestation as on the first of June.¹⁹⁵ President Romney said:

Brethren, I have a confession to make. I knew President Kimball was searching for an answer, and whenever we discussed the question, I told him, “If you get an answer I will support you with all my strength,” but I did not expect him to get an answer. If the decision had been left to me, I would have felt that we’ve always had that policy and we would stick to it no matter what the opposition. I resisted change in my feelings, but I came to accept it slowly. I have now changed my position 180 degrees. I am not just a supporter of this decision. I am an advocate. When the revelation came, I knew the mind and the will of the Lord had been made manifest.¹⁹⁶

191. Dunn, interview, August 8, 1996.

192. 1978 Draft.

193. Dunn, interview, August 8, 1996. Note that this reconstruction of his words came after eighteen years, but to the author the phrasing rings true.

194. Arrington, Diary, June 27, 1978, recording Jay Todd memo.

195. 1978 Draft.

196. Romney statement is composite of Edward L. Kimball, Journal, May 12, 1982; notes taken from Francis Gibbons’s reading of the council minutes; 1978 Draft; and memo of interviews by Jay Todd recorded in Arrington, Diary, June 27, 1978.

President Romney made a similar statement a few weeks after the events:

Another of the brethren said, “I would have voted against such a proposal until I experienced the feeling that I did in this room this morning.” Each of the others verbally endorsed the proposal. Elder Hanks, nearly overcome with emotion, said, “I thank God I lived long enough to see this day.”¹⁹⁷ A vote approved the decision unanimously.¹⁹⁸ Spencer put his hand on President Tanner’s knee and said, “Eldon, go tell the world.” President Tanner left to deliver the announcement to Heber Wolsey, managing director of Public Communications, who was standing by. President Tanner returned in a few moments and reported: “It’s done.”¹⁹⁹

Members of the Twelve were assigned to contact the few General Authorities who were absent as mission presidents, and the absent men all gave their assent.²⁰⁰ By the time the General Authorities had dressed and returned to their offices, the word was out. Phone lines were jammed.

Without addressing questions of history or justification, the announcement said simply God had revealed that the day had come for granting priesthood and temple blessings to all who are worthy.²⁰¹ The final

“I knew President Kimball was moved in his spirit with the problem of permitting blacks to receive the priesthood. It had gone on for months, at least. It troubled him. We as his counselors encouraged him to get it off his mind, to rest, but he was moved upon by the Spirit. The idea of change was new to me. I had gone eighty years defending the Church position. I am a Romney, you see, and a stubborn man. I was personally slow to accept change. I prayed hard that the Lord would give the president the right answer, but I did not presume to urge that the answer be yes or no. I was most interested that he be sure. And from the experience we had in the temple, I was sure that he had the answer. I got a witness in my own soul; I would not have gone along without a witness that he had received the answer he sought. I felt a quiet warmth and whisperings of the Spirit. I didn’t want to get excited; I wanted to be rational. It was not an emotional thing with me, but I was as sure as I have ever been of anything. This is the most far-reaching event of his administration, an historic event that opens up to vast numbers of people all the blessings of the gospel. It ranks well up with Wilford Woodruff’s Manifesto in importance in Church history.” Romney, interview.

197. Marion D. Hanks, interview by author, April 19, 2003.

198. Dunn, interview, August 8, 1996.

199. McConkie, “Receipt of the Revelation,” 9.

200. W. Grant Bangerter in Brazil received a call from Bruce R. McConkie about 10:30 a.m., Utah time. Geraldine Bangerter, *Journal*, June 9, 1978, copy in Kimball Papers.

201. The revelation itself was not reduced to text. A forged document purporting to be the revelation itself is in circulation, phrased as an answer from God that he had heard the cries of his dark-skinned children, who had borne the burdens of others; that the Church should without delay extend missionary efforts to them; that priesthood should be given to those who are worthy; that racial intermarriage

text, canonized as Official Declaration–2 in the Doctrine and Covenants, reads, in critical part:

Dear Brethren:

[T]hat people of many nations have responded to the message of the restored gospel . . . has inspired us with a desire to extend to every worthy member of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords.

. . . [W]e have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. . . .

Sincerely yours, . . .

The First Presidency.

The General Authorities were instructed not to interpret or editorialize but to let the announcement speak for itself. The First Presidency would also not be available for media interview concerning the revelation.²⁰²

Friday morning Heber Wolsey waited for the announcement President Tanner had told him to expect. When Heber received a copy of the announcement and read it over, he wept. President Tanner said, “You’re not the first to shed tears,” and instructed him to release the statement.

was “for the present” inadvisable because of social prejudice; that the end-time is near; and that the faithful will receive exaltation.

The document is typed, headed “A Revelation,” and labeled in pen on the upper left corner “First Draft.” At the end appears a signature block: “Faithfully yours,” signed by President Kimball. Shadows of paper edges on the photocopied document show it to be a composite of four segments: the letterhead, two poorly aligned parts of the body, and the signature block (which appears to be from a different typewriter). The ending, “Faithfully yours,” hardly fits a revelation purporting to be the words of God. Richard E. Turley Jr., managing director of the Church Historical Department, reports that copies of unknown origin circulated as early as October 1978 and that Elder G. Homer Durham ascertained directly from President Kimball on February 21, 1979, that the document was a forgery. Richard E. Turley Jr. to author, October 6, 1997. The purported revelation proved innocuous because it differs little from official Church positions.

202. The revelation is not mentioned in President Tanner’s biography, and he did not describe the experience to his family. See Durham, *N. Eldon Tanner*. Walker, interview. Howard, *Marion G. Romney*, 239, mentions but does not describe the event.

Back in his office, Heber said to Jerry Cahill, “What would you consider ‘an important announcement?’” The response was: perhaps a new temple. Then Heber joyously handed Jerry a copy. At his first free moment, Jerry Cahill closed the door to his office and knelt to pray. “An overwhelming feeling swept through [him] as in a wave.” He could not utter a formal prayer, but experienced the most striking expression of divine power of his life, confirming to him the revelation.

Despite their emotions, they had to deal with the business at hand. The first press run at the *Deseret News* sometimes began as early as 10:30, so speed mattered. Quickly they went about their duties. They prepared a two-paragraph press release and an audiocassette of the letter, then called a press conference at which Heber Wolsey would read the announcement. They were under instructions to get the widest possible dissemination of the full text of the letter but to offer no explanations or commentary. Primary concerns were accuracy, simplicity, and dignity. The Brethren wanted a modest, straightforward announcement with no cross-examination.²⁰³

The Public Communications staff of forty came together to hear the announcement read, then dispersed to inform their assigned contacts about the press conference. When Duane Cardall, religion reporter for KSL-TV, got the call that an important announcement would be made, he queried, “What is it?”

“We can’t tell you.”

“Come on, what is it?”

203. Jerry Cahill to author, December 13, 1995, correcting author’s notes of the conversation. “Mormonism Enters a New Era,” *Time*, August 7, 1978, reported President Kimball saying, “I spent a good deal of time in the temple alone, praying for guidance, and there was a gradual and general development of the whole program, in connection with the Apostles.” Without understanding the whole story, this comment could be taken as a description of an essentially rational, administrative decision-making process, but the description also meshes well with a spiritual explanation. “New Priesthood Policy Stirs Media Interest,” *Sunstone* 3 (September/October 1978): 4.

In an interview, LeGrand Richards talked of consultations and development of a position. LeGrand Richards, *Interview with Mormon Apostle LeGrand Richards concerning the 1978 Negro “Revelation”* (Phoenix: Bob Witte, 1978); interview by Wesley P. Walters and Chris Vlachos. Church critics interpreted the decision as a wholly human one. Robert Gottlieb and Peter Wiley, *America’s Saints: The Rise of Mormon Power* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1984), 184. See John L. Smith to the Editor, *Sunstone* 5 (January/February 1980): 2, interpreting Richards’s account as describing what was “simply a corporate decision.” In contrast, see Arrington, *Diary*, June 18, 1978, Kimball Papers, quoting Mamie Silver that Elder Richards, her brother-in-law, “emphasized that all of the Twelve were certain it was a revelation from the Lord.”

"The blacks are going to get the priesthood."

"Come on, what is the announcement?"

"No, it is serious."

"Really?"

"Yes."

Cardall drove in a microwave truck to the Church Office Building, ran into the building, and hurried to the Public Communications office on the 25th floor. With a copy of the statement in hand, he sped downstairs and broadcast a news bulletin standing on the street, interrupting regular programming.

With no advance notice, the story hit like a bolt out of the blue, an incredible, stunning announcement.²⁰⁴ By late morning, all the news media had copies of the release.

Meanwhile, amid all the excitement, the routine work of the kingdom went on. Spencer's journal for the day reads, laconically:

This morning at seven o'clock by prior arrangement met in the upper room of the Salt Lake Temple with all of the General Authorities to consider with them the matter of giving the Priesthood to all worthy male members of the Church.

After our meeting returned to the office and released the following letter concerning giving the priesthood to all worthy male members of the Church: (See above copy of letter.)

Immediately following the release of this announcement the telephones started to ring and rang continuously the balance of the afternoon. People, members and nonmembers, called from around the world to learn if what they had heard on the radio and TV was true.

The First Presidency met with the Presiding Bishopric at 10:15 A.M. which was much later than usual due to our meeting in the Temple.

At 11:00 A.M. the First Presidency met with a Mr. Ron Smith of Newsmaking International.

This afternoon at 2:30, President David P. Gardner of the University of Utah brought [the eminent historian] Dr. [John Hope] Franklin, a black man, in to meet me and came into my office for a short visit.²⁰⁵

Had appointments with several of the General Authorities this afternoon on matters they needed to discuss with me. Also my counselors and I met with the Missionary Committee and then later with Brother Heber G. Wolsey and Wendell J. Ashton [of Public Communications].

It was a very busy day today and did not get away from the office until six o'clock tonight.

204. Duane V. Cardall, interview by author, recorded on cassette tape, August 30, 1990, Kimball Papers.

205. In this courtesy call, neither Franklin nor President Kimball mentioned the revelation. Ronald Coleman paper presented at Mormon History Association, Logan, Utah, May 7, 1988.

First Responses

The word spread like lightning through official Church channels, over radio and television, and by word of mouth. In some heavily Mormon communities, the telephone circuits became so overloaded that it was nearly impossible to get a call through. Exultation, gratitude, excitement, and other emotions competed for place.

When Elder Dunn arrived at a board of directors meeting right after the temple meeting, it was obvious that he had been weeping.²⁰⁶

At lunchtime, Heber Wolsey went home to share the news with his wife, Fay. She said she had received a call from his office and “when you get back to your office you’re going to have a surprise.” Heber recounts:

On returning to the office, I opened the door and saw Darius Gray [a black LDS businessman and good friend] looking fondly out the window at the Salt Lake Temple. He rushed to me, and we threw our arms around each other and wept for gratitude and joy. When we regained a little composure, I whispered, “I never thought . . .”

“I always knew,” said Darius. “I just didn’t know if it would happen on this side of the veil.”

“ . . . in our lifetime!”

Darius looked at me, then out the window at the temple, and then at me again. He closed his eyes, opened them slowly, and said softly, “God is good.”²⁰⁷

Max Pinegar, president of the Language Training Mission (later renamed the Missionary Training Center), had an appointment with Elder Packer that morning. Elder Packer arrived late for the appointment and said, “Come sit by me,” then handed him the press release. To Max’s tears, he said, “This means that you will be teaching black missionaries at the LTM.” Elder Packer bore personal witness of the correctness of the change. Knowing that the LTM would be in commotion, Max got permission to

206. Arrington, Diary, June 18, 1978, quoting Bill Pulsipher.

207. Heber Wolsey, foreword to Margaret Blair Young and Darius Aidan Gray, *One More River to Cross* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 2000), xiii; Darius Gray to author, June 16, 2000; Heber G. Wolsey, interview by author, September 8, 2000. Wolsey recalls Gray saying, “I always knew,” but Gray says he thought priesthood would have to come after this life. Gray had been unwilling to believe rumors flying around the Church Office Building that announcement of a revelation was imminent until he had personally confirmed it with President Kimball’s office. Young and Gray, *Last Mile*, 418. Costanzo, “Group Marks 20 Years of Black Priesthood,” B2; Gray to author.

call a mission conference for that evening. They parted without ever having dealt with the issues of their planned meeting.²⁰⁸

Rick Vernon, a neighbor of the Kimballs, was working at a bank; he received an emotional call about 11:30 a.m. from Elder Hinckley's secretary, a personal friend. Now he understood why President Kimball had seemed withdrawn.

While Camilla was working in the garden in the late morning, she heard the telephone ring and came in to answer it. Her daughter, Olive Beth, asked excitedly, "Have you heard the news?"

"What news?"

"About the revelation that all worthy men can receive the priesthood!"

Camilla sat down on the floor and wept in joy and relief—joy for the revelation and relief for her husband. She understood now what had weighed so heavily on Spencer's mind. She had seen him so distraught only one other time.²⁰⁹ Spencer had always maintained strict confidentiality where Church business was concerned. She sometimes humorously complained that he couldn't remember what was confidential and what was not, so he solved the problem by never telling her anything. She had to read about new developments in the *Church News*.²¹⁰

Camilla went into the bedroom and poured out her heart in a prayer of gratitude and in desire that this development would not burden Spencer with new controversy. She worried that it might cause a schism in the Church, that there would be those who could not accept a change.²¹¹ Her first thought was that Spencer's anxiety had arisen from fear of possible schism, but she later concluded that his intensity stemmed rather from his

208. Max Pinegar, interview by author, June 10, 1996.

209. Camilla, interview. The other occasion was the 1943 excommunication of Apostle Richard R. Lyman.

210. She sometimes gumbled a little, "How is it that I have to hear about things like this on the radio?" Paul H. Dunn, interview, August 8, 1996, quoting Spencer W. Kimball. Bruce McConkie had at least intimated to his wife that something significant was going to happen: "You'll be surprised." Olive Beth Kimball Mack, interview by author, March 6, 1997, quoting Amelia Smith McConkie. It was Elders Perry and McConkie, not Spencer, who later related to Camilla the intense spiritual experience in the temple. Similarly, Spencer had never talked to her about his spiritual experience on the mountain in Colorado at the time of his call. Camilla, interview. See Kimball and Kimball, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 192–95.

211. "Conversations with Camilla," videocassette, interview by *This People*, February 27, 1985; see Edward L. Kimball, *Journal*, April 25, 1982, and February 27, 1985.

deep desire to receive some sort of manifestation confirming the decision he had arrived at.²¹²

Spencer tried soon afterward to call Camilla with the news, but she was back in the garden and did not hear the telephone. He then called Olive Beth to ask if she knew where her mother was. Then he hesitated, as if wondering what he should tell her, so Olive Beth went on, “I just heard the wonderful news. It is marvelous!”

Spencer responded, “It is the most earthshaking thing that has happened in my lifetime.”²¹³

That evening the story led off NBC News. That afternoon and the next morning the story ran on the front page of major newspapers across the country—the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Washington Post*. *Time* and *Newsweek* stopped their presses to include the news in their weekly runs.²¹⁴ Most newspapers reported neutrally: “The Mormon Church announced Friday a revelation from God will give its priesthood to all worthy male members.” Some commentators scorned the “convenience” of a “revelation” that allowed a way out of an intolerable bind, but others noted accurately that it had been some years since any significant demonstrations against BYU and the Church had occurred. External pressure was the lowest it had been for years.²¹⁵

Because Church leaders declined to comment, reporters began to interview men and women on the street for reactions, NAACP officials, and leaders of other local churches. The responses were almost uniformly



President Kimball with his wife, Camilla Eyring Kimball, 1974. Courtesy Edward L. Kimball.

212. Camilla, interview.

213. 1978 Draft.

214. 1978 Draft. Stephen W. Stathis, “Mormonism and the Periodical Press: A Change Is Underway,” *Dialogue* 14 (Summer 1981): 51–52.

215. Janet Brigham, “‘To Every Worthy Member,’” *Sunstone* 3 (July/August 1978): 14.

positive. The media next turned to black members of the Church, who proved to be articulate and devoted, fielding questions—often barbed—with tact, patience, and humility. An elderly lifetime member said, “We have all waited for this, but I didn’t think it would come in my lifetime.”²¹⁶ Monroe Fleming, expressing his happiness, said, “It’s like not feeling you’re a guest in your father’s house anymore.”²¹⁷ Robert Stevenson said, “After hearing the news, I called my wife at work and told her to come home immediately. When she was home I told her the news and she broke into tears and laughter at the same time. We are already planning our temple marriage.”²¹⁸ Joseph Freeman said, “This is something we’ve waited a long time for,” though he had never been primarily concerned with the question of priesthood. “I knew for sure that this was Christ’s church. . . . I felt certain that the time would come . . . when I would be able to hold the priesthood.”²¹⁹

The news brought nearly universal rejoicing among members, both because of the extension of blessings to worthy families who had been denied them, but also because it illustrated in dramatic fashion the Church teaching that revelation continues to the present. As the news spread through Utah and beyond, people embraced and cried and rejoiced. As with such events as Pearl Harbor and the John F. Kennedy assassination, Latter-day Saints remember where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news.²²⁰

A reporter who came from a local television station to the press conference had been somewhat antagonistic to the Church. When he was told to cover an “extremely important announcement” at Church headquarters, he and a cameraman ran the several blocks to the Church Office Building. Breathless, he received a copy of the announcement from hands shaking in excitement.

He said later, “I felt that I was being a witness to history. I remember being emotional. I sensed a lot of happiness at the Church offices . . . a great burden being lifted. There was a sense of joy; people were genuinely thrilled.” He understood then that the Mormons had not been acting out

216. Lucille Bankhead, quoted in “Tears Tell Feelings of Black Members,” *Deseret News*, June 10, 1978, A3.

217. Monroe Fleming, quoted in “Tears Tell Feelings,” A3.

218. Robert L. Stevenson, quoted in David Liggett, “Former Black ASBYU Executive Excited about New Opportunities,” (BYU) *Daily Universe*, June 9, 1978, 4.

219. Freeman, *In the Lord’s Due Time*, 67.

220. Lester E. Bush Jr., “Introduction,” *Dialogue* 12 (Summer 1979): 9; Brigham, “To Every Worthy Member,” 12.

of bigotry, as he supposed, but out of principle. “I experienced a change in feelings toward the Church that day.” The exultant reactions of the Public Communications staff members and others he interviewed on the street persuaded him, as years of explanation and protestation had not. He rushed back to his station and personally read on the air the bulletin: “God has spoken to the prophet of the Mormon Church.”²²¹

Mary Frances Sturlaugson, a young black woman, recorded that in a downtown office a friend told her the news. She said, “Please don’t joke with me about something like that.”

At that instant a young man who had been talking on the phone stood up and, with his fists stretched above his head, shouted, “All right!”

Cold chills went completely through my body. All I could say was, “I don’t believe it’s happened.” An older man beside me kept repeating, “I’ll be darned, I’ll be darned.”

As I walked outside, crying like a happy kid at Christmastime, horns were honking like crazy. I stopped for a red light and a car pulled up. The driver asked me if I had heard what he had just heard. I half mumbled and half nodded a disbelieving yes. He whooped and started blowing his horn as he drove off. When I arrived at my apartment my roommates ran out to meet me, and we jumped up and down screaming with joy. Finally we went inside and each said a prayer, sobs punctuating every one.²²²

In Brazil, Helvécio Martins returned home from work to find his wife Rudá extremely excited. “I have news, amazing news!” Her friend had received a telephone call from the United States about the announcement. Helvécio could not respond. Could it be true? A rumor? Then the telephone, which had been out of service because of nearby construction, suddenly rang and a call from a friend in Salt Lake City confirmed the news.²²³

The wedding invitations for the Martinses’ son, Marcus, had already been distributed when the announcement came. But he and his fiancée,

221. Lorry E. Rytting to author, April 18, 1990, and June 12, 1990, from reporting his March 4, 1990, interview with Bill Brown, then a Dallas TV reporter, and Rytting’s own observations in the Public Communications Department; Brigham, “To Every Worthy Member,” 12.

222. Sturlaugson, *A Soul So Rebellious*, 65–68.

223. Martins, *Autobiography*, 68; Hart, “Eager to Serve on Lord’s Timetable,” 6, 12; Gibbons, *Spencer W. Kimball*, 293. Brother Martins became the first black mission president (Brazil Fortaleza Mission) in 1987, and the first black General Authority in 1990. “Elder Helvécio Martins of the Seventy,” 106; Martins, *Autobiography*, 115. The first stake where all the priesthood leaders were black was organized in Nigeria in 1988. 1989–1990 *Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1988), 323 (May 15, 1988).



This photograph was taken in the Martins living room in Rio de Janeiro the day Marcus left for his mission. Among the family and friends shown are Marcus (*standing, left*); his future wife, Mirian Barbosa (*seated, next to Marcus*); Mirian's mother, Gloria Barbosa (*also seated*); Marcus's father, Helvécio (*standing, center*); and Mirian's father, Manoel Barbosa Filho (*standing, right*). Courtesy Marcus H. Martins.

Mirian Abelin Barbosa, decided to postpone the wedding because he now could serve a mission. He became the first black missionary to be called after the revelation and served in the Brazil Porto Alegre Mission.²²⁴

Twenty-six-year-old Joseph Freeman, a black member of the Church for five years, rose the morning of June 9 knowing that the lawn of his home in Salt Lake Valley needed watering and weeding. The insistent ringing of the telephone brought him in from the yard, and a white friend asked, "Have you heard? Well, listen! President Kimball has had a revelation—about your people, the blacks."

Waiting for the punch line of what he assumed was a bad joke, Joseph kept calm.

"Turn on the TV and see for yourself," the friend insisted.

224. Martins, *Autobiography*, 68–73. 1979 *Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1979), 6. Soon afterward Jacques M. G. Jonassaint, of Haiti, was called to the Florida Spanish Mission, and Mary Sturlaugson, of Provo, Utah, went to the Texas San Antonio Mission as the first African American woman missionary. Golden A. Buchmiller, "3 Black Members Called on Missions," *Church News*, September 16, 1978, 5.

Joseph telephoned the Church switchboard, and the operator put him through to the First Presidency's office. A secretary told him, "Yes, Brother Freeman, what you've heard is true." On Sunday, June 11, Joseph Freeman became the first black man in Utah to be ordained to the priesthood.²²⁵ Being first made him an instant celebrity, and he was deluged with interview requests from *Time*, *Ebony*, *People*, writers, television news commentators, national television shows, and disk jockeys with call-in shows. Church meetings and firesides booked him six months in advance. Sometimes he had three or four appointments in a single Sunday.²²⁶

New York lawyer George H. Mortimer recalled:

I was working in the public search room at the Patent Office in Washington, D.C. . . . The clerk had a radio playing and as I walked past the little office I heard the announcer say, "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has just made public a revelation that Negroes may now hold the Priesthood." I will always remember the thrill. . . . The following Sunday I was in Manhattan . . . [and] every black member over 12 years of age [was ordained] to an appropriate office in the Priesthood. The joy expressed in the faces . . . is indescribable.²²⁷

A week after the announcement, Ruffin Bridgeforth, leader of Genesis, had still not been ordained because his local leader with that responsibility was out of town. Elder Packer, discussing the situation with President Kimball, asked whether Brother Bridgeforth might properly be ordained a high priest rather than an elder in light of his long and faithful service. After pondering the question, President Kimball said, "Yes, that's right. You do that." After Brother Bridgeforth was ordained, he asked Elder Packer to give his wheelchair-bound wife, Helena, a priesthood blessing. Elder Packer later recalled, "I laid my hands on her head and just as I was to speak, I thought, 'Ruffin, you can now give this blessing.' And when he

225. It may be that another man was ordained to the Aaronic priesthood in Guam sooner than Joseph Freeman, because in Guam, on the other side of the international dateline, it was Sunday while it was still Saturday in Utah. L. Brent Goates to author, March 17, 1998, referring to William W. Cannon, *Beachheads in Micronesia* (Salt Lake City: Privately published, 1997), 102–3.

226. Freeman, *In the Lord's Due Time*, 1–2, 106–10. Within two weeks, he and his wife went to the temple for their endowments. Elder Monson sealed them and their two sons. Others also ordained that first Sunday were Jose Ramon Diaz of the San Juan (Puerto Rico) Branch and Robert Lang of Los Angeles. Brother Lang and his wife were reportedly the first to be sealed in the temple. "Blacks Talk about Membership in the LDS Church," *Provo Daily Herald*, June 5, 1988, 22.

227. George H. Mortimer, interview by author, undated but after Spencer W. Kimball's death.



President Kimball with the first two Ghanaian missionaries, Samuel Bainson and Crosby Sampson-Davis. Both missionaries served in the England Manchester Mission. Courtesy Emmanuel Abu Kissi.

began that blessing—and he needed no coaching—by the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood, that . . . was a moment in Church history.”²²⁸

Spencer attended Helena’s funeral in 1980. Ruffin said of him, “What manner of man is this who can take away my sadness?”²²⁹

228. Tate, *Boyd K. Packer*, 227–28; Young and Gray, *Last Mile*, 417, 422; R. Scott Lloyd, “Ruffin Bridgeforth, First Black High Priest, Eulogized as a Pioneer,” *Church News*, April 5, 1997, 7; Lloyd, “Revelation Rewarded Those Who Waited,” 4–5, quoting Elder Packer’s remarks at Ruffin Bridgeforth’s funeral, March 26, 1997.

229. Margaret Young to author, July 29, 2002, quoting taped interview with Ruffin Bridgeforth in 1996.

President Kimball, Immediately Afterward

The day after the announcement, Spencer's barber trimmed his hair in preparation for a trip to Hawaii and found him "happy, buoyant, and warm . . . [with] a great weight off his shoulders."²³⁰ In Hawaii President Kimball attended a stake conference, rededicated the temple,²³¹ conducted an area conference (the first in the United States), and convened a solemn assembly for leaders. Elder John H. Groberg asked if Spencer had time to meet some of the faithful black Church members living in the islands. "I would like to meet all of them," Spencer answered. When he met with a small group he gave each a bear hug. With characteristic warmth, he told a black Marine, "I just so appreciate your joining the Church under trying conditions—and now you're being blessed for it."²³² Many people reported to him that they had wept tears of joy and gratitude upon hearing of the revelation. Some wept anew in the retelling.²³³

When reporters in Hawaii asked about the revelation, Spencer answered, "It is a different world than it was twenty or twenty-five years ago. The world is ready for it." The reporters also asked him for details about receiving the revelation, but the president described it as "a personal thing." He sidestepped further questions on the subject, saying he was there to rededicate the temple.²³⁴

Although he felt the subject inappropriate for a press conference, Spencer willingly talked about the revelation in a personal conversation with his son, expressing the view that this revelation was "the most important thing to happen in the Church since the Manifesto" in 1890, yet he felt great concern lest some people sensationalize it. He particularly stressed that it had not come in an open vision. "Some people would try to figure it out that I had a personal visitation from the Almighty as in the First Vision. I would not want to make the revelation different from what it was. When I meet little children they sometimes look up at me and say, 'Do you talk to Jesus?' It sets my heart in a whirl, because their simple expectations are so high." Still, he had no doubts that he had received a revelation

230. Arrington, Diary, June 12, 1978, quoting Glen Leonard quoting Ross Pyper, barber at Deseret Gym.

231. The first session was held in the temple, the remaining eight in the BYU–Hawaii auditorium because of the temple's small size.

232. Golden A. Buchmiller, "President Kimball Inspires Members to Improve Their Lives," *Church News*, December 19, 1981, 6.

233. Spencer W. Kimball, Journal, June 11, 1978.

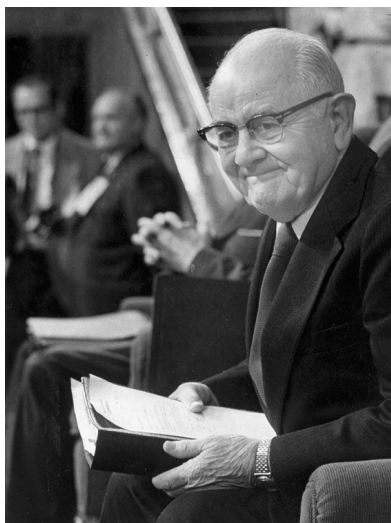
234. Phillip Colton Smith (high councilor who was present at the press conference) to author, January 11, 1994.

and that its source was divine. The strong, distinct, sacred impression he experienced banished for him even the thought of questioning its source.²³⁵

For the Twelve, their respect for President Kimball was augmented by the revelatory process. Elder Perry commented, “This is an example of President Kimball’s willingness to take on himself the prophetic calling. It was not a result of a ‘policy decision,’ but of his going to the Lord. He has the courage to be a prophet.”²³⁶

And Elder Hinckley said, “It is a tremendous thing. It came as a result of great effort and prayer, anxious seeking and pleading. Anyone who does not think that is a part of receiving revelation does not understand the process.”²³⁷

A few weeks after the event, Elder Packer said, “I have feared we might lose him, now that this great work is done. I hope there is something else only he can do, to keep him here. No one else could have done this; there is none so innocent and open, so sensitive.”²³⁸



President Spencer W. Kimball at general conference, October 1974. Courtesy Edward L. Kimball.

235. 1978 Draft.

236. 1978 Draft. Gene Dalton, interview by author, June 1978.

237. Gordon B. Hinckley, interview by author, July 12, 1978.

238. Packer, interview.

Edward L. Kimball (ELKimball@pobox.com) is Professor of Law Emeritus at Brigham Young University and author or coauthor of several books on Church and family history and law, including *Lengthen Your Stride: The Presidency of Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005). He is currently writing the life story of his grandfather Andrew Kimball, son of Heber and father of Spencer W. Kimball.

Thirty Years after the “Long-Promised Day”

Reflections and Expectations

Marcus H. Martins

The announcement of the revelation in 1978, which extended the priesthood to all worthy Latter-day Saint men regardless of race, was celebrated as the arrival of a “long-promised day” (Official Declaration 2). Reflecting on the thirtieth anniversary of that revelation, I feel deep gratitude to the Lord for sending me to earth in an age in which I would be allowed to hold the priesthood and work in his vineyard. The blessings and privileges my family and I have enjoyed in the Church in those three decades far exceeded any dreams we might have had prior to June 1978.

The scriptures reveal that one thousand of our years are like one day to the Lord (see Abr. 3:4; 2 Pet. 3:8), so I don’t suppose he would care that much about our calendar and changes of years, centuries, and so on. But for us, these things are important because they provide us with check-points for reflection and expression of gratitude for blessings received.

Over the years, I have been asked many times to speak publicly about my thoughts on being a black member of the Church. The first time I spoke publicly about my feelings was fourteen years ago in a forum at the Brigham Young University campus. Since then I have spoken from coast to coast—from Boston to San Francisco.

Interestingly, it is mostly American Latter-day Saints who still show some interest in this subject. As I have traveled in Asia and even in my own country, Brazil, I have never been asked to speak on this topic. The one exception happened in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, when during a break in a professional conference three Muslim women approached me and boldly asked, “You are black and Brazilian. How come you are a Mormon?”

While I have always been grateful to my hosts for the opportunities to speak about my experiences as a member of the Church, I always stress



Marcus H. Martins and his wife, Mirian Abelin Barbosa. Courtesy Marcus H. Martins.

to my audiences that I am not an activist in race relations. Instead, I see myself as just an ordinary member of the Church who in the last thirty-six years has had a number of extraordinary experiences.

I reflect on the consequences of the 1978 revelation “wearing two hats,” so to speak—that of a social scientist and of a person of faith. But let me clarify that in my mind I resolved years ago that my faith would always temper my intellectual curiosity and keep it in check. In that spirit, I believe that the 1978 revelation brought about major contributions to the Church. In this essay, I will focus on two of those contributions: (1) an enhanced

emphasis on doctrinal accuracy, and (2) an additional modern standard of faith. And then I will offer my opinion on one of the popular expectations for the future of the Church.

Enhanced Emphasis on Doctrinal Accuracy

Members of the Church are also “ordinary” members of the societies in which they live, and, having a lay clergy, the Church does not coach its members about their social, cultural, or political views. The Church teaches the gospel of Jesus Christ as contained in the scriptures and in the words of living prophets and then allows its members to apply the doctrines of the gospel in their daily lives according to their own choices. Therefore, it is inevitable that at times personal opinions and a few misconceptions or misinterpretations might occur. For me, this is what happened regarding issues of race and ethnicity in the Church.

As a sociologist I would argue that, as systems of belief, religions are not necessarily racist. People bring to their religious congregations cultural traits and shared beliefs from their societies. So, if anyone ever met a Latter-day Saint who was admittedly a racist, that person would have been so not because of the official beliefs of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints but because of that person’s adherence to traditions from his or her larger society. This would have been so whether that person was

living in the United States or Brazil or South Africa or anywhere else in the world. In fact, racism is not a phenomenon restricted to black and white relations, but it also occurs between whites and other whites, such as in the Balkans, and between blacks and other blacks, such as in many troubled tribal relations throughout Africa.

I see the influence of cultural traits and social norms on religious life as almost unavoidable. Even the Prophet Joseph Smith seemed to acknowledge that possibility in 1835 by stating that “many, having a zeal not according to knowledge, and not understanding the pure principles of the doctrine of the Church, have, no doubt, in the heat of enthusiasm, taught and said many things which are derogatory to the genuine character and principles of the Church; and for these things we are heartily sorry, and would apologize, if apology would do any good.”¹

From the mid-1800s until early June 1978, no male member of the Church with black African ancestry could be ordained to the priesthood. We could never explain the reason for that “priesthood ban,” as it is commonly known. Because of its belief in modern-day revelation, it seems that the Church chose to deal with the priesthood ban by waiting for divine direction, which finally came in 1978. In the meantime, members and leaders attempted on their own to find possible reasons for the existence of the ban. Those attempts led to the unofficial popularization and adoption of preexisting ideas about the black race well known in other religious traditions for centuries. However, those who chose to adopt these ideas did so in opposition to the scriptural stance on race relations found in the Book of Mormon, where Nephi proclaims that the Lord “inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God” (2 Ne. 26:33).

Some argued that those of black African descent were not prepared to receive the priesthood, but they said so based on their own opinions, without any evidence, and not in harmony with the revelations of this dispensation, which clearly state that the restored gospel is for all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people. The revelations given to Joseph Smith and recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants establishing the orders of the priesthood in the modern era are broad and all-inclusive in scope, meaning that they established no restrictions regarding which tribes or lineages could hold the priesthood in this last dispensation. Often the language in those revelations clearly states their scope—including those that established the organization of the priesthood—by using terms such as “every man,” or “all men,” or “all the world” (see, for instance, D&C 1:2, 4, 6–7, 20–23, 34–36; 84:45–48).

Therefore, one of the consequences of the 1978 revelation has been an enhanced emphasis on doctrinal consistency. This is one of the challenges for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the early twenty-first century. Neither the Church nor anyone else has control over the flow of information in cyberspace. Anyone can become an “informal public affairs officer” by creating web pages and blogs without any supervision from Church officials.

We now understand more than ever the responsibility each member has to carefully study the scriptures and the words of the currently living prophets, so we can make accurate statements about our beliefs. And notice my emphasis on the words of the currently living prophets. It is easy to use computer databases to find quotations from the past. But we must check those words against the teachings of the present. It doesn’t matter what Brigham Young, John Taylor, or any other nineteenth-century prophet thought or said about this or that racial group or nationality. For those alive today, all that matters is what the currently living prophets and apostles teach about their status and worth as children of God.

An Additional Modern Standard of Faith

The vitality of Mormonism stems from its extraordinary doctrines, ordinances, and the blessings, privileges, and promises contained in the message of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Underestimating any of these could compromise the life of the Church. Figuratively speaking, it is the Sacred Grove that attracts lifelong converts, not necessarily the pioneer handcart. While the handcart is the symbol of an exodus based on faith, that faith started as a result of the heavenly visitation that took place in the Sacred Grove. The Church is true not because its early members sacrificed so much to cross the plains. The Church is true because God spoke from heaven, called a modern-day prophet, and through this prophet restored his gospel and priesthood to the world.

The power of the message and doctrines of the restored gospel can be ascertained in the fact that before June 1978 people with black African ancestry who joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were willing to do so even though they could not enjoy its full benefits. Reminiscent of the faithful Canaanite woman mentioned in the New Testament (Matt. 15:22–28), they would rather enjoy “chunks,” if you will, of the true gospel in the Church of Jesus Christ than whole banquets of man-made religious beliefs elsewhere in the world.

When my parents and I joined the Church in Brazil in 1972, we did so as an act of faith. Some people think that faith and reason do not agree

one with another, but looking in retrospect, I would say that in our case our faith led us to see racial concerns as secondary and temporary. We sincerely believed that if we were faithful, God would somehow have us in a good place in heaven regardless of whether my father and I could hold the priesthood in this life.

The trials of faith faced by black members prior to 1978 speak volumes about their commitment to the restored gospel, and just as the nineteenth-century LDS pioneers provided a standard of faithful living for future generations by their obedience and sacrifice in crossing the plains and building communities in a then inhospitable environment, black converts prior to 1978 added yet another modern standard of faith by joining the true Church even without the enjoyment of its full privileges and benefits.

After thirty years, this additional standard poses a significant question for all Latter-day Saints: Would we remain faithful if some of the privileges and blessings of our religion were withheld from us for a while? Have we ever doubted the Lord and his promises just because a certain anxiously desired blessing was delayed or temporarily denied?

Some of us desire a temple marriage but are temporarily unsuccessful in our search for an eternal companion. Others of us desire children but are unable to conceive them in this life. Or we desire the fulfillment of a specific promise contained in a patriarchal blessing but cannot see signs of the day in which that promise will be realized. Or we have been anxiously waiting for an answer to a heartfelt prayer but receive only heavenly silence for what feels like a long while. For all these and many other similar circumstances, the question remains: Can we remain faithful and obedient even without the realization of all our expected blessings?

For individuals in these or similar conditions, we remember the word of the Lord to the Prophet Joseph Smith in Liberty Jail: “Peace be unto thy soul; thine adversity and thine afflictions shall be but a small moment; and then, if thou endure it well, God shall exalt thee on high; thou shalt triumph over all thy foes” (D&C 121:7–8). With faith in the Lord, we can triumph over the foes of our souls, such as frustration, sadness, embarrassment, impatience, and hopelessness, and remain faithful until the Lord manifests his power in our behalf and grants us either the righteous desire of our hearts or another even greater blessing.

A Popular Expectation for the Future

Every time there is a vacancy in the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, people ask the question, “Will the next Mormon Apostle be someone with Hispanic or black African ancestry?” Whenever I am asked this question,

I remind my interlocutors that Apostles are called to represent the Lord before the people, and not the other way around. No single member of the Quorum of the Twelve controls that body's agenda or perspectives. They form a council that by revelation received the charge, "Every decision made by . . . these quorums must be by the unanimous voice of the same; that is, every member in each quorum must be agreed to its decisions" (D&C 107:27). The role of those men is to testify of Jesus Christ and teach his gospel to the nations of the world. They are not called to represent the demographic makeup of the Church.

For example, the calling of President Dieter F. Uchtdorf to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in 2004 did not make the Church's policies or perspectives more European. Changes in the Church happen because of wisdom and inspiration received in response to the needs of the collective membership worldwide. The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, "This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed."²

As a sociologist, I see the question as possible evidence that Latter-day Saints are ready and willing to accept a non-Caucasian as a religious leader in the Church. As a Latter-day Saint, I also consider that this is a matter of divine intervention, that God himself chooses whom he wants to serve him in positions of responsibility. So, we can say that, yes, one day there will be Hispanics, blacks, and Asians serving as Apostles in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. But at this time we cannot tell when this will happen. And I wouldn't expect any significant changes in Church policy or administration as the result solely of the nationality or race of a new Apostle. Changes have occurred and will continue to occur in the Church, but they will come not because of political or cultural pressures. They will come in order to allow our members to better live the gospel principles in their homes and families, and in order to refine the Church and make it more efficient in fulfilling its mission of proclaiming the gospel, perfecting individuals, and uniting families as eternal entities.

Conclusion

I love my religion, and I have never found in our official doctrine (3 Ne. 11:31–39; D&C 1:17–26) any evidence of racism. I was a member of the Church during the last six years of the priesthood ban, and I was the first member of my race to serve a full-time mission after the ban was lifted. Now, almost thirty years later, I am a high priest and an ordained bishop, and my two sons are also priesthood holders—one is also a bishop and

the other is an elder. My late father, Helvécio Martins, served as a General Authority between 1990 and 1996. He was a member of the Second Quorum of the Seventy, and Latter-day Saints throughout the world from that time still remember him speaking in two general conferences of the Church.

As an educator, I meet with fellow administrators who prior to 1978 might have espoused speculative ideas supportive of the priesthood ban. Like those Muslim women in Malaysia, others might also ask me: “How come you are a Mormon? How can you associate with these people?” For me it is a matter of forgiveness, faith in God, and hope of a peaceful future for my children and grandchildren. Nothing good would come to my life in the present if I were to keep reliving events of the past.

That is why I have maintained my opinion that this is a time for activity, not for activism in the Church. Daily faithful living of gospel principles is what is going to improve our lives and the quality of our associations with others, regardless of the conditions of the society around us.

This is not a “pie in the sky” religion. Many of the extraordinary blessings, privileges, and promises contained in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ can be enjoyed right here, right now. It is interesting that in the Book of Mormon we find that both the Nephites and Lamanites were concerned with maintaining the “rights and privileges of [their] church . . . of their religion . . . and of their worship” (Alma 2:4; 51:6; 3 Ne. 2:12). In a world full of ambiguities, doubts, fears, and dangers, it is a great blessing to be able to enjoy in our lives and homes “the rights of the priesthood [which] are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven” (D&C 121:36). These rights enable every member of the Church to approach the Lord with bold faith and through reverent obedience receive “peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come” (D&C 59:23).

Marcus Helvécio T. A. Martins is the Chair of the Department of Religious Education at Brigham Young University–Hawaii. A native of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, he holds a PhD in Sociology of Religion, Race, and Ethnic Relations. He has taught at BYU (Provo) and Ricks College (now BYU–Idaho) and has also lectured throughout the United States, Brazil, and Japan. He was elected Teacher of the Year by BYU–Hawaii’s President’s Council in 2002. This essay is adapted from remarks originally presented at the Orem Utah Institute of Religion, February 29, 2008.

1. Joseph Fielding Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 80.

2. Smith, *Teachings*, 256.

Tunica Doloris

When sanity begins to drift in mind
Because a friend, from earth has ridden fate,
And terrifying feelings start to grate—
It helps to know that all of humankind

Who mourn were helped by One who stopped and dined
With friends that didn't know the hour was late.
They didn't know the magnitude of Great,
Whom Peter thrice denied—distraught, maligned.

The hugs He must have given each one close,
Could line the coats that warm the coldest men
And women on the earth, who cope with grief.

The tunic that he wore, a seamless dose
Of prize, stripped off and won in gamblers' ken,
Warms not . . . but Jesus, cold, has warmed a thief.

—Christopher Lund

This poem won first place in the 2008 BYU Studies poetry contest.

The Nature of the Pen and Pencil Markings in the New Testament of Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible

Paul W. Lambert

Thomas A. Wayment

In the years after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the manuscripts and the marked Bible associated with the New Translation remained in the possession of Emma Smith and later her son Joseph Smith III, despite efforts by Brigham Young, Orson Hyde, and others to acquire the documents. Eventually the manuscripts were loaned to and became part of the archival collection of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS, now Community of Christ).¹

Concerns about the integrity of the manuscripts led to an 1868 statement by the School of the Prophets in Salt Lake City dismissing the recent RLDS publication of the translation.² Although Robert J. Matthews's groundbreaking study *"A Plainer Translation"* helped dispel the myths surrounding the accuracy of the text of the New Translation manuscripts, there has still been some concern over the exactness of the New Translation manuscripts and the marked Bible.³ Regarding the issue of possible later additions to the manuscripts and notations added to Joseph Smith's marked Bible, the seemingly random pen and pencil markings in the manuscripts and the marked Bible should raise some legitimate questions.

The work of Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews has further clarified many of the concerns raised in previous generations of scholarship.⁴ Yet one important area in the study of the New Testament of the New Translation remains largely untouched—the markings the Prophet made when he transitioned from dictating the complete wording of the New Testament to merely marking an already printed Bible. Some of these notations were made in pen and some in pencil; the two sets of markings also used different systems of notation. Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews do not offer any solution to the origin and meaning

of these notations in the New Translation manuscripts.⁵ In this article, we explain these pen and pencil markings, discuss the editorial procedures Smith followed after he and his scribes completed their initial pass of the New Testament, and examine some clues about the preparation of the manuscripts for publication.

Method, History, and Approach

To assess fully whether the manuscripts and marked Bible were altered after Joseph Smith's lifetime, it is important to understand briefly how the process of translation, when known, occurred. Initially, the scribes wrote out the entire text of the Bible word for word as Smith dictated it. The small number of subsequent corrections that appear on the pages of the handwritten texts demonstrate that Smith dictated the Bible text with the changes already in place so the scribes would not have to write out the King James Version text and then make interlinear changes to it.⁶

Smith began the New Translation with Genesis, but shortly thereafter shifted to the New Testament. On March 7, 1831, he received a revelation: "And now, behold, I say unto you, it shall not be given unto you to know any further concerning this chapter [Genesis 24], until the New Testament be translated, and in it all these things shall be made known" (D&C 45:60). The next day Smith began work on the New Testament.⁷

Adopting the same procedure they had used in the Old Testament, Smith and Sidney Rigdon immediately began working on the New Testament as the Lord had instructed. Now known as NT 1, Smith and Rigdon's initial work followed the pattern established during the translation of Genesis. Later, John Whitmer was directed to make a copy of NT 1. This copy eventually became the living document and is now referred to as NT 2.⁸

On February 16, 1832, after translating John 5:29, both Smith and Rigdon beheld a vision that was later included as section 76 in the Doctrine and Covenants. This vision establishes a firm date for the New Translation and suggests approximately when the shift occurred from writing out the entire text of the New Translation to making notations in the Bible and writing only the changed words on a separate sheet of paper.⁹ Joseph and Sidney altered their method to expedite the completion of the New Translation after finishing the fifth chapter of the Gospel of John. The system Smith used in marking the Bible is the primary focus of our research because this system opens a window into one of the few places where any potential alteration of the manuscripts can be studied in detail.¹⁰

Early Copies of the New Translation Manuscripts

The notation system of the marked Bible and how those markings correspond to the accompanying handwritten manuscripts have received passing attention from scholars. Without the aid of a critical edition of the text, we initially set out to unravel the seemingly complex system of pen and pencil notations in the marked Bible. We had hoped to be able to describe the method used and to arrive at some conclusion about the historical integrity of those texts based on our findings. Within twenty-three years of Smith's death, three copies of the New Translation of the New Testament were completed, one of them by an LDS copyist (John M. Bernhisel, spring 1845) and two of them by RLDS copyists (Marietta Hodges Faulconer and Mark H. Forscutt, July 1866 to January 1867) in preparation for the RLDS publication of the translation in 1868 (figs. 1–3).¹¹ Each of these copies creates a fixed point of comparison for our analysis.

The three copyists worked with the manuscripts for two distinct reasons.

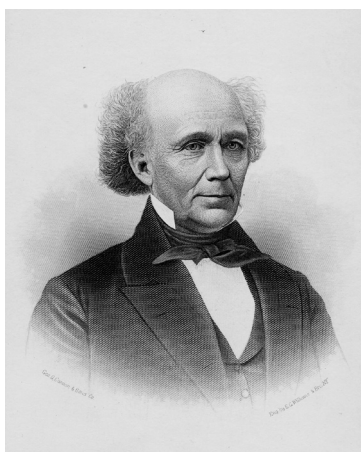


FIG. 1. John M. Bernhisel. Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.

FIG. 1–3 (*continued on next page*). John M. Bernhisel, Marietta Hodges Faulconer, and Mark H. Forscutt. These people made copies of Joseph Smith's manuscripts of the New Translation of the Bible. Bernhisel made the first copy in 1846, and Faulconer and Forscutt made copies in 1866–67.

The copy made by Bernhisel is much more eclectic than the others, and at times he simply summarized the contents of the manuscripts rather than reproducing them exactly.¹² Bernhisel made a private copy because of his own personal interests. However, he ended up circulating this copy among the Saints in the West. The Faulconer and Forscutt manuscripts were carefully completed copies that were later edited and corrected for grammar, punctuation, and spelling prior to publication.¹³

These three copyists preserved important reference points for studying the New Translation in the three decades after Smith's death because they document how these early copyists found the text in their day. We cannot, unfortunately, account for the years the manuscripts were in the private possession of Emma Smith—between Joseph Smith's death in June 1844 and the first printing of the text in 1868, although

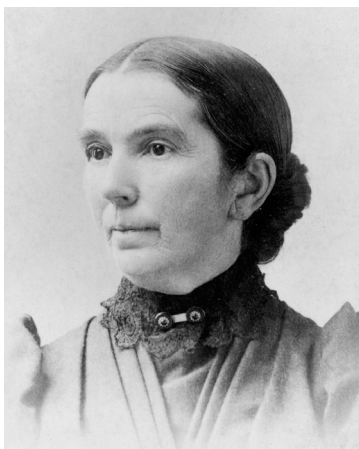


FIG. 2. Marietta Hodges Faulconer. Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.



FIG. 3. Mark H. Forscutt. Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.

Bernhisel provides a reference point through his 1845 copy and summary.

We soon realized that each of these scribes found the text much like, if not exactly as, it appears today.¹⁴ The fact that each of these copies served to document the text for a new audience—such as the Saints in the West (Bernhisel), or to prepare the text for publication (Faulconer and Forscutt)—suggests there was no need to make emendations to the manuscripts or to the marked Bible, because any intentional changes could be introduced easily into the copies rather than to the original manuscripts.¹⁵ The two audiences would encounter only the copyists' versions. Therefore, any changes to the original manuscripts would confuse later copyists and those who worked with the manuscripts.

Because there are no obvious alterations to the marked Bible and the accompanying manuscript pages, we wanted to determine if there were any other possible instances of textual emendations to the New Translation.

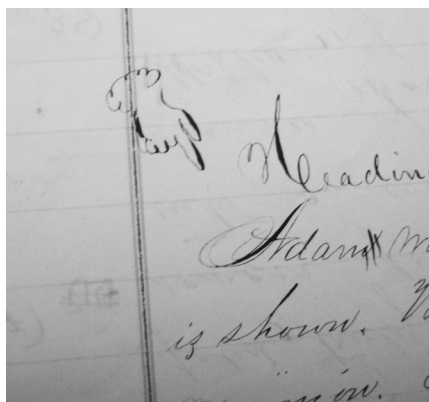
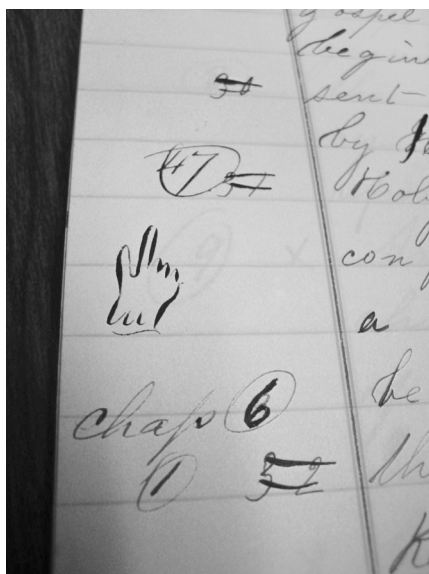
While evaluating the integrity of the copies of the New Translation manuscripts, we came to some important conclusions. First, Bernhisel's transcript does not contain significant textual differences from what we have today. Second, after reviewing the Faulconer and Forscutt manuscripts, we

discovered no plausible evidence that they marked the New Translation manuscripts in any significant way as they prepared their copies.¹⁶ Third, in the vast majority of instances in the Forscutt copy of the New Testament, the handwriting of the copyist seems to be the same as that of the corrector, suggesting that access to the manuscripts was limited to Forscutt

and perhaps a few other individuals who made only minor notations in the copy, such as verse number insertions.¹⁷

Distinct copying errors in the Faulconer and Forscutt manuscripts were noted with a triple strikethrough, a row of x's, or backslashes (\\), to note text that should be removed.¹⁸ The ink of the copies also is an important factor because it is light brown, which did not appear consistent with the often darker black ink used on the New Translation manuscript pages.¹⁹ We were not able to note any physical similarities between any of the inks of the Faulconer and Forscutt manuscripts and the manuscripts of the New Translation, suggesting that these copyists did not make changes to the manuscripts during the copying process. We did, however, observe the use of a pencil in certain instances on the copies, which is noteworthy because of similar pencil markings found in Smith's Bible.²⁰

The copies appear to have received significant attention shortly after they were made, again implying that they were being corrected rather than the New Translation manuscripts. Parablepsia, which occurs when a scribe's eyes jump to a different position in the text other than what he is copying, was noted by the copyist drawing a distinct hand pointing to where the missing text should be placed. The missing text was then copied on



FIGS. 4 and 5. Faulconer and Forscutt Manuscript, 1867. While working on the manuscript, a scribe's eyes sometimes inadvertently jumped to a different place in the manuscript. In these cases, the location of the omission was marked with a hand (fig. 4), and the missing material was copied onto the back of the manuscript page (fig. 5). Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.

the back of the manuscript page with a similar hand pointing to the text that was to be inserted (figs. 4 and 5). This process clearly shows the text was reread for accuracy and that corrections to it were made directly on the copies. From this evidence, we concluded that the New Translation manuscripts were used to correct the Faulconer and Forscutt manuscripts and that the copyists did not intentionally mark on the New Translation manuscripts. This is important because there is no evidence the two copyists marked the manuscripts in any way; rather, they limited their corrections, notations, and changes to their own copies.²¹

To summarize our findings thus far, we concluded that it is nearly inconceivable to argue for any significant alteration of the New Translation manuscripts by Bernhisel, Faulconer, or Forscutt. Instead, the integrity of the manuscripts appears excellent. Therefore, we determined the pen and pencil markings were original to the New Translation manuscripts. We maintain the possibility that a few stray markings on the manuscripts may be the result of later hands, but the integrity of the text is largely unassailable as was partially demonstrated in our research on the Bernhisel, Faulconer, and Forscutt copies.²²

Next, we considered the system of markings in the New Translation Bible and its relationship to the manuscript pages to determine what the Bible and accompanying manuscripts could tell us about the editorial process used on the manuscripts and whether Smith or others had edited the text again after he had revised the New Testament the first time.

The System of Notation in the Marked Bible

When Smith changed his approach from dictating the entire text of the Bible to dictating only the changes, he simultaneously began to mark his Bible in a way that provided a reference point for locating the exact position of the changes in relationship to the printed King James Version text. It was important that the insertion points were noted in the printed Bible; without some point of reference, many of the changes could have been placed in a variety of locations in the verse. For example, sometimes Smith changed only one instance of a word that was repeated in a single verse; without the marked Bible, it would have been difficult to determine which instance he intended to change. His notations—which eventually included a check mark with a line through it and a colon both at the beginning and at the ending where the change was to be inserted—were the key element in locating the inspired changes.

Initially, his method of marking the Bible and noting insertion points was not fixed, and there is clear evidence that the system of marking the

Bible developed over the first few days after Smith shifted methods. In the first four instances where the Bible is marked, a short dash was inserted to the left of the verse (John 6:12, 16, 17, 19) and a change to three of those verses was dictated to a scribe.²³ Even though the Bible clearly indicates which verses were being changed and the manuscripts contain unmistakable directions on the wording of those changes, it is not always clear where the changes were to be placed within the verse. To remedy the problem, Smith noted the ending point of the insertion with a dot in the first instance. He crossed out a word in the second instance, and he appears to have settled on identifying the third change through the use of a dot at the beginning and at the ending of the change (see fig. 6).

The next few changes noted in the marked Bible show equal fluidity in method. At John 6:25, a change is noted by two small check marks, one at the beginning and one at the ending of a word, but no notation appears at the beginning of the verse. The following verse has a distinct check mark at the beginning, and the change is noted by dots at the beginning and at the ending. This method of noting changed verses with a check mark and then indicating the location of changes through the use of a dot and later a colon became the dominant method of marking the Bible.²⁴

Recognition of this system suggests an explanation for the otherwise unexplained note in Smith's Bible, "one mark, for the print." This note, which appears written in the margin underneath Romans 9:10, should perhaps read, "one mark, for the printer," but because of space limitation due to the binding of the Bible, Smith was possibly unable to add the final "er" to "printer" (see fig. 8). We believe Smith was trying to designate which marks in the Bible were intended to identify verses to be changed in the New Translation. Otherwise, the reader, the printer, or both could become confused by the wide array of seemingly random markings in the Bible. By the time Smith began working through the New Testament for a second time, the original pen notations likely had begun to bleed through the pages, and shifting to a pencil may have been the logical choice to avoid this problem (see fig. 9).

Comparing both pen and pencil marks in Smith's Bible reveals what appear to be two distinct but interrelated systems of marking the printed Bible. One system—represented by the pen markings—is fairly well developed, but it is disrupted by what appears to be another system of notation, represented by the pencil markings, which typically employ a check mark, although there is some fluidity in method. From this we concluded that the initial system shows some development in the first chapters of the Gospel of John after chapter six and becomes more standardized thereafter. The same system spans the entire New Testament from John 6 through

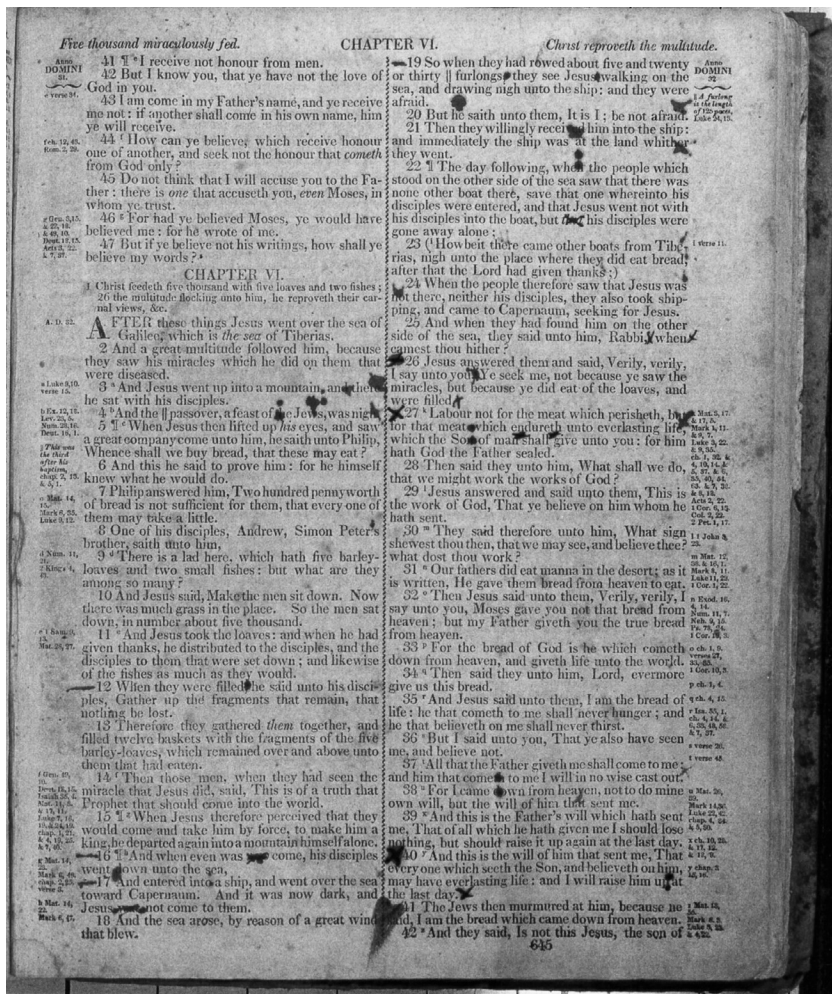


FIG. 6. John 6 from Joseph Smith's marked Bible. This page shows examples of several kinds of markings from the New Translation. Next to verses 12, 16, 17, and 19 is a short dash, indicating there was a change to that verse. As it became apparent that the exact location of the change was necessary, the scribes indicated the locations by placing dots at the end of the change (verse 16), simply crossing out a word (verse 17), and finally placing a dot at the beginning and end of the changed part (verse 19). Verse 25 shows two check marks at the beginning and end of a word to be changed. The next verse illustrates the notation style Smith and his scribes largely settled on—a check mark at the beginning of the verse, indicating there was a change, and a dot (or semicolon) marking the exact location of the change. Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.

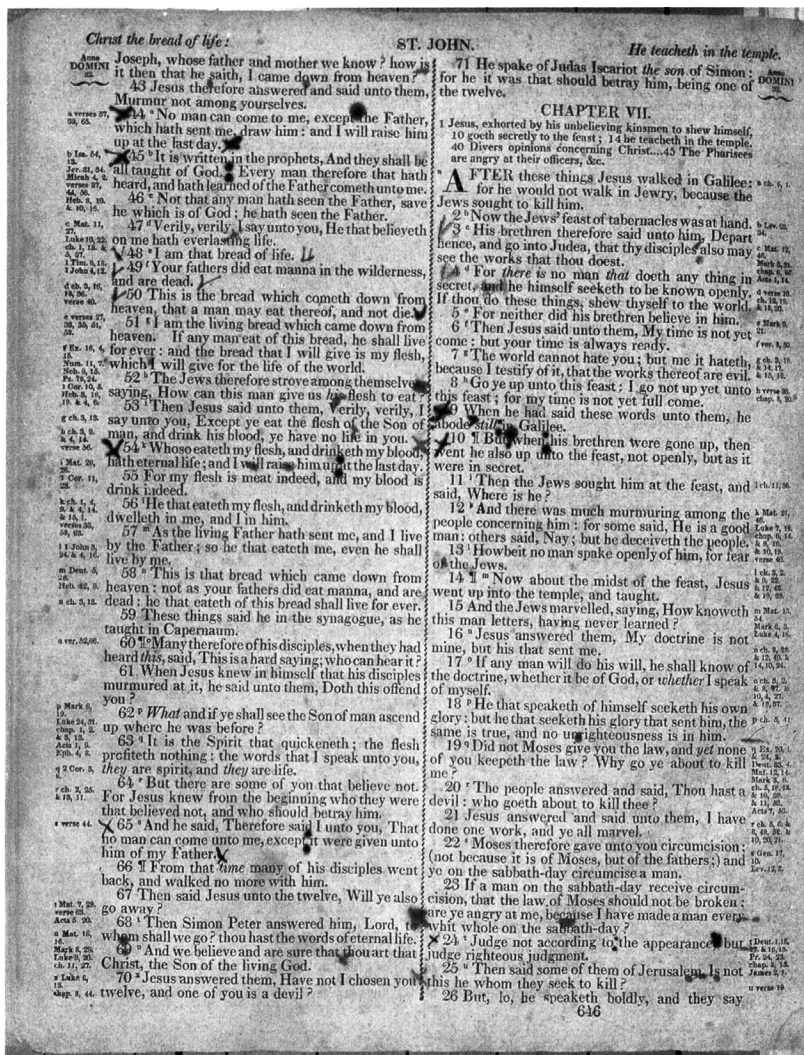


FIG. 7. John 6-7 from Joseph Smith's marked Bible. Even though Smith and his scribes had mostly settled on one form of notation by John 6:40, that form was not universally used. Verses 44 and 45 are marked with a check and a line (making it look like an X) and colons to show the exact spot of the change. Yet verses 49 and 50 do not have indications of where in the verse the changes are to be made. In verse 54, the colon has returned to mark the exact spot of the change. John 7:3-5 has pencil markings from when Smith and his scribes made their second pass through the manuscript in preparation for printing. Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.

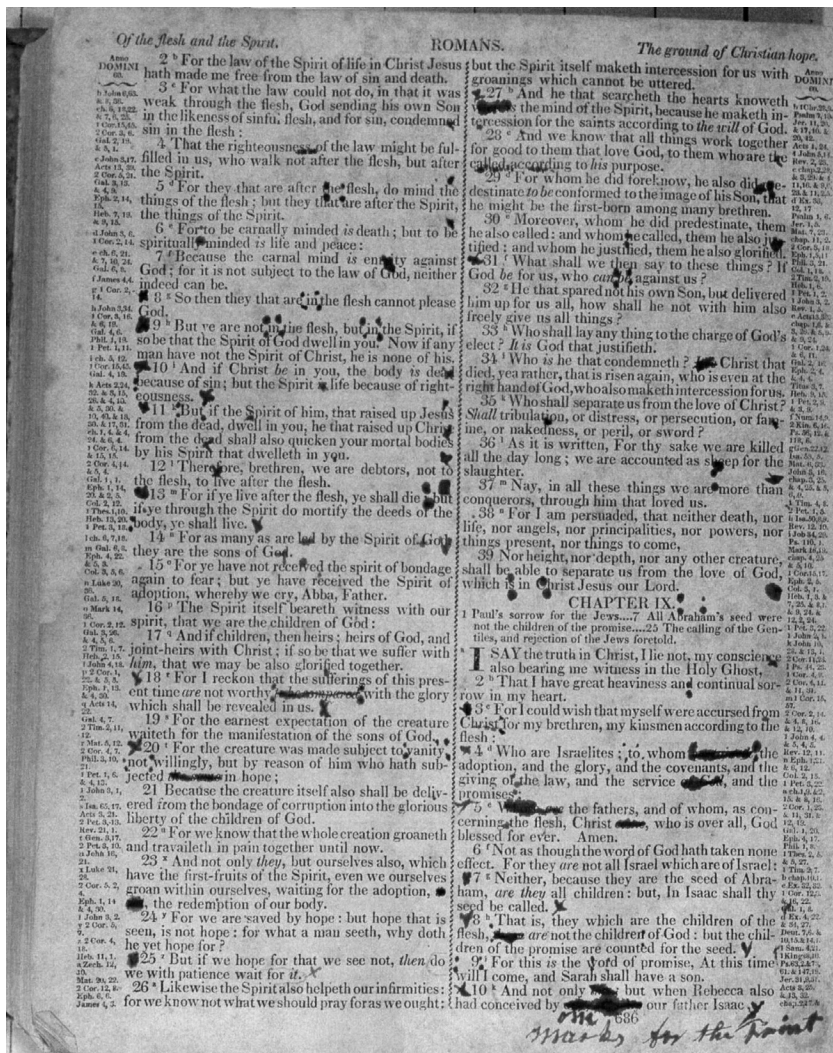


FIG. 8. Romans 8-9 from Joseph Smith's marked Bible. The bottom of this page contains a note possibly indicating that these markings are for the printer—suggesting that Smith was preparing the manuscripts for publication. Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.

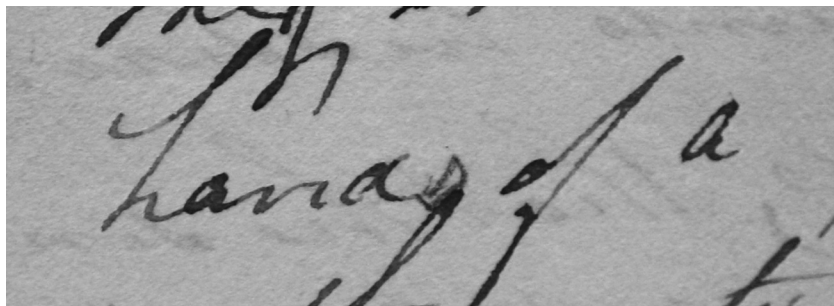


FIG. 9. Pencil marking in the New Translation manuscript copy. This mark indicates that Smith and his scribes may have further edited the manuscripts for publication even after these changes were written down during the initial stage of translation. Courtesy Community of Christ Library-Archives.

Revelation 22, but a more static system of pencil notation exists alongside the first system of notation. With very few exceptions, the verses marked in pencil in the Bible are written in the manuscripts' margins or above other lines of text and are clearly secondary to the first dictation of the text of the New Translation.

It is possible that whichever system is determined to be secondary was introduced by the original editor, in this case Smith, or it may have been added later by a scribe or scribes. Fortunately, the 1845 Bernhisel copy becomes an important *terminus ante quem* for the alterations, because the copy firmly fixes the majority of the text and preserves passages from both the original dictation and what we interpret as being a second pass by Smith himself.²⁵ In other words, if the Bernhisel copy had preserved only passages that were marked with a check mark and a colon, the markings that were made during the first pass of the New Testament, then we could conclude that they were original and the other markings were later than 1845. But this is not the case.

If, for reasons that will become obvious later, we assume that the pen notations in the marked Bible generally represent the first pass of the New Translation and that the pencil notations represent a second pass, then we can paint a fairly complete picture of the process by which the New Translation of the New Testament was completed. In the process of our physical inspection of the manuscripts, we discovered that some of the pen markings might also have resulted from the second pass of the New Translation manuscripts because of the way they appear on the manuscripts.

In the marked Bible, we categorized every verse and indicated whether it contained any type of marking in pen or pencil, the writing instruments used in the manuscripts after John 6:1. We then compared those

verses with the written manuscripts to determine what relationship, if any, existed between them. In almost every instance, the pencil markings in the Bible represent obvious additions to the written manuscripts after the original dictation, and the pen markings represent the text as it was recorded in the original dictation.

How this appears to have worked is that the changes made to the New Testament (NT 2—the portion covering John 6 through Revelation) were dictated to scribes over the course of about a year and a half. The scribes recorded the original dictation in pen while creating a rudimentary format for the manuscripts. The scribes added chapter headings, verse notations, and titles of the New Testament books. Perhaps not long after reaching the end of the book of Revelation, Smith and his scribes returned to John 6, where they began correcting the manuscripts, doing an entire, although quick, second pass of the New Testament.

The original dictation²⁶ was copied with fairly wide left and right margins on the handwritten manuscripts, as well as large spaces, particularly above and below the chapter headings.²⁷ When the second pass was made, additional corrections were inserted into those available spaces. These insertions are typically written in pen on the handwritten manuscript pages. When they are compared directly with the markings in Smith's Bible, we see the vast majority noted in the Bible in pencil instead of pen. This confirms that the pencil markings in the Bible are from the second stage of the New Translation and are original to Smith and his scribes because additional inspired textual changes are clearly introduced and the scribes who worked on the original dictation are the same ones who copied the second dictation. Aside from the change in writing instruments from pen to pencil, we were unable to note any other variation in method during the second dictation.

The first instance of this type of secondary change occurs at John 7:3–4, where the change is noted in pencil in the Bible and where a later change is added to the manuscripts: “there” is added to John 7:3 and “but” is added to John 7:4.²⁸ This type of correction of the manuscripts occurs again at John 8:1–2, where a note is added concerning the first word of 8:1. The marked Bible has the change in pencil at John 7:53, which directly precedes the change indicated for 8:1.²⁹ This type of change occurs again at John 9:29 and then sporadically until the end of the book of Revelation. After completing the New Testament, Smith returned to Genesis and completed the Old Testament, where a similar set of pencil markings is also evident.

A Second and Possibly a Third Pass

The simple fact that the first marking in the Bible is in pen (John 6:12) likely indicates the pen markings are earlier than the pencil markings, although pencil markings also appear in that chapter. John 7:3–4 is just one example among many that holds the definitive clues: This passage contains an obvious later addition to the handwritten manuscripts, and this addition is noted in the marked Bible in pencil. A distinct check made in pencil precedes the verse in the marked Bible. As illustrated in figure 7, the manuscripts here have an obvious addition placed at the right of the original verse number in the margin.

We propose that the New Translation of the New Testament was carried out as follows. First, as other scholars have already noted, Smith dictated John 6:1 to Revelation 22:21 to Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, and another scribe.³⁰ Second, Smith went through the New Testament a second time, making changes, corrections, and alterations to the previous work. Finally, a scribe may have gone through the text a third time, primarily making minor punctuation and spelling changes to the text but not to the marked Bible. Because the people who worked on the two stages are the same, we propose that the second pass to the New Testament was carried out immediately following the first.

After we identified all passages that are clearly secondary to the original dictation—made obvious because they are written on the manuscript pages in the margins and other blank spaces—we noted several characteristics that indicate two distinct corrections were made to the New Translation manuscripts of the New Testament. The following features stand out as characteristics of what we have labeled the second pass or manuscript review.

1. Most changes are made in pen to the manuscripts and are noted in pencil in the marked Bible.
2. The changes are almost always inserted in the available blank spaces on the manuscripts.
3. The pinned-on notes in the handwriting of Sidney Rigdon belong to this editing because they also fulfill criterion 1.³¹
4. Marks were inserted in Smith's Bible to facilitate printing and to correspond to the practice of marking all changed verses with a check mark with a line through it or a dot at the beginning.³²
5. Some changes are noted in the Bible but not in the manuscripts, perhaps revealing further considerations made during the second pass that were never introduced as changes.

6. The insertions and pinned-on notes in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams probably belong to this second pass because of their sequential relationship to the pinned-on notes in Sidney Rigdon's handwriting.

The following passages fit one or more of these criteria and belong to a second pass of the manuscripts: John 6:50; 7:3–4; 7:53–8:1; 9:29; 12:7; 19:29; Acts 4:21; 7:59; 21:25; Romans 5:3; 6:5 (unknown handwriting); 1 Corinthians 2:11, 15, 17; 10:11; 12:31; 14:34–35; 15:37; 2 Corinthians 3:4, 16; 6:1; 1 Timothy 5:10; 2 Timothy 2:5; 3:13; Titus 1:15; Hebrews 3:3; 4:12; 9:27–28; 1 Peter 5:13; 1 John 3:18, 21; 4:3; and Revelation 17:17.

Furthermore, the following passages belong to notes that were pinned to the manuscripts and are in the handwriting of Sidney Rigdon: John 12:7; Romans 8:29–30; 13:1, 4, 6–8; 14:14–15; 15:5, 15, 24; and 1 Corinthians 4:3–4; 5:3–4, 12. The insertions and pinned-on notes in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams are John 14:3; 19:29; Acts 3:12; 17:27, 31; 22:30; Romans 1:9, 17–21, 28; 4:16; 7:15–25; and 1 Corinthians 1:1. Each of these passages contains clear evidence that every correction was written after the original dictation. The marked Bible was carefully corrected to reflect these additional passages that were originally intended to be part of the New Translation.

Subsequent to the second pass of the manuscripts, there also may have been later changes made to the manuscripts to prepare them for publication, but these marks cannot be dated using the criteria employed in this study. Typically not noted in the marked Bible, these changes are characterized by corrections to the manuscripts and focus on grammar, punctuation, and other publication concerns.

Conclusions

Several important conclusions can be reached from the above data. First, we were unable to find any significant evidence that the New Testament New Translation manuscripts were altered after Joseph Smith's death. It is apparent that Smith did have time to edit and complete the manuscripts before he left Ohio. There has been a concern that he did not finish the New Translation, but his careful editing of the manuscripts provides a clear indication that his work had shifted entirely from "translating" the Bible to correcting and clarifying the work he had already completed. The scribes who worked on the editing of the manuscripts—Frederick G. Williams, Sidney Rigdon, and the unidentified Scribe A—suggest that the revision of the manuscripts was carried out early, perhaps immediately

after the manuscripts were declared completed on July 2, 1833, although certainly within Smith's lifetime and while the above mentioned scribes remained in the Church. Furthermore, we think it appears the work was done while these men were still in Ohio.³³

Second, it is clear that as early as 1832 Smith already had a keen eye toward the eventual publication of the manuscripts. The second pass of the manuscripts clarifies many of the Bible markings and provides directions for the printer in several important examples. These notations indicate the importance the marked Bible played in the publication of the New Translation. Eventually the marked Bible became essential in locating the position of the New Translation changes. The marked Bible is perhaps more important for the printer, a realization that became obvious in the second pass, because it indicates exactly where the changes were to be inserted. Without the marked Bible, the printing of the text after John 6 would have been nearly impossible.

Finally, a minor third pass shifts toward copyediting issues. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation were addressed in this final pass, again suggesting Smith was preparing for publication. The focus of this stage was to prepare the manuscripts for publication, whereas the second pass had been aimed at preparing the Bible *and* the manuscripts. As we come to understand the New Translation and the processes under which it was completed, we realized that the facsimile edition³⁴ has proven to be indispensable and that a critical text of the New Translation would be an invaluable resource. Although Smith later translated and edited other texts, such as the Book of Abraham, our understanding of the processes that these texts went through are not nearly as detailed as our knowledge of the history of the New Translation. Perhaps future studies will show that when Smith translated texts he also edited them using similar methods.

In the end, we concluded that the marked Bible and accompanying New Testament manuscripts have faced no significant alteration during the past two centuries, although more study on the few stray markings may shed further light on their origins. Those individuals who worked with the manuscripts after Smith's death apparently did not mark the manuscripts or the Bible in any significant way, even though a few random marks may be attributed to them. Importantly, no additions of words or phrases can be attributed to the copyists of the New Testament portion of the New Translation. We believe the New Translation of the New Testament has been preserved in much the same condition as Smith left it at his death. Although he may have had some intention to correct the New Translation further before publication, the marked Bible preserves the text as he recorded it in Kirtland, Ohio, from 1831 to 1833.

Paul W. Lambert (pwlam@byu.net) is a program administrator for the International Fellowship Program at National Defense University in Washington D.C. He holds a BA in American Studies from BYU.

Thomas A. Wayment (thom_wayment@byu.edu) is Associate Professor in Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University. He holds a PhD in New Testament Studies from Claremont Graduate University. He is the author of numerous books on the New Testament as well as *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament: A Side-by-Side Comparison with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005).

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1. Robert J. Matthews, “A Plainer Translation”: *Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible; A History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1975), 103–4.

2. School of the Prophets Salt Lake City Minutes 1868, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. See Thomas E. Sherry, “Changing Attitudes toward Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible,” in *Plain and Precious Truths Restored: The Doctrinal and Historical Significance of the Joseph Smith Translation*, ed. Robert L. Millet and Robert J. Matthews (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995), 187–226; Thomas E. Sherry, “Attitudes, Practices, and Positions toward Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible: A Historical Analysis of Publications 1847–1987” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1988); Reed C. Durham Jr., “A History of Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible” (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1965), 254–55; Thomas A. Wayment, ed., *The Complete Joseph Smith Translation of the New Testament: A Side-by-Side Comparison with the King James Version* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), xii.

3. Compare Durham, “History of Joseph Smith’s Revision.” Throughout this work, Durham argues against the integrity of the New Translation manuscripts, although he did not specifically note concerns about the pencil markings. Interestingly, the Bernhisel copy, which contains the majority of the New Translation texts and was made in spring 1845 in Nauvoo, should have settled concerns over the accuracy of the text because of its early copying of the original manuscripts.

4. See Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 2004), 1–13, 29–48; Robert L. Millet, “Hard Questions about the Joseph Smith Translation,” in Millet and Matthews, *Plain and Precious Truths Restored*, 147–51; Robert J. Matthews, “Questions and Answers Pertaining to the Joseph Smith Translation,” in Millet and Matthews, *Plain and Precious Truths Restored*, 179–80.

5. Some passages were dictated to and recorded by an unidentified scribe, who was designated as Scribe A by Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews in *Joseph Smith’s New Translation*, 4. Those passages are 2 Thessalonians 2:7–9; Hebrews 6:1–8, 7:27, 9:28, 11:1; James 1; 1 John 1:1–3:8; and Revelation 1:1–16.

6. See Matthews, "A Plainer Translation," 39.

7. John Whitmer recorded that he, Rigdon, and Smith began working on the New Testament on March 8, 1831. See Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 155.

8. NT 1 contains Matthew 1:1 to 26:71. NT 2 contains a copy of NT 1 plus a transcription of the rest of the changes made to the New Testament. From a notation in the manuscripts, it seems John Whitmer copied the New Testament texts as Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon completed them. For example, at Matthew 9:1, John Whitmer noted that he had "transcribed" the text to that point, and then he dated the manuscript (April 7, 1831). Whitmer's reference to transcribing the text helps establish the development and relationship of the two New Testament manuscripts—NT 1 (the original) and NT 2 (the copy and later living text). See Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 156.

9. The actual shift may have occurred several days later, since the formal shift took place at John 6:1, eighteen verses after the revelation of Doctrine and Covenants 76 came at John 5:29.

10. Compare Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 57–59.

11. Matthews, "A Plainer Translation," 117, 143. See also Ronald E. Romig's "The New Translation Materials since 1844," in Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 29–40, which provides a careful discussion of the history of the manuscripts after Smith's death.

12. Matthews, "A Plainer Translation," 117–18, 143. The Bernhisel copy was made in spring 1845. While visiting Emma Smith, John M. Bernhisel was permitted to see the New Translation materials, both the marked Bible and the original manuscripts. Bernhisel maintained possession of these materials for approximately three months, during which time he copied annotations from the marked Bible into his own, attempting to replicate Joseph's markings.

13. Faulconer's copy included only Genesis through Psalms, so it was not as relevant to our study as Forscutt's.

14. A less positive assessment is expressed in Matthews, "A Plainer Translation," 144–65.

15. Some verse numbers are added to NT 2 in pencil that may represent a second pass of the text. It is possible that these numbers were added years later, but they could likewise belong to the third pass of the manuscript done under Smith's direction.

16. We noted that both Faulconer and Forscutt, along with the subsequent correctors of those manuscripts, were very careful to consistently note insertions in their own texts using the insertion point "Λ" below a line. This type of notation is rare in the Bernhisel and the Forscutt copies, but obvious identification of correction does occur in Forscutt's text at 1 Corinthians 6:12 and is written in pencil. These insertion points were made during the process of editing the manuscripts after they were initially copied.

17. Kent Jackson argues that Joseph Smith III was the final editor of the manuscripts and that his markings are found in addition to Faulconer's and Forscutt's markings. However, Jackson's argument is based upon the Old Testament manuscripts. In the New Testament manuscripts, the notations appear to be in the handwriting of Forscutt. See Kent P. Jackson, *The Book of Moses and the*

Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 2005), 20–28.

18. Some corrections were made in the process of copying, and these were usually noted with the correct text being written directly over the error. Because of some confusion over the relationship between the manuscripts—OT 1 (the first manuscript of the Old Testament beginning with Genesis), OT 2 (a copy of OT 1 including the portions after OT 1 and ending with Malachi), NT 1 (the first manuscript of the New Testament; Matthew 1:1–26:71), and NT 2 (a copy of NT 1 and continuing through Revelation)—it appears that at times Faulconer and Forscutt inadvertently copied sections in the wrong sequence. These errors are noted in their copies using a huge x to delete the entire page. Careful descriptions of OT 1, NT 1, OT 2, and NT 2 can be found in Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 77–81, 155–57, 231–34, 301–4, 585–90.

19. Some of the ink in the marked Bible has also faded to a brown color, particularly where it has bled through the pages. The two brown inks, however, visually appear to be from different sources.

20. Pencil markings on the copies were limited to four instances. First, verse numbers were inserted or changed after the initial copying was done. Second, punctuation was added at times. These appear to be distinct notations made to prepare the text for publication. The punctuation appears to have been added after the initial copy, further suggesting that the copyists did not mark the original New Translation manuscripts. Third, “Son of Man” was corrected so the lowercase *m* is altered to an uppercase *M*. This finding shows the copyists found the lowercase *m* on the manuscripts in the phrase “Son of man.” However, RLDS publications contain a capital *M*, suggesting that copyists changed the reading in their copies but did not bother with changing it in the manuscripts. See *The Inspired Version* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1991). Fourth, ampersands (&) were spelled out as “and.”

21. We noted two different hands involved in correcting the copies, one that used pen and one that used pencil. The copyist who used pen made no attempt to hide or obscure his work, but instead the changes are clearly marked. The copyist who used pencil to correct the manuscripts corrected the text in only a few instances, which are largely limited to issues of grammar and versification.

22. In Matthew 2 of NT 1, “Ch1” and also “(17)” are written in blue on the copies. These chapter and verse identifications are probably later additions to the copies. Some similar red pencil markings also appear, but these are quite rare. Although blue and red pencil markings do not appear on the copies of the manuscript where Smith began marking his Bible and dictating the changes, these colored markings do appear in those portions where the entire text was being copied. The reason for this is that in the manuscripts that correspond to the marked Bible, the chapter and verse designation are part of the dictation.

23. At John 6:12, the Bible is marked to indicate the beginning (a dash) and the ending (a dot) positions of the changed wording. John 6:16 contains a dash at the beginning of the verse, but it does not contain any change in the manuscript. At John 6:17, the New Translation change is noted in the Bible by the cross out of a word, and a small dash appears to the left of the verse number, while at John 6:19 the insertion point is identified with a dot at the beginning and the ending.

24. The first use of a colon to make the insertion point in the Bible appears at John 6:40. Thereafter, Smith gradually began marking his Bible with a colon at the beginning and at the ending of changed passages. See John 7:45 for the first instance.

25. It has been common for some time for scholars to argue that the manuscripts of the New Translation were edited throughout Smith's lifetime, including during the Missouri and Nauvoo periods. We, however, argue that the primary editing of the manuscripts took place during the Ohio period, between 1831 and 1833, although there may have been some very limited corrections made to the manuscripts but not the marked Bible after 1833. See Matthews, "A Plainer Translation," 97. Richard Howard states that excerpts from Genesis 7 included in an 1843 printing of *Times and Seasons* did not include all Joseph Smith's later revisions, thus supporting the argument for a second pass. Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1969), 154. Kent P. Jackson was the first to argue against this common assumption. Kent P. Jackson, "New Discoveries in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible," *Religious Educator* 6 (2005): 156–57.

26. The original dictation using the original notation system took place between February 16, 1832, and July 31, 1832. The second pass is likely referred to in a statement from Frederick G. Williams, dated February 2, 1833, where he notes: "This day completed the translation and the reviewing of the New Testament." Kirtland Council Minute Book, 8, Church History Library, cited in Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 59.

27. Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 51, state the opposite, i.e. that there is little space on the manuscript pages for scribal insertions, without qualification. Their conclusion is based on the pages where the entire text is written out, whereas the pages that accompany the marked Bible do contain significant blank spaces and, therefore, room to write in further changes.

28. For the exact location of these changes, see Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 459; Wayment, *Complete Joseph Smith Translation*, 241–43.

29. It may be that the notation in the marked Bible is mistakenly placed at John 7:53 rather than at 8:1, where the change is to take place. However, the final word of 7:53 directly precedes the insertion of "and" at 8:1, so the notation could take place either at 8:1, if Smith intended it to begin that verse, or at the end of 7:53, if he viewed the addition as a change to 7:53. After the change, it reads, "And every man went unto his own house, and Jesus went unto the mount of Olives." See Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 459.

30. Some other passages also appear in the handwriting of Frederick G. Williams and an unidentified scribe.

31. The New Translation manuscripts contain several notes that are written on small scraps of paper and are literally pinned onto the foolscap paper of the manuscripts. These notes generally are longer insertions that would not fit into the margins of the manuscripts, so the notes were written out and pinned into position according to the text being changed.

32. 1 Corinthians 6:12 is an example of a correction being made to the system of marking the Bible and where the manuscripts contain a passage from the

first dictation. The notation made at the end of Romans 9:10, “one mark, for the print[er],” would also point in this direction.

33. Joseph Smith left Ohio on January 12, 1838. The shift from pen to pencil may indicate a physical change in location or simply a change in the instrument of writing. There is no definitive evidence suggesting that the Prophet undertook a significant revision of the New Translation after the Ohio period, and therefore it seems more likely that the revisions were done prior to 1838. Because Smith used an inkwell pen, the marked Bible may have immediately shown signs of the ink bleeding through the paper. The shift to a pencil, therefore, may simply be a recognition that the pen markings were making a mess of the printed Bible, thus pushing the date closer to the early 1830s rather than nearer to the time when the Prophet departed from Ohio.

34. Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation*.

We Who Owe Everything to a Name

Lynda Mackey Wilson

When I was ten years old, my mother told me that my father was not really my father. My “real father” was a man named Aladdin, a foreign student at UC Berkeley where she had been a student. When his father found out that he had gotten an American girl pregnant, he whisked Aladdin back home.

I found this interesting. I tucked it into a mental drawer labeled “intriguing data” and went out to play. It did explain some things. Like why I was olive skinned with jet-brown eyes and dark hair when my little sister was blond and blue eyed. But it was not in the drawer labeled “disturbing facts.” All the unpleasant things about growing up in my family were related to my mother.

Finding out that I had a father somewhere in the Middle East was intriguing when I thought about it—which was rare. You see, I already had a father. His name was John Joseph Mackey. He was a retired Catholic from Boston, the son of Irish immigrants, and he was the most real thing in my life. Not for a second did I ever think, “Oh no, that means that Daddy is not really my father.”

He *was* my father. He was my rock. He taught me. He spent time with me. He told me jokes. He took me for rides on his big BMW motorcycle. On Saturday mornings we went out for pancakes. He complimented me. He protected me. He smiled at me. He told me that I was smarter than he was and that I could do anything I wanted to. I didn’t think anybody could be smarter than my father, but I knew it meant he believed in me. All the mental health I gratefully draw on in my adult years comes from the security of knowing that my father really loved me.

It took me years to realize what an amazing thing he had done.

During the time my mother and father were dating at Berkeley, my dad took off for a two-month course at UCLA. He didn't tell her he was leaving or that he was coming back. She wasn't an important part of his life then. But he was everything in her thumping heart. Devastated, she drowned her sorrows in the elixir of physical attraction. Aladdin asked her out. I don't know how many times they dated, but one day my father called and said "I'm back." No big deal.

Except that she was pregnant. She told Jack she was pregnant with his child. He did the honorable thing and offered to marry her. They tied the knot during a break between classes. She told me later of the last time she ever prayed. "Please Lord, let this be Jack's baby."

She knew in the delivery room. I was a little Arab from the start. Dark hair, nearly black eyes, and olive skin. But she admitted nothing. Trust being crucial in marriage, this made for a bad beginning. Dad wasn't stupid, and later when my little sister was born, the comments by Dad's friends started: "Milkman stop by when you were away?" My sister and I did not look like sisters. Sometime during my childhood my mother blurted out in the middle of a blowup, "OK. She's not your kid! Does that make you happy?"

I didn't know any of it. I only knew two basic things about growing up in my family. My father loved me. And my mother didn't. In the work I've done since to sort through it all and forgive as Christ requires, I think of her, pregnant and seventeen, scared to death. It was all so doomed.

She was not abusive in the way that lands kids in the ER. She ignored me. She didn't like to look at me. I was her sin walking around on knock-kneed legs. Aladdin must have been knock-kneed like me, because no one else had them.

"Mom, will you show me how to work the sewing machine?"

"Can't. I'm busy."

"Mom. Can you help me make brownies?"

"Don't have time."

Most of the time, being ignored is not life threatening. Just enraging. I felt a great deal of anger at my mother. Diary pages of "I hate my mother!" in neat rows.

There was just one fact that didn't fit with the otherwise bad soap opera script. My father didn't care that I wasn't carrying his genes. He had decided to be my father. I see now that he adopted me—a *de facto* adoption. He made me his from the beginning. He never took out his anger at my mother's betrayal of him on me. Because I was his daughter.

Like a duckling imprinting on Momma duck, I imprinted on my father. I absorbed his likes and dislikes, his taste in music, his politics,

his love of reading and education, and even his bent for writing. To me he seemed to know everything worth knowing. So all my little neurons did their darnedest to line up and fire just like his: I got good grades, wrote a lot, read everything from the cereal box in the morning to the under-the-cover-with-the-flashlight library book at night. He was a Democrat and voted for Adlai Stevenson. I proudly wore my Vote for Adlai button to school in Shreveport, Louisiana. I tried to *be* him.

I was bathing seven times in the river of my father's mind—except for one last dip. Some guardian angel held me by the heel, and I did not get immersed in my father's religion. That religion was the one taught at Berkeley and most other universities in the '40s after the war—Darwin, Freud, Marx, Joyce, Kinsey. It was modern and therefore sophisticated, and it scoffed—politely in those days—at anything that made religion real and concrete, whether that was the Virgin Mary appearing at Lourdes or the angel Moroni handing a boy golden plates to translate.

When I was eleven, we moved near my maternal grandparents, who loved me too. They were active in the LDS Church. I took the streetcar to their house. I had lots of questions about life, death, and God. I think I was born a theologian.

That was the year my parents gave my sister and me a Time-Life book for Christmas called *The Origins of Life*. There were dramatic pictures of lightning flashing over moody ammonia seas, doing the Darwinian equivalent of thundering, "Let there be life!" The book was filled with dinosaurs and protohumans. It was my parents' attempt to proselyte for their agnosticism. If they worried about their oldest daughter's odd propensity to think about God, I'm sure they thought that time and a college education would cure the malady.

I loved my dad with all my heart, but it was not my fate to absorb modern agnosticism from two parents who had rejected the religions of their youth. I had a not-to-be-denied hunger to know if there was a God and, if there was, what he was like.

From my grandparents I heard the plan of salvation for the first time. Actually, my grandmother drew it for me on the blackboard in her kitchen: a circle for premortality, a wavy line for the veil of forgetfulness, another circle for earth, and so on. I also checked out a series of books from the library called *Why I Am a _____* (*Methodist, Lutheran, and so forth*). You see, one of my father's predominant traits was intellectual honesty. I was not about to believe what my grandparents believed just because it sounded so right and I hoped it was true. My father's daughter felt an obligation to gather data and to be careful.

Perhaps the most important thing my grandparents taught me was that if you asked God a question he could and would answer you. That seemed like a reasonable thing, a good test. I began to pray. I would sit in my backyard and talk to God, if there was a God, and ask him, if he could hear me, to answer me, if he would, by letting me know he was there, if he wanted to. Finally I stopped equivocating and proposed a bold plan that he could show me he existed by letting the giant concrete cross on Mt. Davidson appear through the fog the next morning. I ended up asking for this sign more than once because one clear day could be just a coincidence.

Some days were foggy and some days weren't. I kept praying and began to be less dogmatic. "Please just let me know if you're there!"

One day, while I was riding the streetcar in San Francisco, God talked back. I simply had a download of the Spirit into my eleven-year-old heart that was undeniable. Like the moment when the Blue Fairy touched a wooden puppet and Pinocchio turned into a real boy, nothing after that was ever the same. I looked up startled and had to resist a momentary urge to run down the streetcar aisle yelling, "God answered me! He's real!"

I think I was prepared to accept the gospel precisely because of my relationship with my father. Fathers were wonderful things. A Heavenly Father was more of the same on a grander scale, with infinitely greater power to provide, protect, and defend. At eleven I asked to be baptized. My parents humored me and said okay, assuming I would grow out of this religious phase.

As a teenager it was obvious that my Mormonism wasn't wearing off. My mother railed against her parents for brainwashing me, and my father just seemed confused. "How can a bright girl like you believe in angels and golden plates?" My mother told me she would help pay for college as long as I didn't go to BYU. So, of course, I went to BYU.

I went there in the early '70s. I graduated, married, and raised four children in the Church. I now have the pleasure of watching them raise their own children in the faith. Once I had a blessing from my grandfather in which he pronounced that I would "do a work for [my] real father's people." The phrase "real father" made not the slightest dent in the relationship that had been my anchor. I already had a real father, and like the Velveteen Rabbit, it was love that made him real.

Yes, I have somewhere a biological father who passed on his physical DNA—the knock-knees, large dark eyes, my height (I'm taller than my father). Then I have the father who loved and nurtured me. He is ninety years old now, his Irish wit still charming. I have proudly carried his name through my life.

But I bear more than his name. In many significant ways I have become like him. I have taken into myself his ideas, his character, and his thought patterns. My children asked for stuff and I lectured them: “A man is rich to the degree that he can walk through the marketplace of life and say, ‘I don’t need that. I don’t need that.’” But really it was Dad’s philosophizing. A guest in my home breaks a dish and I say, “People are more important than things.” But it is really my father talking to them. I am “the word” of my father. I reflect him outwardly to my children and in every association I ever have in this life. I owe everything to his name.

One day at my health club I heard a stunning echo of this thought. I was listening to an audio course on the history of ancient Rome to numb the boredom of the treadmill. Suddenly I heard something that galvanized me. I never took Roman history in school. What I knew was mostly from toga movies. I didn’t know that when Mark Anthony read Caesar’s will to the people of Rome, they learned he named a grandnephew, Gaius Octavius, as his adopted son. It was news to the boy as well as the public. He was eighteen years old, practically a baby by Roman standards.

Here is what the professor¹ said about Octavius: “He wasn’t of particularly august origins. His natural father was a local from a town north of Rome, so he really didn’t have any great connections. He had met Caesar once. Caesar had obviously been impressed about some qualities that he saw in the young man for he adopted him as his son in the will and made him his chief heir. Now, I should point out that in Roman eyes the legal adoption of a person gave that person every claim not just to the property and patrimony of the adopting party, but also to the heritage, the political connections, the name, the *dignitas*, everything else that came with the adoption. The Romans really made no serious distinction between a natural and an adopted son. It wasn’t considered like the adopted son was an imposter or some kind of a late claimant. He was simply considered as if he had been born of the adopting party. And so Gaius Octavius, at that time, when he became adopted, took the name Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus.”

Historians refer to him as Octavian, but he called himself Caesar, son of Caesar, and that name made all the difference. The men who had been loyal to Caesar flocked to him. Slowly his power grew. Inevitably Mark Anthony and Octavian clashed, fought, and Anthony was beaten. Octavian became Augustus Caesar, the first emperor of Rome, the man who ordered the census that took Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. Fascinating!

It was Cicero who recorded Mark Anthony’s comment on their fates. Octavian was “that boy, who owes everything to a name!” The phrase reverberated in my mind and heart. Didn’t I owe everything to a name?

Hadn't my father given me the good life I had by making me his, by adopting me?

It was later that I discovered the Apostle Paul's use of the term adoption in reference to our relationship with Christ. The word adopt or adoption does not appear in the Old Testament, with its kinship obligations to orphans, nor is it found in the Book of Mormon, whose laws and social customs were derivative of Mosaic Law. But Paul understood the implications of being an heir by adoption. He, though a Jew, was a Roman citizen in a Roman world. And he used the implications of Roman law to explain to the gentiles the inheritance they might receive through the gospel's new covenant in Christ's blood. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8:15).

Until I listened to that tape on Caesar's adoption of Octavian as his heir, this scripture puzzled me. Adopted by God? Weren't we, after all, his natural children? He was the real—"biological," if you will—father of our spirit bodies. We didn't need any adoption process to become God's children. I found Ephesians 1:5 later. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." Ah. It all began to make sense, especially to me, that child who was brought in out of the cold by a father who made me his.

It is Christ who makes us his heirs. He becomes our father, as King Benjamin explains: "Because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; . . . ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters" (Mosiah 5:7). That is why, contrary to the persistent but false doctrine we find popping up like a whack-a-mole in gospel doctrine classes, we do not "earn" exaltation. The word earn is never used in scripture to refer to the process by which men and women become exalted. To quote exactly from the lds.org scripture search engine, "There were no occurrences of the word EARN found in the Text of the Scriptures." The word is "inherit." Stick the word "inherit" in the search box and you get 251 hits.

Once I saw it, I saw it everywhere. Earning implies a *quid pro quo*, Latin for "something for something," and "indicates a more-or-less equal exchange of goods or services."² An employee "earns" his wages, because his work is worth twenty dollars an hour to his employer. But I did not earn my father's love. And Octavian did not earn the title of Caesar. Those who give the inheritance set the terms.

In our poor fallen humanness, what can we do that "earns" us the magnificent gift of eternal life? To earn something puts someone in

our debt. But as King Benjamin made clear, God is never in our debt (Mosiah 2:21–22).

The inheritance is Christ's to give. He alone truly did earn it. His perfect life, without spot or blemish, with its complete submission to the will of his Father, earned "a fulness of the glory of the Father; and he received all power, both in heaven and on earth" (D&C 93:16–17). In all ways, he earned his exalted state. The miracle is that he is willing to make us his children, heirs of all he has.

To qualify, we covenant to obey him, take his name, and always remember him. He said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son" (Rev. 21:6–7).

I cling to these promises that make sense to me through the lens of my own life. My own father's love was a redeeming force for good in my life. That love makes it easy to believe in the redeeming love of our Savior, to whose name we owe everything.

This essay by Lynda Mackey Wilson (lyndalmw@gmail.com) won first place in the *BYU Studies* 2008 personal essay contest.

1. Garrett G. Fagan, Associate Professor of Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies and History at The Pennsylvania State University, "History of Ancient Rome," recording by The Teaching Company.

2. Wikipedia, "Quid pro quo," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quid_pro_quo.

Fifth-Floor Walkup

When we first came to the city we found
A French studio on the Upper East Side:
Fifth-floor walkup—a single room, glass doors
In the middle—that was, I was told,
As high as the law allows a building to grow
Without an elevator.

We grew accustomed to the stairs, passing them by
Quickly, as increased quadriceps sped us upward,
The stained white tile flowing past. A cultural imperative
Puts one in a New York hurry. Hence, it seems,
You cannot take the time to plod, to ponder
Each step—where you have been or might yet be going.

I wonder now how the stairs to heaven appear, and when
Built. Those are not steps to replicate by man.
Did that infamous tower, marvel of its day, not reach higher than my
Fifth-floor walkup before it crumbled with the advent of
Language? How far did the last step, arching into the void,
Reach? And did some accursed Babylonian, robbed of his tongue,
Sit silent to admire the view?

Jacob, knowing this history, still dreamt of steps to heaven. Was this because
Vitruvius had not yet built the lift? Or was there some goodness in
Babel's quest to raise itself that modern readers fail to grasp?
God gave us language. A gift, though curse, allowing man at times
To touch the sky. Have we, still dull, not comprehended
What he wrought that day? Do our tongues, do our feet, still pin
Us to the ground? Do we always fail to look up just to not
Misstep? Do I write these words, climb these stairs, simply because

I have refused to learn to fly?

—Randy Astle

“A Picturesque and Dramatic History”

George Reynolds’s *Story of the Book of Mormon*

Noel A. Carmack

If asked about art featuring the Book of Mormon, few Latter-day Saints of today would fail to bring to mind Arnold Friberg’s large, heroic characters and epic scenes. Others have a growing affection for the colorful Book of Mormon paintings by Minerva Teichert.¹ These two artists produced some of the most recognizable images to illustrate the Book of Mormon in the last century. In the second half of the twentieth century, Latter-day Saints saw a significant rise in the use of the Book of Mormon as a proselyting tool and principal selling point, contributing to the Church’s rapid worldwide growth. It is not surprising, then, that in more than one hundred and seventy-five years since its publication, the Book of Mormon has inspired scores of visual images meant to bring life to the book’s protagonists and geographic scenery. Many of these visuals have made a significant impact on our imaginative perceptions of Book of Mormon lands and peoples.

While Reuben Kirkham and others produced large painted canvases for his traveling panorama show from 1885 to 1886,² it is scarcely known that the first *published* attempt at illustrating the Book of Mormon was in 1888, with the publication of *The Story of the Book of Mormon* by George Reynolds. Reynolds, best known as the voluntary subject for the Supreme Court test case against polygamy in 1878, showed his deep conviction for the scriptural text by popularizing the Book of Mormon narrative and providing enlivening visuals to help tell the story.³ In the preface, Reynolds presented his prospectus to the work:

This volume presents one unique feature, in that it is the first attempt made to illustrate the Book of Mormon; and we have pleasure in

realizing that the leading illustrations are the work of home artists. To break fresh ground in such a direction is no light undertaking; the difficulties are numerous, none more so than the absence of information in the Book of Mormon of the dress and artificial surroundings of the peoples whose history it recounts. Each artist has given his own ideas of the scenes depicted, and as so much is left to the imagination, some readers will doubtless praise where others will blame; and the same effort will be the subject of the most conflicting criticism.⁴

Reynolds's intention was not only to bring an easy-to-read text of the scriptural narrative to children and young adults, but to bring together the latest in archaeology and scholarship on the pre-Columbian Americas. To historicize and authenticate the work, he provided line drawings of Aztec charts, maps, and engravings of Mesoamerican writings and glyphs. The story itself was illustrated with dramatic narrative images. These illustrations were "reproduced from paintings and drawings specially prepared for the work by able and well known artists," including George Ottinger, William Armitage, John Held Sr., and William "Billy" C. Morris.⁵

Immediately following his release as a "prisoner for conscience' sake" in 1881, Reynolds began researching and preparing his *Complete Concordance of the Book of Mormon*, his *Dictionary of the Book of Mormon*, and his compilation, *The Story of the Book of Mormon*. In 1888, Reynolds wrote in his journal:

During the Fall I collected my writings on Book of Mormon subjects that had appeared during the last ten years in the Juvenile Instructor, Exponent [*sic*], Contributor, Deseret News + Millennial Star, and adding several chapters thereto to make it a continuous narrative from Lehi to Moroni I put it into book form and agreed with Bro. Jos. H. Parry for its publication. It appeared on December 20th under the title of 'The Story of the Book of Mormon.' The agreement with myself and Bro Parry was that we were to divide equally all profits. An edition of 5,000 was published. It was i[l]lustrated by Ottinger, Held, Armitage, Morris (of our home artists) and others.⁶

When *The Story of the Book of Mormon* appeared in December 1888, the *Millennial Star* carried a book notice that had been published in the West Yorkshire *Brighouse and Rastrick Gazette*, lauding the book's appearance as a "handsome, gorgeously and profusely illustrated and exquisitely-printed volume, fit to be placed in any parlour," a result of "profound research, deep, critical, and discriminative thought." The reviewers also referred to the book as "a picturesque and dramatic history," reminding them of the "thrilling and the pictorial style of Dean Stanley," Bishop of Norwich and author of the popular *Sinai and Palestine in Connection with*

Their History (1856).⁷ Other notices placed in the *Deseret News* and *Parry's Monthly Magazine* made special mention of the illustrations and charts for the purpose of attracting the interest of young readers.⁸

Through his Book of Mormon project, Reynolds sought to reach the younger generations who had not yet formulated literary and visual imagery from the dramatic scriptural narrative. His *Story of the Book of Mormon* synthesized growing interest in the study of New World civilizations. For Latter-day Saints, it brought Promised Land characters and places to life. But it also reflected the nation's imaginative transmittal of Western myth and Old World empires on the lost civilizations of America's past.

A critical examination of the illustrations will show that *Story* artists employed imagery that was either borrowed from Bible narratives or elements that were clearly meant to show a connection with the peoples and cultures portrayed in the Bible. The use of biblical imagery was an efficient mechanism for showing readers (most specifically young people) that Book of Mormon characters were of Near Eastern origins. Since illustrative material on the Book of Mormon was virtually nonexistent, the artists had to look to the most current research on Mesoamerican archaeology and supplement it with what was then known about Israelitish customs, architecture, native costume, and so on. Naturally, they would have taken their visual cues from published imagery like that of Gustav Doré, John Martin, James Tissot, Bernhard Plockhorst, and others.⁹

The BYU Museum of Art hosts a biennial symposium entitled "Art, Belief, Meaning." The symposium provides an opportunity for Latter-day Saint artists, art critics, and commentators to contribute to the ongoing discussion about issues related to art and spirituality, specifically regarding art that bears witness and gives perspective to the realities that flow from the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

Selected articles from the 2006 Art, Belief, Meaning symposium are being published by BYU Studies as *Art and Spirituality: The Visual Culture of Christian Faith*, available November 2008. This article is one presentation from that symposium: Noel A. Carmack's discussion of a unique aspect of Mormon culture, the first published illustrations of the Book of Mormon.

The commissioned artists were known as the best from Latter-day Saint talent. The four chosen for the *Story* project were members of a small group of congenial working artists in Salt Lake City and were well prepared and experienced to do the illustrative work. Shortly after the opening of the Salt Lake Theater in 1862, George Ottinger and William “Billy” C. Morris found employment painting stage scenery and decorations.¹⁰ Armitage, Ottinger, and Morris were also three of the founding members of the Salt Lake Art Society, organized in October 1881.¹¹ Although their styles varied somewhat, the artists had known each other as friends and probably relished the idea of working together on a project of this sort. Known for his religious and historical subjects, Armitage was one of the most skillful of the group, but because of his untimely death in California in 1890, very few of his paintings are known to exist.¹² An engraver and printer, John Held Sr. was not formally trained as an artist but had several years’ experience creating woodblock prints and line drawings for the *Deseret News* and *Parry’s Monthly Magazine*.¹³

William Armitage’s only contribution to the book, *The Glorious Appearing of Jesus to the Nephites* (fig. 1), served as the book’s frontispiece. This painting appears to have been executed in the tradition of the dean of American historical painting, Benjamin West. In fact, if we compare the placement and gesture of Christ, and note the posturing of surrounding figures, we can see a striking similarity in style to that of West’s in his *Christ Healing the Sick* (fig. 2). The open arms of Christ and the astonishment and resultant gesturing of the figures suggests that Armitage may well have used West’s painting as his source of inspiration.

That Armitage and other *Story* artists were looking at American historical painters for their inspiration would not have been unusual. Painters such as Benjamin West, John Vanderlyn, John Singleton Copley, John Trumbull, Charles Willson Peale, and Washington Allston set the precedent for nineteenth-century Grand Manner history painting in America.¹⁴ Often associated with the teachings of Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Grand Style* or *Grand Manner* is a term that connotes a style that “ennobles the painter’s art” by depicting “some eminent instance of heroic action, or heroic suffering.” History painting done in the Grand Manner ostensibly elevated viewers to a higher state by depicting ideal or noble subjects taken from classical and religious history. Grand Manner artists looked to the “authority” of masterpieces created in classical antiquity, the Renaissance, and the Baroque, studying the works of such masters as Raphael, Michelangelo, Titian, Correggio, and Poussin. Taking their inspiration from classical figures in antiquity, such as Apollo, Venus, Ariadne, and Marius, the artists

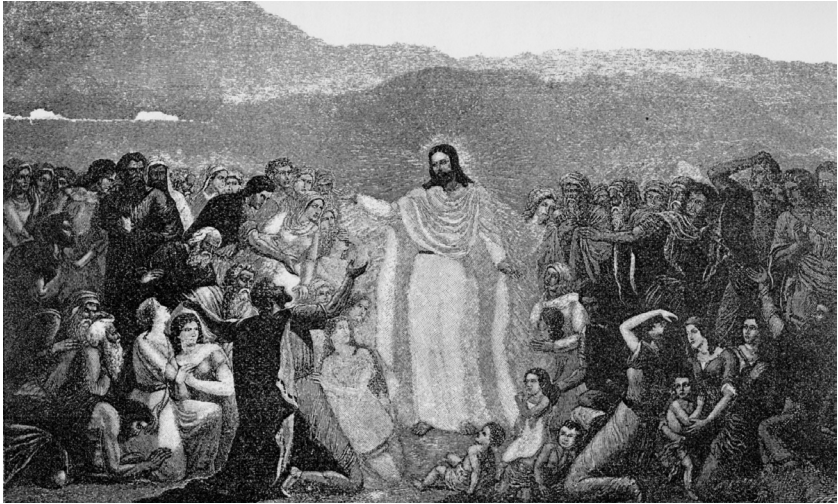


FIG. 1. William Armitage, *The Glorious Appearing of Jesus to the Nephites*, engraving. Frontispiece of *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, by George Reynolds (Salt Lake City: Joseph Hyrum Parry, 1888).

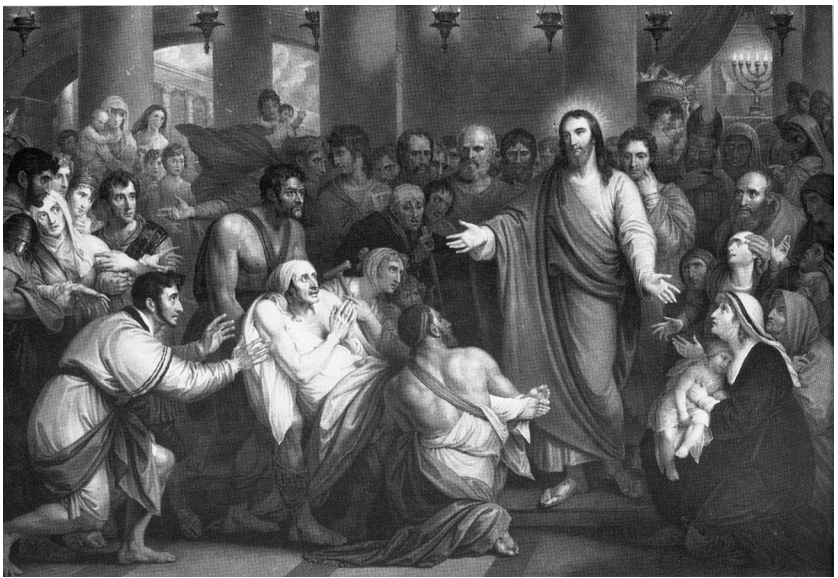


FIG. 2. Charles Heath, engraving (1822) of Benjamin West's *Christ Healing the Sick* (1811). Figure reversed for comparison.

sought to bring “intellectual dignity” and “excellence” to artistic renderings of historical events.¹⁵ In this case, the *Story* artists—particularly Ottinger (fig. 3)—visually recreated events from the Book of Mormon narrative in the tradition of Grand Manner American history painters such as West, Vanderlyn and Copley.¹⁶

The first created image in the series, and perhaps the historical antecedent to all of the paintings in the series, George Ottinger’s *Baptism of Limhi*, was a large pastoral scene showing Alma baptizing the early convert at the waters of Mormon as described in Mosiah 25:17–18. According to Ottinger, *The Baptism of Limhi* was a monumental piece, measuring seven and a half feet by five feet. It and other smaller cartoons (preliminary sketches) of Book of Mormon subjects were conceived long before *The Story of the Book of Mormon* appeared in print. In an 1872 entry to his journal, Ottinger recorded that *The Baptism of Limhi* was “the first Picture ever painted from a subject suggested by the Book of Mormon.” As encouraged as he was by the progress of the painting, he was less than hopeful about selling the piece. “I don’t know of any one who will buy it,” he wrote, “but our State Fair offers a gold medal for the best picture this fall and I am going to try for it.”¹⁷ A short time later, Ottinger wrote, “Two or three days more work will finish the baptism of Limhi, the largest picture I have painted so far.”¹⁸ His next mention of the painting was significant, because it shows his interest in creating more images as part of a larger series of paintings on Book of Mormon subjects:

The Baptism of Limhi seems to give general satisfaction. I have spent some eight years gathering material for subjects suggested by the Book of Mormon. This picture is the first. I have been just twenty days putting it on canvas. Should I meet with ordinary success this winter, I will paint another subject from the same book. I have some ideas of making twelve cartoons in black and white this winter, illustrating the Book of Mormon.¹⁹

As he had hoped, the painting was completed in the fall and exhibited at the Territorial State Fair. The newspaper correspondent noted that Ottinger’s *Baptism of Limhi* was “the largest and among the finest” in the



FIG. 3. George M. Ottinger, from Tullidge’s *Quarterly Magazine* 1 (January 1881): facing page 218.



FIG. 4. George M. Ottinger, *Baptism of Limhi*, from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 113. The original version of this work was a monumental painting created in 1872.

art exhibition. “The landscape,” he wrote, “is supposed to represent a scene in the northern part of South America. The two principal figures stand out in bold relief, while the crowd of spectators on the banks of the river, witnessing the baptismal ceremony, are beautifully and tastefully grouped.”²⁰ The image reproduced in *The Story of the Book of Mormon* (fig. 4) lacks the detail in the figures and ornament that one would expect from the large-scale piece described by Ottinger and the State Fair correspondent. This leads one to believe that the published illustration is more likely a cartoon, like one of those mentioned by Ottinger in his 1872 journal entry.

Another *Story* painting, *First Sacrifice on the Promised Land* (fig. 5), depicts Father Lehi offering sacrifice in thanks for the group’s safe arrival in the New World. Lehi is prominently shown in front of the altar with his arms stretched upward in an attitude of prayer, surrounded by his family and that of Ishmael.²¹ An active volcano emits vapors in the distance while the arc of a rainbow leads our eyes back to Lehi, the central focus of the painting. The rainbow reveals that Ottinger was not only borrowing biblical imagery for a Book of Mormon narrative with little or no visual precedent but was illustrating an event that was never described in the Book of Mormon text itself (see 1 Nephi 18:23–25). By using the rainbow, he may well have been playing off of an Old Testament image with which many young readers could identify. Perhaps by using the token



FIG. 5. George M. Ottinger, *First Sacrifice on the Promised Land*, from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 53.

of the covenant between God, Noah, and the inhabitants of the earth, it would show that God's benevolent promises extend to all of the children of Abraham—including those who had crossed the great waters to arrive in the Promised Land.

Although Ottinger would make the largest contribution to Reynolds's project, he evidently didn't think it significant enough to regularly note in his journal. His observations are devoid of any further mention of *The Story of the Book of Mormon* images, other than the *Baptism of Limhi*. It is worth noting, however, that Ottinger completed other historical paintings which reflect his interest in Mesoamerican antiquities.²² In 1887, he recorded: "January. Painted on the 'Maya Sculptor' a little but have very little incentive, so set it aside until I can grind up a little more inspiration."²³ When the *Maya Sculptor* (fig. 6) was published in the *Improvement Era* nearly twenty-three years later, Ottinger wrote:

In some of the ruins of the old cities, especially at Copan, there are clusters of square stone pillars or obelisks varying from twelve to twenty feet high. They are elaborately sculptured, showing human figures, ornamental designs and hieroglyphic inscriptions on their sides. The picture represents a Maya sculptor, elevated on his scaffolding, laboriously and patiently working out his conception of a deified king or hero, which evidently these monoliths personify.²⁴

Ottinger's propensity for historical subjects would have been no surprise to the viewing public. He had been touted as one of the territory's leading artists, whose chosen pastime was the cultivation of his talent for "historical painting, a branch of the art which requires careful study as well as skill in using the brush."²⁵

Considered one of Utah's most respected artists, Ottinger supported himself and his family working as Salt Lake City's fire chief, and he tried to make additional income by hand coloring photographs and selling his historical paintings to Salt Lake City patrons.²⁶ That he "spent some eight years gathering material" to paint Book of Mormon subjects indicates that he had been looking at the published

research on the Maya and the discoveries of ancient glyphs and decorated friezes unearthed in the Yucatan. "Ah, here is a vast, almost unexplored vista, mysterious, new and picturesque!" he wrote. "Old America with all her pre-historic treasures, a store-house of material, that needed only study, time and patience to make interesting and of value; and in this direction my studies have been chiefly directed for years."²⁷ By the time he and the other *Story* artists had received their commission, Ottinger would have been well acquainted with Frederick Catherwood's illustrations for John Lloyd Stephens's *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatán* (1841), Stephens's *Incidents of Travel in Yucatán* (1843), and Catherwood's own *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatán* (1844).²⁸ He would also have undoubtedly seen William H. Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* (1843) which was in wide circulation and contained a number of line drawings showing the elaborate stone carvings and architectural wonders of the Aztecs. Ottinger's painting *Flowers of Cola Luyona*, for example, clearly shows a finely executed reproduction of *The Altar of the Temple of the Sun* at Palenque, which was originally drawn by Catherwood and engraved by Archibald Dick for Stephens's *Incidents of Travel in Central America*, a complex design not only appearing as an illustration but also used for the cover of the book.²⁹



FIG. 6. George M. Ottinger, *Maya Sculptor*, from *Improvement Era* 13 (April 1910): 498.

During the height of Ottinger's efforts at historical painting, archaeological exploration in Mexico and the Yucatan was at a new high point. Augustus and Alice Le Plongeon were two of the earliest to excavate and photograph numerous Maya ruins in the Yucatan. Although their work was regarded as somewhat eccentric and speculative, the Le Plongeon brought the world some of the first photographic images of the Central American ruins. Contemporaneous to the work of the Le Plongeon, Désiré Charnay published his photographic record of Yucatan's pre-Columbian monuments and ruins in *Ancient Cities of the New World* (1887). The photographs of Alfred Maudslay, accompanied by the colored line drawings of his two artists, Edwin J. Lambert and Annie G. Hunter, were published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society* in 1883 and 1886.³⁰

In addition, Ottinger's cataclysmic painting *Destruction of Zarahemla* (fig. 7), taken from 3 Nephi 8:6–8, appears to have been stylistically influenced by two of the most distinguished historical painters, Nicolas Poussin and Benjamin West. The overall composition and placement of figures suggests that Ottinger drew from the widely known religious painting *Death on the Pale Horse* (fig. 8), by West. The horses, chariot, and terror-stricken figures in Ottinger's painting are similar in many ways to the visual arrangement of West's apocalyptic image. Two fallen figures in the foreground of Ottinger's rendering appear to have been inspired by West's figures of a fallen mother and children in *Pale Horse*. Furthermore, if we compare Ottinger's *Destruction* with Poussin's drawings *The Conversion of St. Paul* and *The Death of Hippolytus*, we will notice even more striking visual similarities in the gesture of the horses, the chariot, darkened clouds, and fleeing figures.³¹

With this comparison in mind, we can be relatively confident that Ottinger was well familiar with both West's and Poussin's work. Ottinger shared the same interest in classicism and historical narratives that are depicted in Poussin's drawings and paintings. Traditionally, West's and Poussin's works have been linked with drama and scenery paintings, bringing life to the events being portrayed on stage.³² Ottinger's skills and experience were created from this same tradition. If we, as spectators, visually perceive Ottinger's images as those which are created for a grand-scale drama, we can readily see the similarities of style and two-dimensional action to that of Poussin's. And, indeed, we see echoes of Poussin in Ottinger's background landscapes, his posturing of figures, and his placement of the activities depicted within the pictorial space, as if we are watching a drama unfold on stage.³³



FIG. 7. George M. Ottinger, *Destruction of Zarahemla*, from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 249.



FIG. 8. Benjamin West, *Death on the Pale Horse*, oil on canvas, 176" x 301", 1817. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. Pennsylvania Academy purchase.

It is this theatrical arrangement in the composition of paintings that informed the art of the High Renaissance and, ultimately, the neoclassicism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Historically, the approach to composition was often characterized by the unity of a sequential narrative, with many events and places located in the same pictorial space. Or, in other examples, a historical event is depicted with its protagonists as the central focus, while supporting players act out minor scenes in the surrounding space. In its classicized form, a picture would appear as a window looking out on one scene. It would require that the background, at least, be “recognizable as one place, although it continued to be common to depict more than one moment in time in the single spacial surrounding.”³⁴ This manner of theatrically arranging figures within a visual narrative is also thought to have been employed by American historical painters such as West, Copely, and Trumbull. Britain’s own Sir Joshua Reynolds is believed to have based his ideals of Grand Style classicism in painting on the arrangement of figures on a stage. A widely read painting manual by Daniel Webb, for example, conveyed the neoclassical ideals of history painting as having their origins in drama:

History painting is the representation of a momentary drama: We may therefore, in treating of compositions, borrow our ideas from the stage; and divide it into two parts, the scenery, and the drama. The excellence of the first consists in a pleasing disposition of the figures which comprise the action.³⁵

In these compositional terms, a reverence for classicism, intellectual dignity, and noble, heroic action could best be visualized within the context of the theater. Grand Manner was a style that was founded upon theater-like imagery.

In addition to being influenced by dramatic Grand Manner history painting, the *Story* illustrations came on the heels of other historical visualizations of pre-European New World empires.³⁶ Josiah Priest’s widely read 1833 publication *American Antiquities* generated curiosity in the origins of Native Americans that spilled over to visual conceptions of how the native peoples might have looked and lived. The work of poets and novelists, including William Cullen Bryant and Sarah J. Hale, fed into the aura of mystery surrounding the Promised Land’s vanished race.³⁷ Early American painters and panoramists, such as John Egan, painted grand visions of the once-resourceful and warlike “Mound Builders” who lived in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. Speculation regarding these lost civilizations provoked the mythic theories that they were the lost tribes of Israel, that they were Vikings or Phoenician migrants, or that they were from Egypt or Atlantis. The work of Stephens and Catherwood also seemed to

support the Latter-day Saint view of a new world colonized by three small groups of people descended from Israelitish tribes.³⁸

Although the *Story* illustrations do not approach Friberg's skill for capturing the heroism of Book of Mormon characters or the naturalistic manner in which he visualized them, they convey the "nineteenth-century Mormons' connection between specific archaeological sites and events described in the Book of Mormon."³⁹ For example, a toppling Mayan monument in *Destruction of Zarahemla* suggests a correlation between Copan or Quiriqua and Zarahemla and might indicate that Ottinger was aware of Church writings to that effect.⁴⁰ The scene depicted in Ottinger's illustration *Discovery of the Records of the Jaredites* (fig. 9) also appears to owe much to Catherwood's lithographs of ancient ruins in Central America. The painting shows the discovery of Jaredite records and ruins as described in Mosiah 21:26–27, and is laid out as though it is another act in a stage performance in which figures are placed in front of an elaborate backdrop—a situation with which Ottinger, as a theatrical scene painter, would have been intimately familiar. The principal figures are dressed in Roman frocks and are central to a larger dramatic narrative within the picture plane—yet another indication that Ottinger was following the traditional classicism of the history painters who had preceded him. The minor figures are inspecting the elaborately carved structure and fallen stone carvings. The painted scene shows reliance on Catherwood's sketches of his own team making similar discoveries of overgrown ruins in the Yucatan (fig. 10).⁴¹

Another Ottinger illustration in the *Story* series, *Moroni Raises the Title of Liberty* (fig. 11), shows three principal figures at the top of the steps of a Maya temple. One upright figure, Moroni, raises his hands high as he holds the Title of Liberty as described in Alma 46:12–24. A multitude of onlookers crowds the lower steps, waving pieces of their own garments in token of the covenant they made with God, as further described in the scriptural passage. If we compare this image to Ottinger's *Aztec Maiden*, we will see that Ottinger was well aware of the Temple of Inscriptions at Palenque and similar ruins at Tulum in Mexico (fig. 12). The Roman military garb worn by the figures in this scene, again, indicates that Ottinger was following the nineteenth-century neoclassical tradition. Indeed, the scene is one of theatrical staging, with centrally placed protagonists in costume that suggests a highly ordered, civilized society—a mythologized pre-Columbian empire.

The principal subjects of John Held's *Vision of Nephi* (fig. 13), depicting 1 Nephi 11:20, are also shown wearing Romanesque robes; the Madonna and child appear in a visionary cloud overhead, reminiscent of the angelic apparitions which are characteristic of religious paintings of the Italian Baroque period. Again, as with the other artists enlisted in this project, Held was

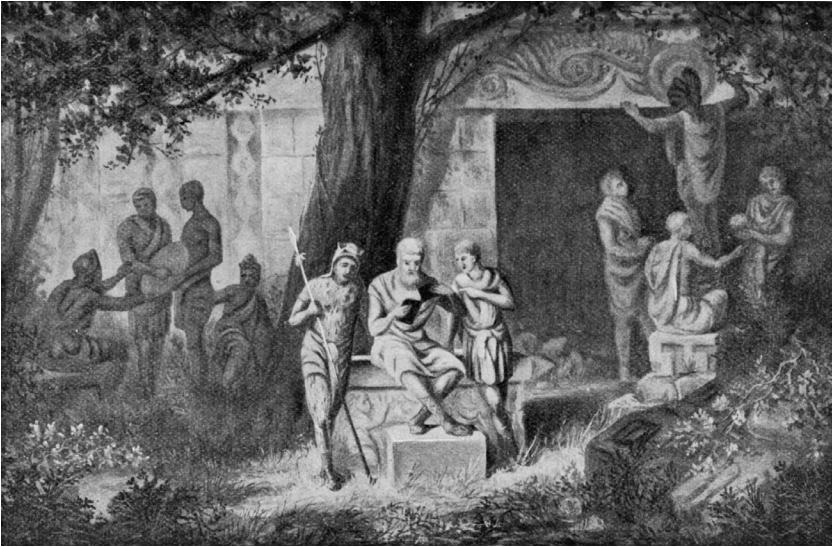


FIG. 9. George M. Ottinger, *Discovery of the Records of the Jaredites*, from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 105.

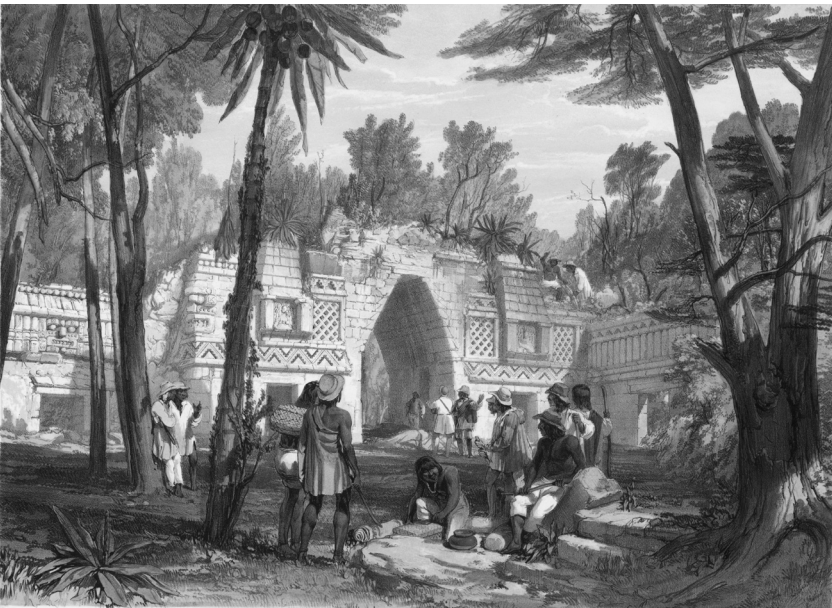


FIG. 10. Frederick Catherwood, *Gateway at Labnah*, from *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (London: F. Catherwood, 1844), plate 19. Photo: L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.

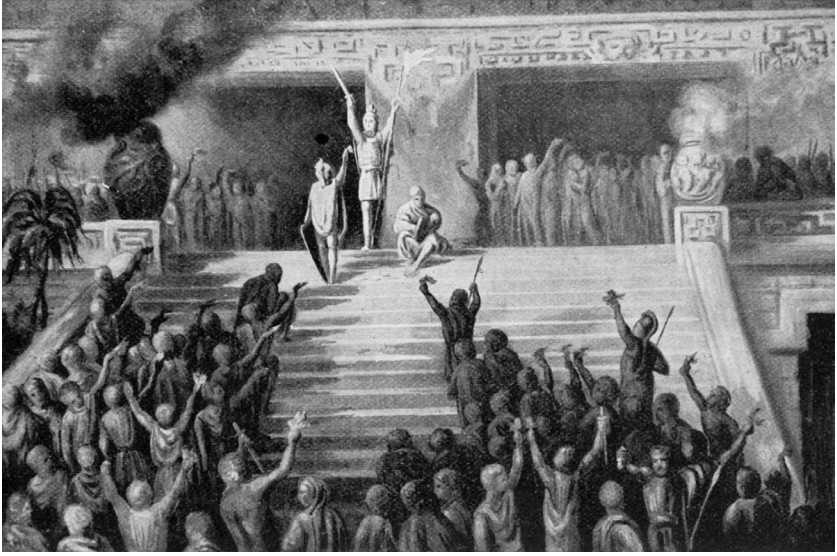


FIG. 11. George M. Ottinger, *Moroni Raises the "Title of Liberty,"* from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 185.

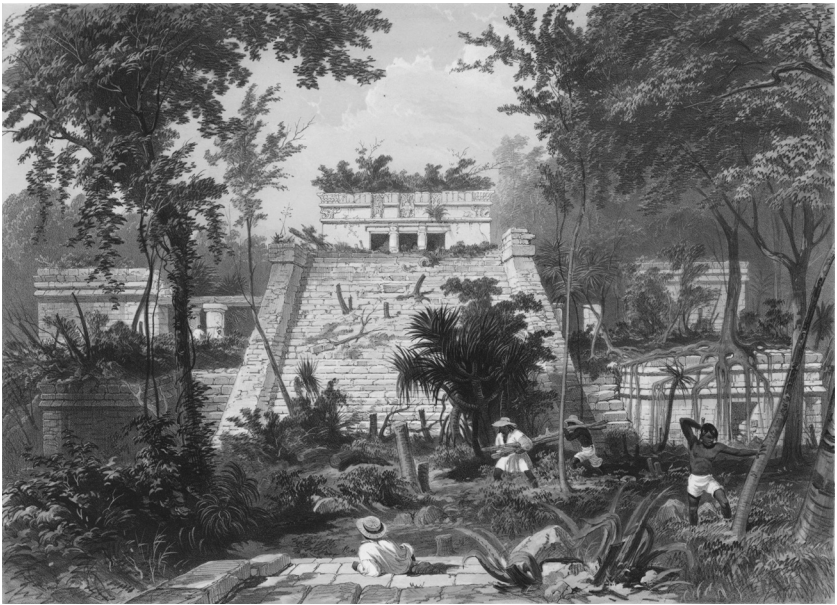


FIG. 12. Frederick Catherwood, *Castle at Tuloom*, from *Views of Ancient Monuments in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (London: F. Catherwood, 1844), plate 23. Photo: L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.

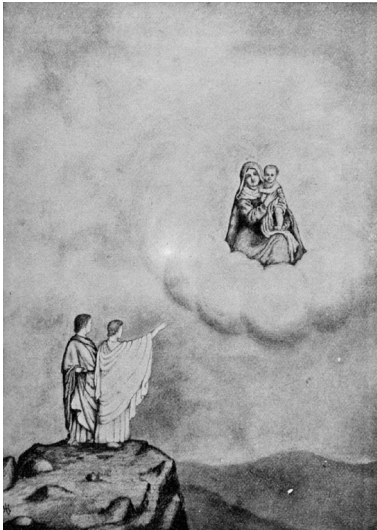


FIG. 13. John Held Sr., *Vision of Nephi*, from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 39.

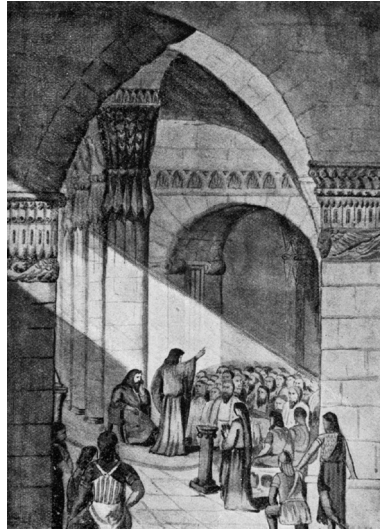


FIG. 14. John Held Sr., *Prophets Preaching to the Jaredites*, from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 463.

turning to familiar religious imagery. Envisioning the virgin birth would naturally cause one to borrow what other artists had done during religious periods preoccupied with the immaculate status of the mother of Christ.

Held's illustration *Prophets Preaching to the Jaredites* (fig. 14), as described in Ether 11:1–2, shows what appears to be a prophet dressed in priestly robes, addressing a group of congregants. The architecture in the image is an ambulatory and radiating chapel with an odd combination of unstuccoed Gothic-style vaults and columns with capitals bearing Persian motifs. Curiously, what appears to be a pedestal font can be seen at the front of worshipers, suggesting the ritual element of baptism.

While the handling of figures is quite primitive in Held's paintings, he is not unwilling to render complex, action-filled scenes that are rarely seen even in modern visual depictions of Book of Mormon narratives. In what was perhaps his strongest, most skillful piece in the series, Held conveys high drama in his woodblock print *The Martyrdoms at Ammonihah* (fig. 15). This compelling image shows the believers and their scriptures being consumed by fire as described in Alma 14:8–14. The victims are depicted burning at the stake, while the guards throw their sacred scriptures into the fire with them. Held's catastrophic image *Deliverance of Alma and Amulek* (fig. 16) shows the two missionaries breaking their shackles, while pillars and walls crumble down upon their captors (see Alma 14:26–29). Although



FIG. 15. John Held Sr., *The Martyrdoms at Ammonihah*, from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 157.



FIG. 16. John Held Sr., *The Deliverance of Alma and Amulek*, from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 161.

inelegantly conveyed, these illustrations are visually progressive and reveal more than meets the eye. The dynamism in these images is another indication that Held and the other artists were drawing inspiration from the interactive movement of figures in other historical paintings of the time.

Held's illustration entitled *Appearance of Christ to the Brother of Jared* (fig. 17) shows the interplay between man and deity, also revealing the LDS belief in an antemortal Christ who, although appearing in spirit, had a form and visage. Ironically, the figure of Christ is distinguished with a halo, a mystical Christian symbol which is normally excluded from modern Latter-day Saint religious imagery. Nevertheless, the painting is true to the Book of Mormon incident supporting the passage that "Jesus showed himself unto this man in

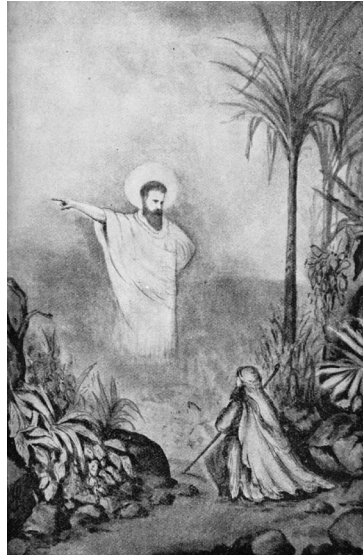


FIG. 17. John Held Sr., *Appearance of Christ to the Brother of Jared*, from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 455.

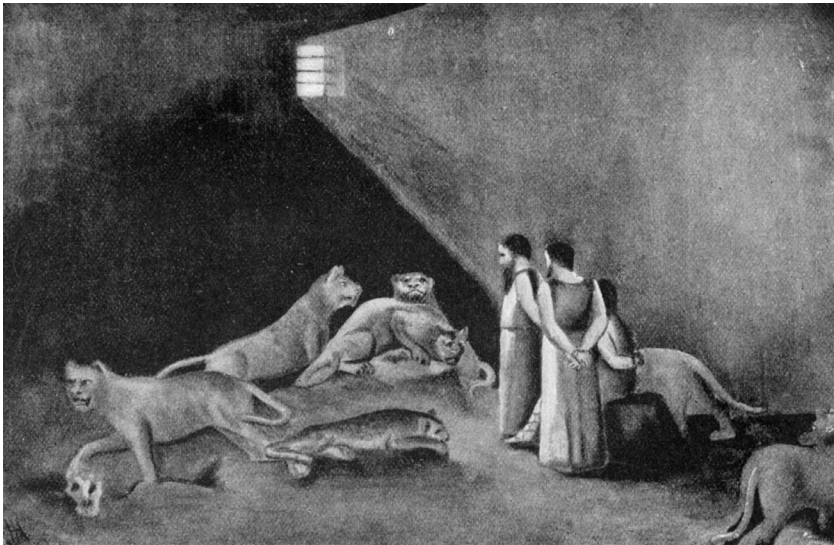


FIG. 18. John Held Sr., *The Three Nephites and Wild Beasts*, from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 293.

the spirit, even after the manner and in the likeness of the same body even as he showed himself unto the Nephites" (Ether 3:6–28).

By comparison, Held's illustration *The Three Nephites and Wild Beasts* (fig. 18; see 3 Nephi 28:22) is somewhat static but reminiscent of other known biblical illustrations showing Daniel in the lion's den (Dan. 1:8; 6:7–16) or Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the Assyrian king's fiery furnace (Daniel 1:6–15; 3:16–30). In like manner, the three Nephite characters face ferocious lions without fear, standing in a shaft of light piercing a darkened dungeon. The theme and casting of these characters in a recognizable visual scene supports the notion that the *Story* artists were drawing upon biblical narratives that would render the Book of Mormon event comfortably familiar to the young, impressionable reader.

William Morris (fig. 19), whose strength was in the decorative arts, did not have the artistic background to visualize these narratives in a naturalistic way. His dark, nocturnal-like paintings are naive but show his capacity to illustrate a scene with brooding drama. The stark Baroque lighting of his subjects resembles the gaslight illumination of actors on a stage. His contributions to the *Story* project, *Teancum Slays Amalickiah* (fig. 20, see Alma 51:33–34) and *Ether Finishing His Record* (fig. 21, see Ether 15:33), are viscerally painted in darker values, coarsely heightened in areas with contrasting lighter color. Indeed, Morris's characters are like phantoms who participate in the narrative under a moonlit sky, recalling the Neapolitan Baroque qualities of Salvatore Rosa and Monsù Desiderio. He may have also been attempting to emulate the biblical visionary paintings of English Romanticist John Martin. Unfortunately, Morris's accidental death of gas asphyxiation in January 1889 halted any further development of his artistic training at the New York Academy.⁴² He died not knowing that *Story* would become popular.

As it turned out, *The Story of the Book of Mormon* was a successful seller. Reynolds recorded in his journal that "by the end of the year about 3,000 copies of "The Story of the Book of Mormon ^were^ was sold, and the greater part of the expenses being paid it began

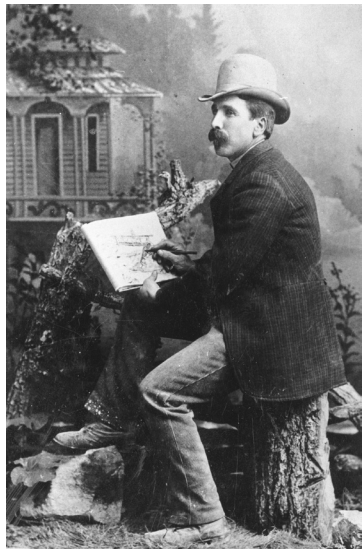


FIG. 19. William Morris. Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society. All rights reserved.



FIG. 20. William Morris, *Teancum Slays Amalickiah*, from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 195.

to yield a profit.”⁴³ Subsequent editions also proved popular. The Church’s General Board of Education recommended the use of *The Story of the Book of Mormon* in Church academies and schools as a text. Despite its impressive sales, Hyrum Parry did not continue publishing the book, relinquishing his undivided one-half interest in the copyright, plates, illustrations and unsold copies of *Story* to George Reynolds for the second 1898 edition and other subsequent editions.⁴⁴

In a memo addressed to Church educators, Reynolds promoted the sale of the book as a text for use in Church schools. Except for a slight change in the weight of the paper, very little changed in the second edition. “Two or three ugly pictures have been left out in the second edition, and a slight condensation made in the letter press,” Reynolds conceded.⁴⁵ Two illustrations, *Teancum Slays Amalickiah* and *Prophets Preaching to the Jaredites*, were dropped from this edition, presumably because they were considered poorly rendered and did not have the desired level of naturalism. By comparison, the other reproductions in the second edition were clearer and bore a better tonal quality than the first.

Its widespread use in Church lessons indicates that *The Story of the Book of Mormon* was a useful tool for teaching in the Church Primary and Sunday School organizations. Reynolds, a member of the General Board of the Deseret Sunday School Union, undoubtedly lobbied for more Book of Mormon visuals to be used in religious teaching. A call

for more Book of Mormon art in the *Deseret News* in March 1890 included a list of desired images.⁴⁶

The importance of historical accuracy could not be overestimated. Teaching children with meaningful visual aids would require that participating artists research their subjects and only include elements that conveyed the sense of proper culture and antiquity. The call for artwork stipulated the need for this integrity by stating, “The Union desires that the artists maintain, as far as possible, the unities of time, place, dress, etc., that the pictures may not be misleading to the children, even in their minor details. The characters therein (except the angels) are all Israelites of the sixth century before Christ, and the localities are Palestine, Arabia and Chili [Chile].”⁴⁷

This desire for utility in teaching was no less important for the Union’s Book of Mormon Chart series as it was for Reynolds in his *Story* project. For example, Ottinger created for the Book of Mormon Chart series a new version of *First Sacrifice on the Promised Land* (see fig. 5) and named it *Arrival in the New World* (fig. 22). This vertical version was visually composed in the same manner as the first, but without the bow in the clouds. The removal of the rainbow and the placement of the letters “L” for Lehi and “N” for Nephi on the clothing of the two main protagonists shown in the scene helped to distinguish the main characters and avoid potential confusion with the biblical flood story. Such distinguishing marks would make the painting more didactically useful in the classroom.⁴⁸ In an apparent de-emphasis of mystical symbolism, Ottinger also painted a version of Nephi’s vision of Mary and the Christ child (fig. 23), without the recognizably Baroque Madonna hovering above the Book of Mormon prophet and his angelic guide, as was rendered by Held in his version of the scene (see fig. 13).

By fall 1891, a sufficient number of artists had responded to the call that the list of desired pictures had been filled. “We had our own artists procure premium oil paintings of the important events in the early life of Nephi, etc., which formed the basis of the Book of Mormon charts, which



FIG. 21. William Morris, *Ether Finishing His Record*, from *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, page 467.

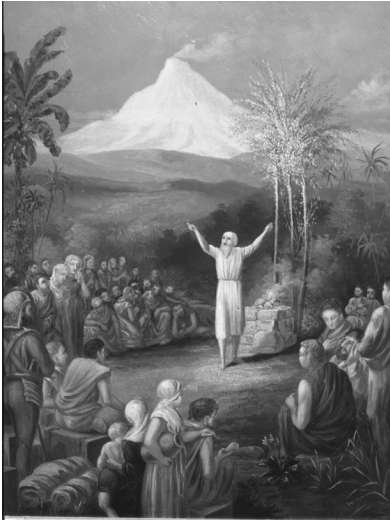


FIG. 22. George Ottinger, *Arrival in the New World*, ca. 1890. © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City. It appeared in *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (August 1, 1891).



FIG. 23. Artist uncertain, probably George Ottinger, *Nephi's Vision*, from *Juvenile Instructor* (1891).

we expect will be ready for sale about February, 1892. We have ordered 5,000 sets of twelve pictures each, and they will be a great aid in teaching the children of Zion the truth and beauty of the Book of Mormon,” proclaimed the *Deseret Weekly*.⁴⁹ The first of these illustrative teaching aids were then published in the *Juvenile Instructor* during the second half of the 1891 subscription year. Although none of the images bear attribution, it appears that the Union used several of Ottinger’s paintings and may well have adopted several more of Armitage’s Book of Mormon illustrations which were painted before his untimely death in 1890. Ottinger’s *Baptism of Limhi* and his *Arrival in the New World* were both included in this second series of Book of Mormon visuals.⁵⁰ Other images in the Book of Mormon Chart series bear the primitive stylistic qualities of Latter-day Saint artist C. C. A. Christiansen.⁵¹

Of the thirteen paintings published in *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, Ottinger’s illustrations appear to be the most well-informed and deftly executed. If we can confirm their attribution, we will undoubtedly find that Ottinger also contributed most of the images in the Deseret Sunday School Union’s Book of Mormon Chart series.⁵² His images were evidently popular enough to be used well into the twentieth century.

Several of Ottinger's *Story* paintings were reproduced in a romanticized Book of Mormon novel, *Cities of the Sun*, written by Elizabeth Rachel Cannon some twenty-two years later.⁵³ Five of Ottinger's illustrations were included in Genet Bingham Dee's *A Voice from the Dust*, which was published as a handsome update to what Reynolds had started with *The Story of the Book of Mormon* more than fifty years earlier.⁵⁴

The illustrations created for *The Story of the Book of Mormon* may not have been sterling specimens of narrative fine art by today's critical standards of excellence. But the visual impact they may have left on young readers of the Book of Mormon is immeasurable. If we dismiss them as simplistic nineteenth-century primitives or naive art, then we fail to recognize their significance as character-building visuals. Artists who illustrated for *The Story of the Book of Mormon* had accomplished something of lasting value. They carried forth in the minds of young people the official visual representation of Book of Mormon characters, places, and narrative events. For at least one generation—perhaps longer—these images were the first to be associated with the Book of Mormon text and the stories contained therein.

Noel A. Carmack (Noel.Carmack@ceu.edu) earned a BFA in illustration and an MFA in drawing and painting, both from Utah State University. He is currently an instructor of art at the College of Eastern Utah. He served as Preservation Librarian at Utah State University's Merrill-Cazier Library for fourteen years. Aside from his interests in bookbinding and conservation, he has interests in visual art, the history of the nineteenth-century American West, and the art and cultural history of the Latter-day Saints. He has published on Mormon cultural topics in the *Journal of Mormon History*, *Dialogue*, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, and *BYU Studies*. In 2000, his *BYU Studies* article "Images of Christ in Latter-day Saint Visual Culture, 1900–1999," generated a thoughtful discussion that led to the four articles which accompanied it.

1. On Friberg's Book of Mormon images, see Vern Swanson, "The Book of Mormon Art of Arnold Friberg, Painter of Scripture," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10, no. 1 (2001): 26–35. For Teichert's work, see John W. Welch and Doris R. Dant, *The Book of Mormon Paintings of Minerva Teichert* (Salt Lake City: BYU Studies and Bookcraft, 1997).

2. "Notice," *Utah Journal*, January 9, 1886, 3, and "Reuben Kirkham," *Deseret News*, April 28, 1886, 1. A biography of Kirkham is currently in preparation by Donna Poulton and Vern Swanson.

3. For more on George Reynolds (1842–1909), see Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Reprint, Western Epics, 1971), 1:206, and Bruce A. Van Orden, *Prisoner for Conscience' Sake: The Life of George Reynolds* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992).

4. George Reynolds, *The Story of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Joseph Hyrum Parry, 1888), "Preface," iv.

5. "A New Book," *Deseret Evening News*, October 30, 1888, 3; see also Reynolds, *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, "Preface."

6. George Reynolds, *Journal*, 1888, 78, MS 3347, LDS Church Archives, Historical Department, Salt Lake City, Utah.

7. "The Story of the Book of Mormon," *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 51 (August 5, 1889): 492–93. Rev. Arthur Stanley (1815–1881) was Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and later Dean of Westminster from 1864 to 1881. He is known for his trip to Egypt and Palestine and the best-selling account of his observations, *Sinai and Palestine in Connection with Their History* (1856).

8. "From the Press," *Deseret News*, December 9, 1888, 13, and "New Home Publication," *Parry's Monthly Magazine* 5 (February 1889): 195.

9. That *Story* artists would strive to visually convey a close association with biblical stories, peoples, and cultures may be seen as curious, given that some critics of the Book of Mormon in the 1880s accused Joseph Smith of plagiarizing the Bible. See, for example, M. T. Lamb, *The Golden Bible, or, The Book of Mormon: Is It from God?* (New York: Ward and Drummond, 1886). Perhaps *Story* art plays into that criticism, but the concern for historical and cultural authenticity in visualizing the Book of Mormon reflected the same concerns shown by nineteenth-century Bible illustrators. See Ljubica D. Popovich, "Popular American Biblical Imagery: Sources and Manifestations," in *The Bible and Popular Culture in America*, ed. Allene Stuart Phyllis (Philadelphia, Penn.: Fortress Press, 1985), 193–233, esp. 208, and Paul Gutjahr, "American Protestant Bible Illustration from Copper Plates to Computers," in *The Visual Culture of American Religions*, ed. David Morgan and Sally M. Promey (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 267–85, esp. 276.

This same concern for historical authenticity was just as important for youth picture study in Church Sunday Schools, visualizations of the Bible, and the depiction of the Book of Mormon in motion pictures. See J. Leo Fairbanks, "Picture Study in the Sunday Schools," *Juvenile Instructor* 48, no. 1 (January 1913): 3–5; Edwin F. Parry, "Moving Pictures as Helps to Bible Study," *Juvenile Instructor* 48, no. 9 (September 1913): 584–88; and "Book of Mormon in Picture Play," *Deseret News*, December 20, 1913, 122.

10. "Art and Artists in Utah," *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine* 1 (January 1881): 213–220.

11. "The Fine Arts," *Deseret News*, October 26, 1881, 609.

12. See "Christ and Mary," *Salt Lake Daily Tribune*, December 20, 1881, 4. For biographical information on William Joseph Armitage (1817–1890), see Robert S. Olpin, William C. Seifrit, and Vern G. Swanson, *Artists of Utah* (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 1999), 8, s.v. "Armitage, William Joseph."

13. For biographical information on John Held Sr. (1862–1936), see Olpin, Seifrit, and Swanson, *Artists of Utah*, 127, s.v. "Held, John, Sr." For examples of Held's illustrative work and woodcuts, see *Parry's Monthly Magazine*, vol. 6 (1890) and *Utah Monthly Magazine*, vols. 7–9 (1891–1892).

14. See Ann Uhry Abrams, *The Valiant Hero: Benjamin West and Grand-Style History Painting* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985); and Wayne Craven, "The Grand Manner in Early Nineteenth-Century American

Painting: Borrowings from Antiquity, the Renaissance, and the Baroque," *American Art Journal* 11, no. 2 (April 1979): 4–43.

15. Abrams, *The Valiant Hero*, 9, and Craven, "The Grand Manner," 6–9.

16. It is worthy of note that in mid-June of 1874, Ottinger was visiting San Francisco, where he saw Vanderlyn's *Marius amid the Ruins of Carthage* (1807) up close at the de Young Museum while it was being prepared for restoration. See George M. Ottinger, Journal, June 12, 1874, 207, copy of original, MS 123, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah. On the importance of this painting, see Craven, "The Grand Manner in Early Nineteenth-Century American Painting," 15–19.

17. George M. Ottinger, Journal, 1872, 197–98.

18. George M. Ottinger, Journal, 1872, 200.

19. George M. Ottinger, Journal, 1872, 201.

20. "Territorial State Fair," *Deseret News*, October 9, 1872, 4. See also Heber G. Richards, "George M. Ottinger, Pioneer Artist of Utah: A Brief of His Personal Journal," *Western Humanities Review* 3, no. 3 (July 1949): 209–18.

21. The orant or *orans* posture, a gesture of prayer with uplifted hands, was used by officiating priests in the early Christian church. A form of this prayer gesture was used in ancient times and later in this dispensation, after the Church was restored. See, for example, Exodus 9:29; 1 Kings 8:22; D&C 88:120, 132, 135; and 109:9, 19. For more on the *orans* posture, see Clark D. Lambertson, "The Development of Christian Symbolism as Illustrated in Roman Catacomb Painting," *American Journal of Archaeology* 15, no. 4 (October–December, 1911): 507–22; Walter Lowrie, *Art in the Early Church*, 2d ed. rev. (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1965), 44–49; and Hugh Nibley, "Early Christian Prayer Circles," *BYU Studies* 19 (Fall 1978): 41–78.

22. For a thorough list of works mentioned in his journal, see Richards, "George M. Ottinger, Pioneer Artist of Utah," 216–17.

23. George M. Ottinger, Journal, 1887, 269.

24. George M. Ottinger, "The Maya Sculptor," *Improvement Era* 13 (April 1910): 498–499.

25. "Cultivation of the Fine Arts," *Parry's Monthly Magazine* 5 (November 1888): 76–77; quote from 77. See also "Art Notes," *Deseret News*, November 3, 1886, 1.

26. For more on George M. Ottinger (1833–1917), see Richards, "George M. Ottinger, Pioneer Artist of Utah"; Olpin, Seifrit, and Swanson, *Artists of Utah*, 185–89; Madeline B. Stern, "A Rocky Mountain Bookstore, Savage and Ottinger of Utah," *BYU Studies* 9, no. 2 (1969): 144–54; and Richard G. Oman, "Outward Bound: A Painting of Religious Faith," *BYU Studies* 37, no. 1 (1997–98): 75–81.

27. "Ottinger," *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine* 1 (January 1881): 219. For more on Ottinger's artistic activities, see sources cited in notes 20 and 26.

28. For more on Stephens and Catherwood, see Victor Wolfgang von Hagen, *Maya Explorer: John Lloyd Stephens and the Lost Cities of Central America and Yucatán* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1947); von Hagen's *Frederick Catherwood, Archt.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950); and C. W. Ceram, *Gods, Graves, and Scholars: The Story of Archaeology* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 337–56. See also Evans R. Tripp, *Romancing the Maya: Mexican Antiquity in the American Imagination, 1820–1915* (Austin: University of Texas, 2004). It should be noted that Joseph Smith and early Church members were well aware of Stephens's *Incidents of Travel in Yucatan*. In fact, it was once owned by Joseph

Smith as part of his personal library. See “Zarahemla,” *Times and Seasons* 3 (October 1, 1842): 927–28, and Kenneth W. Godfrey, “A Note on the Nauvoo Library and Literary Institute,” *BYU Studies* 14, no. 3 (1974): 386–89.

29. See von Hagen, *Frederick Catherwood*, page 73 and figure 11, following page 144.

30. See Lawrence Gustave Desmond and Phyllis Mauch Messenger, *A Dream of Maya: Augustus and Alice Le Plongeon in Nineteenth-Century Yucatan* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988); Ian Graham, *Alfred Maudslay and the Maya: A Biography* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2002); the contributions of Lambert and Hunter are discussed on 221–23.

31. See Anthony Blunt, *The Drawings of Poussin* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), 68–69.

32. For more on Poussin’s method of arranging small wax figures and scenery on a miniature stage, see Anthony Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, Bollingen Series 35, no. 7 (Washington, D.C.: Bollingen Foundation; Pantheon Books, 1967), 242–47; and Blunt, *Drawings of Poussin*, 95–99.

33. See Blunt, *Nicolas Poussin*, 40–50.

34. Barbara Carlisle, “Pageants and Painting: The Theatrical Context of High Renaissance Style,” *The Centennial Review* 24, no. 4 (Fall 1980): 459–73; quote from 463. For a more thorough study on landscape in nineteenth-century scene painting, see Nancy Hazelton, “‘Green to the Very Door’: Painted Landscape on the Nineteenth-Century Stage,” *Theatre History Studies* 22 (June 2002): 115–36.

35. Quoted in Abrams, *The Valiant Hero*, 123.

36. See Angela Miller, “‘The Soil of an Unknown America’: New World Lost Empires and the Debate over Cultural Origins,” *American Art* 8, no. 3/4 (Summer–Autumn 1994): 8–27.

37. Miller, “The Soil of an Unknown America,” 11–16, 21–23.

38. Tripp, *Romancing the Maya*, 88–102, esp. 99–102; Josiah Priest, *American Antiquities, and Discoveries in the West . . .* (Albany: Hoffman and White, 1833); Robert Silverberg, *The Mound Builders of Ancient America* (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1968). See also Curtis Dahl, “Mound-Builders, Mormons, and William Cullen Bryant,” *New England Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (June 1961): 178–90.

39. Tripp, *Romancing the Maya*, 94.

40. See “Zarahemla,” *Times and Seasons* 3 (October 1, 1842): 927–28. Interestingly, the writer (presumably editor John Taylor) stated: “We are not agoing to declare positively that the ruins of Quiriqua are those of Zarahemla, but when the land and the stones, and the books tell the story so plain, we are of the opinion, that it would require more proof than the Jews could bring to prove the disciples stole the body of Jesus from the tomb, to prove that the ruins of the city in question, are not one of those referred to in the Book of Mormon” (927).

41. Ottinger’s reliance on archaeological discoveries, as introduced to the West by Stephens, Catherwood, Prescott, and others, is not unlike that of other artists who relied on the latest archaeological knowledge for historical paintings depicting New World events. See, for example, William H. Truettner, “Storming the Teocalli—Again: Or, Further Thoughts on Reading History Paintings,” *American Art* 9, no. 3 (Autumn 1995): 56–95.

42. For more information on William C. Morris (?–1889), see Olpin, Seifrit, and Swanson, *Artists of Utah*, 179, s.v. “Morris, William ‘Billy’ Charles.” See also “To Sue the Deputy Coroner,” *New York Times*, January 8, 1889, 5; “A Gentle Spirit

Gone," *Deseret Weekly* January 12, 1889, 19, and "W. C. Morris' Funeral," *Deseret Weekly*, January 19, 1889, 28.

43. Reynolds, Journal, 1889, 81.

44. See signed copyright transferral receipts and *Circular of the Story of the Book of Mormon* in George Reynolds papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

45. George Reynolds, "Memo. Regarding Books written by Geo. Reynolds," George Reynolds Papers.

46. "To the Artists of Utah," *Deseret Weekly*, March 8, 1890, 23.

47. "To the Artists of Utah," *Deseret Weekly*, March 8, 1890, 23.

48. A close examination of Ottinger's Book of Mormon chart image "The Peacemakers" shows the labeling of Nephi ("N") in the same manner.

49. "Sunday School Union," *Deseret Weekly*, October 17, 1891, 3.

50. Reproductions of these visuals are still preserved in the LDS Museum of Church History and Art. See also "Lehi Preaching to the Jews," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (April 15, 1891): 234; "Lehi and His Family in the Wilderness," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (May 1, 1891): 283; "Nephi and Zoram with the Records," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (May 15, 1891): 298; "The Peacemakers," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (June 1, 1891): 349; "Nephi's Vision," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (June 15, 1891): 375; "Lehi Finding the Liahona," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (July 1, 1891): 408; "The Building of the Ship," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (July 15, 1891): 438; "Lehi Offering Sacrifice," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (August 1, 1891): 476; "Lehi Blessing His Posterity," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (August 15, 1891): 503; "Nephites Seeking a New Home," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (September 1, 1891): 537; "The Building of the Temple," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (September 15, 1891): 575; "Nephi Making the Plates," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (October 1, 1891): cover.

51. A number of Book of Mormon charts have been attributed to C. C. A. Christiansen in the records of the LDS Museum of Church History and Art.

52. An advertisement poster dated October 1, 1897, lists dates, quotes the cost of the "Book of Mormon Picture Charts," and evidences the fact that the picture charts were issued in two parts. See Accession # LDS 93-109-1, LDS Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah. Thanks to Carrie Snow for alerting me to this source.

53. Elizabeth Rachel Cannon, *The Cities of the Sun: Stories of Ancient America Founded on Historical Incidents in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1910). Several of Ottinger's paintings were retitled but are clearly from *The Story of the Book of Mormon* series. His work in this volume included: "Alma Baptizing in the Waters of Mormon" (22); "Moroni Raises the Standard of Liberty" (60); "Amalickiah Sent the Corpse of Her Husband to the Lamanite Queen" [not from series] (75); "Amickiah Sacked the Coast Cities and Put Hirza to the Sword" [Destruction of Zarahemla] (78); "Alla Deriding the Idols" [not from series] (82); and "The Cliff Dwellers' Daughter" [not from series] (108).

54. See Genet Bingham Dee, *A Voice from the Dust: A Sacred History of Ancient Americans, The Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press for Genet Bingham Dee, 1939). Ottinger's paintings in this volume included: "Nephi's Vision of the Virgin and the Son of God," (88); "Out into the Wilderness," (64); "Making the Plates of Nephi," (129); "Lehi's Parting Blessing," (140); and "Offering Sacrifice as a Token of Gratitude," (271).

Karen Armstrong. *The Great Transformation:
The Beginning of Our Religious Traditions.*

New York: Anchor Books, 2007

Reviewed by Eric D. Huntsman

Karen Armstrong's *The Great Transformation* is an engaging and highly readable compendium and survey of the great religious and philosophical traditions of India, Israel, Greece, and China that focuses on the period of roughly 900–200 BC. The German philosopher and writer Karl Jaspers first termed this period “The Axial Age,”¹ a title Armstrong adopts in this and her other works about the era because she, like Jaspers, sees it as the axis around which human history pivoted. This age is also important to Latter-day Saint readers because it is the period of the great Hebrew and Book of Mormon prophets. The late Hugh Nibley, for instance, concentrated on this period even before he became familiar with Jaspers’s works, noting, “It is not without significance that Lehi counted among his contemporaries not only the greatest first names in science, politics, and business, but also the most illustrious religious founders known to history: Guatama Buddha, Confucius, Lao-tze [Laozi], Vardhaman Mahavira (the founder of Jainism), Zarathustra, and Pythagoras were all of Lehi’s day.”²

How strongly Armstrong depends upon Jaspers for both periodization and subject matter becomes apparent in reading this book. While she made allusions to the concept of the Axial Age in many of her previous works, interviews, and lectures, Armstrong reveals her debt to Jaspers by organizing *The Great Transformation* into ten chapters, the first nine of which are chronologically delineated but move synchronically between her four geographical focal points. Armstrong also builds upon Jaspers’s basic thesis that Axial civilizations shared certain social and economic conditions that led to intense spiritual introspection and innovation—namely incessant conflicts, political division, and cultures of violence that were paired with both overall prosperity and stark economic stratification.³

However, she adds to this thesis by focusing on the need for selflessness and compassion, and she demonstrates that these virtues were discovered independently in all four regions. Thus, for Armstrong, the important thing about Axial religions and philosophies is that they stressed not so much belief as behavior, and in each instance they produced variants of the Golden Rule (xviii–xix).

Armstrong's facility in working with such disparate traditions and her intense interest in matters of faith and belief are largely the result of her own intriguing life story. Her personal spiritual odyssey—not so much *to* faith but *through* faith—began after a seven-year period in a Roman Catholic convent in Britain. When she left her order in 1969, she was spiritually lost and emotionally damaged but at the cusp of her intellectual life.⁴ After studying at Oxford (she never completed her PhD) and briefly teaching at a girls' school, she began her research into general religious topics with a television assignment to produce a documentary about St. Paul. While in Jerusalem, she encountered not only the roots of Christianity but was also exposed, for the first time really, to Judaism and Islam.⁵ Of this experience she later said:

I began to see that there was much more to monotheism, to the idea of God . . . than I'd thought, despite my religious background. When I began to research my history of God—it was a long period of research that lasted for about three or four years—I began—still began in this skeptical spirit . . . to see that there was a lot in these monotheistic traditions that were really speaking to me, that I could relate to. And in the course of writing and studying, therefore, I came back to a sense of the divine.⁶

This experience sowed the seeds for her densely difficult but nonetheless engaging book *A History of God: The 4000-Year Quest of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (1993) and the more readily accessible *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths* (1996). In both of these works, Armstrong revealed her growing adeptness in moving within and between the three great Abrahamic traditions, leading herself to describe herself as “a freelance monotheist.”⁷ Later fruits of this approach include *The Battle for God: Fundamentalism in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (2000) and biographies of Muhammed (1992) and Buddha (2001). Armstrong's treatment of the Buddha, in fact, signaled a broadening of her interest and expertise beyond the monotheistic faiths, a change that laid the groundwork for *The Great Transformation*.

Armstrong's first chapter, “The Axial Peoples (c. 1600 to 900 BCE),” introduces her readers to the four cultures upon which she centers her book and establishes both Jaspers's basic thesis and her development of it.

Jaspers's historical rubric, perhaps reflecting biases of his day, had ignored the cultural and religious contributions of some earlier traditions, notably those of Egypt and Babylon. Armstrong perpetuates this approach, ignoring the religious, philosophical, and ethical contributions of other cultures (including the monotheism of Akhenaten), although her focus was probably necessary to make the book manageable.

The body of *The Great Transformation* then proceeds to chronicle how the religious and philosophical systems (both grounded in ritual and formalized patterns of behavior) evolved in India, China, Israel, and Greece, and how these systems arrived at relatively common understandings that individual interest and power must give way to concern for the universal good and to selfless compassion. This development is necessary in order for men and women to acquire the "spiritual technology" (275) needed to transcend the mundane struggles of life and achieve inner peace. The following seven chapters bear titles that reflect this evolution: "Ritual (c. 900 to 800 BCE)," "Kenosis (c. 800 to 700 BCE)," "Knowledge (c. 700 to 600 BCE)," "Suffering (c. 600 to 530 BCE)," "Empathy (c. 530 to 450 BCE)," "Concern for Everybody (c. 450 to 398 BCE)," and "All Is One (c. 400 to 300 BCE)." While Armstrong's general observations about this evolution seem correct, the rhetoric she uses to describe it seems overly influenced by the language of Eastern traditions: as she puts it, "The religious traditions created during the Axial Age in all four regions were rooted in fear and pain. . . . To acknowledge suffering fully was an essential prerequisite for enlightenment" (69).

The penultimate chapter, "Empire (c. 300 to 220 BCE)," witnesses China's descent into legalism under the Qin dynasty, India's coming under the sway of the Mauryan Empire, and the Near East falling under the dominion of Alexander the Great and his successors. In this context, the efforts of Laozi in China, the composers of the *Bhagavad-Gita* in India, and the Hellenistic philosophers are seen as rear-guard actions as the Axial Age draws to a close. The messianic piety of the Jews in the intertestamental period, in Armstrong's view, "had no roots in the Axial Age, and took Judaism in a different, post-Axial direction" (419).

Sometimes, however, the four cultures under discussion do not manifest synchronic development as conveniently as Armstrong seeks. While she recognizes that the great Axial figures—such as Zoroaster in Persia, Buddha in India, and Laozi and Confucius in China—were not actually as contemporaneous as Jaspers had implied (xxiii), her own periodization sometimes reveals itself as artificial when groups do not realize the appropriate stage of development in the period—and chapter—she is discussing. For instance, her discussion of social and economic developments

in seventh-century Greece centers on *kenosis* or “emptying” as the Greeks strive to develop an ethic of selflessness (104). This discussion, however, is in the fourth chapter, “Knowledge (c. 700 to 600 BCE),” whereas this same concept is discussed for India and the Israelites in the previous chapter, appropriately entitled “Kenosis (c. 800 to 700 BCE).” Likewise the Chinese Axial Age is centuries behind the others: while all four cultures begin to discover the transformative power of rituals in the period discussed in her second chapter, “Ritual (c. 900 to 800 BCE),” the Chinese are still concentrating on *li* or rituals in the fourth chapter on knowledge. Only later do they begin to move forward in the direction already taken by the other Axial cultures. Finally, chapter seven, “Concern for Everybody (450–398 BCE),” ironically begins with Israel’s retreat into exclusivity under Nehemiah and Ezra (291–95). In this same chapter, Armstrong’s narrative often digresses into an intellectual and religious chronicle that is interesting and useful to be sure, but which is barely held together by perfunctory references to Axial Age themes.

Armstrong’s skill in moving between and comparing traditions—a manifest strength in *The Great Transformation* and in her other published works—also reveals a certain weakness. She sometimes appears guilty of blurring differences and highlighting similarities. At times she also seems to favor traditions that have been less well-understood in the West in the search for “balance.” By her own admission, she first did this when she took a break from researching *A History of God* to write *Muhammed* in the period following Ayatollah Khomeini’s fatwa against author Salman Rushdie.⁸

Furthermore, there are moments in *The Great Transformation* when barely concealed biases almost smack of a form of religious or philosophical political correctness. The experience of the Greeks in the Axial Age, Armstrong maintains, was scientific and cultural, not religious, and they never abandoned their self-promoting heroic ethos (127). The cosmologies and insights of the natural philosophers of Miletus in the Greek Archaic Age could not be used “therapeutically” because “they had nothing to do with spiritual insight. . . . The Milesians developed their speculations for their own sake” (224–25). According to Armstrong, all Axial peoples were aware of the limitations of the human condition, but while others developed the “spiritual technology” necessary for transcending suffering in life, “the Greeks, it seems, could only see the abyss” (275). While she generally sees the move of the Greeks toward *logos* and reason as having kept them from reaching the spiritual heights of India or China, Armstrong nevertheless does find moments of Hellenic success, including the self-sacrifice of the tragic literary form in “the internalization . . . of ritual that characterized the spirituality of the Axial Age” (268).

Another weakness is Armstrong's tendency to subscribe to and advocate liberal scholarly assumptions when dealing with biblical matters without alerting her readers that these are still only theories. By not articulating for her readers, even briefly, the reasoning behind issues in biblical history and compositional theories, she presents these assumptions as accepted fact, thereby not rising to the kind of scholarly circumspection that one would expect of a writer of her caliber. For instance, in her first chapter on Axial peoples, she presents the "scholarly consensus" on the history of early Israel as arising out of a confederation of local Canaanites and already-in-place Hebrew tribes, dismissing the Exodus story as not having any significant claim to historicity (46–53). Her treatment of the reforms of Josiah, the Deuteronomists, Ezekiel, and the priestly school also reflect many positions popular in much current scholarship, but she reflects on these subjects with little background and discussion (185–216).

The chronological rubric of the Axial Age also excludes, by definition, a full treatment of the origins and development of Christianity, Rabbinic Judaism, and Islam, the subjects of her earlier *A History of God*. To her credit, however, Armstrong deals with these traditions in her stirring final chapter, "The Way Forward," when she describes these movements as building upon the spirit of the Axial Age. Here she pulls together the themes of *The Great Transformation* and ends with an inspiring call for a return to the Axial Age principles of compassion, selflessness, and a desire to avoid inflicting harm as a remedy for many of today's social and religious ills.

Eric D. Huntsman (eric_huntsman@byu.edu) is Associate Professor of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University. He received his PhD in Ancient History and Classics from the University of Pennsylvania. In Classics, his publications include: "And They Cast Lots: Divination, Democracy, and Josephus," and "The Reliability of Josephus: Can He Be Trusted?" *BYU Studies* 36, no. 3 (1996–7): 365–377 and 392–402; "Levels of Meaning: The *Ara Pacis Augustae* and the Teaching of Roman History," *Interdisciplinary Humanities* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 62–76; and "Livia before Octavian," forthcoming in *Ancient Society*. A coauthor of *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament* (Deseret Book, 2006), he has written several articles and chapters on New Testament subjects, most recently "The Lamb of God: Unique Aspects of the Passion Narrative in John," in *Behold the Lamb of God* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, 2008).

1. Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of Human History* (New Haven: Conn.: Yale University Press, 1953).

2. Hugh Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 3d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), xi, 53.

3. Jaspers, 1–6, 14–21.

4. Karen Armstrong, *Through the Narrow Gate: A Memoir of Spiritual Discovery* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981).
5. Karen Armstrong, *The Spiral Staircase: My Climb out of Darkness* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), vii–xx, 170–75, 226–53.
6. Karen Armstrong, interview by Brian Lamb, *Booknotes*, C-Span, September 22, 2000, <http://www.booknotes.org/Transcript/?ProgramID=1636>.
7. Armstrong, interview.
8. Armstrong, *The Spiral Staircase*, 273–83.

Howard Schwartz. *Tree of Souls: The Mythology of Judaism*.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2004

Reviewed by Roger G. Baker

Readers who hear “myth” and think “untrue” will not appreciate the encyclopedic collection of nearly seven hundred myths of Judaism in *Tree of Souls*. Readers who understand that myth goes beyond the Oxford English Dictionary’s definition of “traditional stories” and understand that myths are truth beyond historicity, will read Schwartz as someone who craftily merges Bible, Midrash, Talmud, and works kabbalistic, Hasidic, and rabbinic to discover the cultural and spiritual DNA of modern Jewish, and by interpolation, Christian belief and practice.

Those who view myth as an explanation of why we believe will enjoy *Tree of Souls*. Schwartz is very clear on his definition of myth: “Myth refers to a people’s sacred stories about origins, deities, ancestors, and heroes. Within a culture, myths serve as the divine charter, and myth and ritual are inextricably bound” (xliv). According to Schwartz, there are ten divine stories in Judaism and each includes submyths. His ten-myth paradigm organizes the book and makes it accessible to both scholar and student.

Tree of Souls is critically acclaimed, and it is a staple on academic bookshelves as the 2005 recipient of the National Jewish Book Award. However, the idea of a Jewish mythology is not universally accepted, and the reasons do not include the myth as untrue canard. Most objections seem connected to the idea that Judaism is monotheistic and myths require gods that interact and even compete or conspire. Elie Wiesel, one of the best modern-day tellers of Jewish stories, makes his point about Jewish mythology in *Messengers of God: Biblical Portraits and Legends*. Many of Wiesel’s retold Jewish stories come from biblical and midrashic texts, the same sacred texts used by Schwartz. But, according to Wiesel’s introduction, the stories are not myth:

Jewish history unfolds in the present. Refuting mythology, it affects our life and our role in society. Jupiter is a symbol, but Isaiah is a voice, a conscience. Mars died without having lived, but Moses remains a living

figure. The calls he issued long ago to a people casting off its bonds reverberate to this day, and we are bound by his Law. Were it not for his memory, which encompasses us all, the Jew would not be Jewish, or more precisely, he would have ceased to exist.¹

So while the same stories refute mythology for Wiesel, they are mythology for Schwartz. He establishes these founding stories as Jewish myth in spite of the fact that Judaism is monotheistic. In looking at the permutations of Jewish myth, Schwartz reveals a dialectic evolutionary process “that alternates between the tendency to mythologize Judaism and the inclination to resist such impulses” (xxxiii).

The questions remain: Is *Tree of Souls* a book for Latter-day Saints? Do these stories, myth or not, have relevance to our stories? Comparing one Jewish tradition with a Book of Mormon narrative and other LDS traditions will give an answer.

After the brother of Jared prepares his eight vessels, each with two holes for air, he fashions sixteen stones from mount Shelem, a place that is not referenced in the Bible, but in Hebrew *Shelem* as used in Amos 5:22 means “peace offering.” The brother of Jared asks the Lord to touch the clear white transparent stones so that they will “shine forth in darkness” (Ether 3:4), a phrase that could symbolically represent the gospel that will be preserved by the journey to a new land and continue to shine forth.

The sixteen stones may be *Tzohar*. The story in Ether echoes the flood narrative in Genesis 6:16 when Noah is instructed to make a cubit-sized window in the ark. In Hebrew he “put the *Tzohar* in the ark” (85), which is much more than an opening or “window” as translated in the King James Version. To summarize the mythic trajectory of *Tzohar*, or sacred light, it was created when God said “let there be light” (Gen. 1:3). *Tzohar* is the light of creation, but different from the light created later on the fourth day in connection with the sun, moon, and stars. *Tzohar* comes to represent exactly what Latter-day Saints already believe about the gospel light or “light of Christ” that enlightens us all.

In mythic tradition, *Tzohar* is sacred and is fully entrusted to worthy prophets for the benefit of all. Adam and Eve lose *Tzohar* at the Fall but receive part of it again in the form of a stone from the angel Raziel after their expulsion from the garden. Adam gives the *Tzohar* stone to Seth on his deathbed. Seth passes the light to Enoch who in turn gives it to Methuselah. Lamech, Methuselah’s son, delivers the sacred light to Noah who uses it in the ark but loses it while drunk after the ark has landed. The trajectory of the sacred light continues as the stone is possessed by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (85–88).

Myth says that Jacob had the light stone when he had the ladder dream, and the stone saved Joseph from snakes when his brothers threw him into a pit. Later, Joseph put the stone in the cup that he hid in Benjamin's sack. It was in the cup because Joseph used it and the cup for divination. "Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth?" (Gen. 44:5). Does not the *Tzohar* myth resonate with LDS traditions of translation, light, stones, and restoration of truth?

That cup, with the precious jewel in it, was placed inside Joseph's coffin at the time of his death, and it remained there until Moses recovered Joseph's coffin and was told in a dream to take out the glowing stone and hang it in the Tabernacle, where it became known as the *Ner Tamid*, the Eternal Light. And that is why, even to this day, an Eternal Light burns above every Ark of the Torah in every synagogue. (86)

Doctrinally and metaphorically speaking, Latter-day Saints would say that *Tzohar* passed through a period of apostasy until it was restored through priesthood authority. In my reading of Schwartz, a light has also passed to a student of Jewish mythology and we now have in *Tree of Souls* an encyclopedic retelling of the sacred stories in a new, well-organized academic light.

The *Tzohar* is only a small niche lasting a few pages in this 618-page reference book. LDS readers will perk up at many stories about the physical attributes of God that include breath, mind, eyes, face, arms, hands, and body. And together we can wonder where these physical attributes are in modern Jewish thought and find comfort in understanding where they are in LDS theology. LDS readers will no doubt pause to read stories of the bride of God, the translation of Enoch, Elijah the angel, the ascent of Moses, stories of the Abrahamic covenant including Abraham's glowing stone, the various stories surrounding the *akedah* (the binding of Isaac), numerous Sabbath tales, dozens of accounts regarding sacred garments including those of Adam and Eve, and an entire section of Messiah stories. With almost seven hundred carefully documented and explicated stories, the book seems to warrant a permanent place on a reader's desk or nightstand.

In spite of some readings that seem to make no sense from our cultural context and some that seem to contradict each other as well as LDS tradition, most invite further discovery and support our natural instinct to see the light of congruence and explanation within a restored LDS worldview. This congruence makes academic and spiritual sense if what Harold Bloom says about Joseph Smith is correct: "What is clear is that Smith and his apostles restated what Moshe Idel, a great living scholar of Kabbalah, persuades me was the archaic or original Jewish religion, a Judaism that

preceded even the Yahwist, the author of the earliest stories in what we now call the Five Books of Moses.”²

Roger G. Baker (who can be reached via email at byu_studies@byu.edu) is Professor of English, emeritus, at Brigham Young University and is the author of *The Bible as Literature: Out of the Best Book* (Ephraim, Utah: Snow College, 1995).

1. Elie Wiesel, *Messengers of God: Biblical Portraits and Legends*, trans. Marion Wiesel (New York: Random House, 1976), xi–xii.

2. Harold Bloom, “The Religion-Making Imagination of Joseph Smith,” Kingsbury Hall, University of Utah, 1990; Bloom, “The Religion-Making Imagination of Joseph Smith,” in *The American Religion: The Emergence of the Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 96–111; or Bloom, “The Religion-Making Imagination of Joseph Smith,” *Yale Review* 80 (1992): 26–43.

Thomas A. Wayment.
From Persecutor to Apostle: A Biography of Paul.
Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2006

Reviewed by Kathryn H. Shirts

As author Thomas Wayment noted in a radio interview publicizing *From Persecutor to Apostle*, we know more about Paul's life than we do about any other single person in the first century, and yet most of the books on Paul focus primarily on his teachings. In contrast, Wayment wanted to write a book about Paul himself, his family background, his early experiences, his missionary challenges, and his character in a way that would engage the general Latter-day Saint reader.

As an associate professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University with a PhD in New Testament studies from Claremont Graduate University, Wayment is well prepared to undertake such a study. He is coeditor of the excellent three-volume series of essays *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ* (2003, 2005, 2006) as well as coauthor of the beautifully illustrated and well-researched *Jesus Christ and the World of the New Testament* (2006), a reference book that is difficult to lay down once you pick it up. (I admit I bought at least ten copies for family and friends at Christmas.) Both previous projects draw on a wealth of current scholarship as well as insights from Latter-day Saint sources in a combination that offers readers the best of both worlds. In *From Persecutor to Apostle*, however, Wayment limits his citations, quoting only LDS General Authorities and ancient authors.

Wayment's ancient sources are well chosen and woven into the text to enhance the narrative. Wayment quotes Epictetus on the terror of sea travel, Plutarch on the boldness of pirates, and Lucian on the rigors of imprisonment. He cites Epiphanius to explore a clue regarding his speculation that Paul, as a young man in Jerusalem, was rebuffed in his aspiration to marry the daughter of a priest. Nevertheless, in failing to introduce LDS readers to contemporary scholarship on the life of Paul, Wayment loses an opportunity to involve his Latter-day Saint audience in the process of evaluating historical evidence for themselves.

Most likely, Wayment wanted to focus on the flow of Paul's story, not distracting readers with side issues and scholarly minutiae. However, this approach can be misleading. For example, Wayment asserts that Paul's progressively failing eyesight was the mysterious "thorn in the flesh" Paul bemoans in 2 Corinthians, without considering any of the other interpretations scholars continue to ponder. Wayment's arguments on this subject are intriguing (including Paul's reference to large handwriting in a postscript he penned himself) but certainly not conclusive. Wayment fails to even entertain the possibility that the "thorn" was metaphorical and not physical. New Testament scholarship often depends on making the most of scarce information, using cultural and historical clues to illuminate brief scriptural references or resolve contradictions in scriptural accounts. Wayment underestimates his LDS readers by not providing footnotes, or even endnotes, so they can ponder alternative explanations or engage in further reading.

The strongest and most interesting section in *From Persecutor to Apostle* explores Paul's early life and the historical circumstances that offered him such apt preparation for his role as the premiere emissary of Christ to the Gentiles. Wayment does an excellent job explaining how it was that Paul was born in Tarsus in Cilicia and why he was a Roman citizen. Although the fourth-century biblical translator Jerome claimed Paul was born in the town of Giscalis (in Galilee), meaning his parents were carried away by Roman soldiers during the unrest following the death of Herod the Great, Wayment suggests that the time frame works better if it was Paul's grandparents who were taken to Tarsus as slaves. Such a scenario explains how Paul's family could have had time to learn a trade, purchase their freedom, and accumulate enough wealth for their brilliant young son to attend the schools of rhetoric for which Tarsus was famous. At the age of nineteen or twenty, Paul journeyed to Jerusalem to study under Gamaliel, leader of the House of Hillel, the more compassionate of the two major Pharisaic schools. Wayment expertly evokes the first-century Jewish intellectual environment and carefully explores Paul's motivation for persecuting followers of Jesus at a time when most other Jews tolerated them as just another variation on Judaism.

Throughout the book, Wayment demonstrates Paul's prescient understanding of the challenge that Jesus the Messiah presented to the law of Moses. Wayment gives an intriguing explanation for the reason Paul went first to "Arabia" after his vision of the resurrected Lord. This area (actually the area of modern Jordan) was the land of the Nabataeans. According to tradition, they were descendants of Abraham through Ishmael's oldest son and practiced circumcision. Thus, Wayment argues, Paul knew that he could preach the gospel freely among them without raising the undecided issue of circumcising Gentile converts to the gospel of Christ.

Wayment also offers the unsettled question of circumcision as one explanation for the difficulties Paul encountered in establishing churches on his first extended mission with Barnabas through Asia Minor. Wayment points out that Luke's account in the Acts of the Apostles does not mention any baptisms between 30 and 49 AD. After 49 AD, however, when the council at Jerusalem definitively decided that circumcision would not be required for Gentile converts, Luke records many Gentile baptisms, beginning with Lydia's household in Philippi.

In discussing the dynamics of the council at Jerusalem, Wayment provides some interesting insights into early church leadership, including the emerging role of James, the brother of Jesus, as the local leader of the church in Jerusalem and an advocate of maintaining Jewish traditions. James eventually weighs in on the side of Peter and Paul, requiring only that converted Gentiles abstain from meat sacrificed to idols, but James does not necessarily extend his approval to the table fellowship of Jewish and Gentile followers of Christ.

While visiting Antioch, an important missionary hub established by Paul, Peter is persuaded to stop eating with Gentiles under pressure from delegates from Jerusalem, and Paul is furious. Wayment characterizes Paul's undiplomatic criticism of Peter as simply pride and insubordination, although Paul rightly anticipates the difficulties the Judaizers will cause as they follow his missionary trail from city to city, preaching the law of Moses and trying to turn his converts against him. (Were they the persistent "thorn in his flesh"?)

In evaluating Paul's relationship to other early church leaders, Wayment tackles interesting questions about what qualifies someone to be called an Apostle and how Paul fit the criteria. In deciding who should replace Judas, the eleven remaining Apostles determined that the new Apostle should be a witness to the Resurrection from among those who had known Christ throughout his ministry. Limiting apostleship to men who matched these qualifications, however, would mean that the calling of Apostle could not continue into the second century. Wayment evaluates other criteria that are not so restrictive. Even though there is no evidence that Paul met Jesus during his earthly ministry, Luke implies that Paul should be called an Apostle by virtue of his witness of the resurrected Lord, and Paul himself claims the title on the same grounds (Galatians 1:1). Wayment also explores the possibility that Paul may have been ordained to apostolic office when he returned to Jerusalem after his second missionary tour.

In the book's introduction, Wayment observes that after years of research, he finally gained an understanding of Paul as a person while traveling through many of the cities where Paul preached. As Wayment retraced Paul's steps, "his experiences, struggles, triumphs, passions, and

character fell into place for me. He became real, tangible, almost a present reality,” and Wayment explains that his motivation for writing his book on Paul was to help “others to experience what I have experienced” (xii–xiii). How well does Wayment succeed in giving his readers this sense of place, so key to the understanding of who Paul really was?

One of most difficult things in understanding Paul’s ministry is the profusion of unusual place names and unfamiliar geography related to his missionary experiences. Wayment tries to differentiate among them primarily by providing geographical detail and historical background. In *Paul: His Story*, a comparable biography published in 2004 by Oxford University Press, Jerome Murphy-O’Connor goes beyond physical description and historical setting to provide a great deal of ethnic and cultural detail. We feel that we know the Celtic Galatians well: tall and blond, with mustaches that become entangled in their food, hospitable but quick to fight, with exposure neither to Greek culture nor Jewish population. Murphy-O’Connor also makes the progress of Paul’s journeys more understandable by paying close attention to his missionary strategies. He describes, for example, the importance of establishing hub cities (Ephesus was such a missionary hub with key Christian communities within 200 to 300 miles in a 360-degree radius) and the advantages of earning one’s living along the way as a tentmaker (Paul could carry his tools in his pocketbook and had a skill needed in every city.)

On a more basic level, the wealth of interesting written material in *From Persecutor to Apostle* would be greatly enriched by a more interesting layout. The book provides only four maps, hidden on the end pages behind the flaps of the dust jacket. Any book on Paul’s travels should include many maps, illustrating the sweep of each mission as well as the environs of each major city. Ideally these maps should be placed near the text where each location is discussed, for quick reference. Furthermore, while color pictures are expensive, a few of them would be well worth the cost in a book relying so heavily on the readers’ appreciation of unfamiliar sites. Despite the lack of color photographs and the limited number of maps, I would encourage LDS readers to pick up *From Persecutor to Apostle*. If they do, they will be rewarded with many valuable insights into the life of the man who risked hunger and weariness, beatings and imprisonment, perils on the sea and perils in the wilderness to introduce the world to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Kathryn H. Shirts (who can be reached by email via byu_studies@byu.edu) holds a Master of Theological Studies degree from Harvard Divinity School. She is the coauthor of *A Trial Furnace: Southern Utah’s Iron Mission*, published by Brigham Young University Press (Provo, Utah) in 2001.

Solomon Schimmel. *Wounds Not Healed by Time.*

New York: Oxford University Press, 2002

Reviewed by Ronald E. Bartholomew

Solomon Schimmel,¹ a professor of Jewish education and psychology at Hebrew College in Massachusetts, presents a serious, scholarly discussion of revenge, justice, forgiveness, and repentance. In 2002, this book was awarded the best professional and scholarly publication in psychology by the Association of American Publishers. In it, Schimmel presents his arguments in the framework of an analytical comparison of the different perspectives of Christian, Islamic, and Jewish beliefs, with the purported purpose of coming to a clearer understanding of how these phenomena must be dealt with as part of the universal human experience. He also closely examines the differences between the various philosophies of psychology in relation to this focus. However, his personal bias towards the Hebrew scriptures and Jewish traditions overshadow his treatment of the Christian and particularly the Islamic perspectives. In addition, his personal preferences to particular philosophies of psychology are also evident. In these biases are found the weaknesses of this book, and they color his otherwise extremely scholarly presentation of the research.

With that said, the strengths of this book are too numerous for all of them to be mentioned here. Schimmel's treatment of revenge and justice as both psychological phenomena and responses to religious beliefs is exceptional. He asserts that evil is ever present, is perpetrated on all of us, and must be dealt with. He dismisses what he considers a typical Christian view that God's love requires us to forgive all people, regardless of whether or not they repent, or whether or not the demands of justice are met. Schimmel asserts that "the best balm . . . is the proper balance of justice, repentance, and forgiveness" (7). He explores deeply the human need, or perceived need, for revenge and justice, with the important differentiation between "public" and "private" revenge and justice. To do this, he uses examples from history, more often employing examples of Jewish persecution and privation. His major contributions in this section of the

book include his analysis of the evolution of these doctrines in the Old Testament. He navigates the divergent views of biblical writers, from the doctrine that the “iniquity of the fathers” being answered “upon the heads of the children to the third and the fourth generation” (Ex. 34:7), exacting revenge and justice on the often innocent descendants of the perpetrators of the original crimes (for example, the command for Saul to annihilate the Amalekites years after their fathers spurned the Jews), to the later and more widely accepted doctrine taught by Ezekiel: that children were not to be held accountable for their father’s sins (1 Sam. 15; Ezek. 18:20). Another significant contribution is his discussion of the apparent reality that wounded parties can never be objective in terms of the amount of evil perpetrated on them, the actual natures of the perpetrators of evil, or their deserved punishments—and that objective third parties should always be called upon to examine and resolve such matters.

After a detailed analysis of what forgiveness is and, more importantly, what it is not, Schimmel discusses why and when to forgive. His comparative analysis of the conflicting doctrinal foundations of Judaism and Christianity in this regard, juxtaposed against agnostic and atheistic beliefs, is his most valuable contribution in this section. His basic thesis is this: Christian and Jewish doctrine differs on two main points—Christians believe in the Fall and the Atonement, Jews do not. Therefore, from Schimmel’s Jewish perspective, there is no need for redeeming grace because men are not innately evil (68–69). Furthermore, agnostics and atheists do not attach religious meaning to repentance or forgiveness. His main contention is that “radical forgiveness”—which is based on a primarily Christian belief that we should imitate Jesus’ forgiveness of those who perpetuated evil acts on him, despite the absence of remorse, repentance, or justice—is morally wrong and possibly emotionally harmful (65, 70). He contrasts the Christian view, that we should forgive all sin regardless of whether or not repentance occurs or justice is met, with the Jewish view, based on Hebrew scripture and rabbinic teaching that, while it is a sin to bear false witness, it is also a sin to withhold testimony against a sinner, even, and perhaps especially, in a capital case. To illustrate, he cites an actual example of a Catholic nun who, true to her Christian convictions, refused to testify against two men who brutally raped and tortured her, because it was her responsibility as a Christian to forgive, forget, and even turn the other cheek. He contends that if she were true to Jewish scripture and tradition, she would have committed a grievous sin by not testifying against these men, even if it led to their conviction of a capital crime, because that is the only way justice could be served. By refusing to testify, she not only became responsible for the demands of justice not being met

but also for the future evils these men may perpetrate on others when freed prematurely from prison due to reduced sentences. The kind of forgiveness the nun exhibited is radical forgiveness. Schimmel's perspectives might be of particular interest to LDS Church members in light of relatively recent teachings given by former members of the First Presidency who related stories of what Schimmel might consider acts of radical forgiveness and the need for LDS Church members to emulate these examples.²

Schimmel does not abdicate Christian principles entirely. On the contrary, while disagreeing with them from his doctrinal perspective, he claims some of them might actually be psychologically beneficial. For example, he continues to offer the Christian notion of forgiving others whether they have repented or not (which goes against his Jewish theology) as psychologically beneficial if done in the right way and for the right reasons. However, while heralding the positive, personal psychological effects of the Christian teachings of love and forgiveness, he asserts these principles will not only fail to heal a troubled world, but might actually retard the ethical and moral improvement of people because, instead of dealing directly with the evils we perpetuate on one another, we offer leniency and even excuses for them.

One of the greatest contributions of this book is Schimmel's careful analysis of several leading psychological theories on how to forgive. These analyses are carefully interwoven with both Christian and Jewish theologies in an attempt to elucidate, validate, and help the believer find doctrinal congruencies in them. I found this section of the book to be a helpful and objective attempt to lead the reader to valuable resources relating to the "how" of forgiveness.

Schimmel's analysis of self-forgiveness is deep, well balanced, and intelligent; moreover, his discussion of forgiving God is brilliant. His Jewish perspective lends itself well to his treatise, as does his familiarity with the literature. He explores the multifaceted phenomenon of believers becoming angry at God. Not only does he explore the reasons behind this anger, but also various responses to it and ways believers have successfully overcome it. This extraordinary analysis leaves one hopeful that a believer can retain faith despite evils suffered and despite the paradox of believing that God is both all-powerful and loving and yet either unable or unwilling to remove or prevent evil perpetrated against oneself.

Schimmel's assessment of the difference between Christian, Jewish, and Islamic doctrine in relation to repentance is this: Christians do not see repentance as a prerequisite to forgiveness; those embracing the Jewish and Islamic faiths do (141). Regardless of an individual's religious orientation, or absence of one, Schimmel asserts that repentance is

psychologically beneficial. He suggests that it is a positive way to rectify the harms you have done to yourself, your victim, and your relationships. By repenting, you can restore your moral status and worth as an individual, as well as relieve your pain and suffering and that of the victim. Repentance also has the potential of restoring valuable interpersonal and societal relationships between the sinner and the victim and between the sinner and God. In addition to offering a rather simplistic approach to repentance for specific “sins” of omission or commission, he also provides an analysis of the theology surrounding repentance as a successful method of self-transformation. Drawing on both Christian and Hebrew theologies, he suggests this can be either the process required for replacing undesirable characteristics with more desirable ones, or the much deeper process of conversion that occurs when an individual becomes a new person. He concludes this section with a valuable analysis, from his perspective as a psychologist, of the parallels between repentance and psychotherapy and how therapists might help individuals overcome the obstacles to change.

Schimmel follows up this careful analysis of repentance with a discussion of reformation. Can evil-doers reform? Can their claims of reformation be trusted? If so, how can true reformation be assessed? He employs two examples for analysis: the penal system and rabbinical law. He draws from these several conclusions: (1) moral self-improvement is possible; (2) psychologists should be able to develop instruments that could reliably measure true remorse and reformation; (3) innovative systems could plausibly be developed that would enable offenders to undo, amend, or substitute for the harm they have done; and (4) religious and civic laws should induce offenders to reform, not have built-in systems to perpetuate punishments and retard the desire or even the opportunity for reformation. He asserts that reforming the penal system from where it is now to a place where offenders are taught a civic form of repentance and reformation is desirable for many reasons, including the innate value of reformation itself as well as reintroducing the offender into society. However, he admits this proposition is clouded by many difficult issues: (1) the fact that not all offenders see themselves as needing reform or do not have a desire to reenter what they see as a flawed society; (2) the demands of justice from victims and a general lack of trust by the public that offenders really do or even can reform; and (3) the feeling held by many that offenders should be required to continue to pay a debt to justice even after their initial debt has been paid in prison.

The final section of the book takes a close look at group crime, punishment, and resolution, and the related idea of an individual or group “repenting” for acts committed by their ancestors or predecessors.

Schimmel makes a good case for the impossibility of both. He asserts that groups cannot repent, because sins are not committed by groups but by individuals in groups, and so it would therefore be impossible for groups to feel the same degree of remorse or make individual restitution and reformation required for true repentance. Likewise, an individual or member of a group may feel sincere remorse for what their predecessors had wrongfully done but would not be able to fully repent for the same reasons. However, groups or individuals can make efforts to reconcile with other groups or individuals by employing as many aspects of true repentance as possible, given the obvious limitations. Schimmel's genius in this argument is not only manifested in the principles he asserts, but also in the examples from history he employs, ranging from Apartheid in South Africa to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

This widely acclaimed book offers much to a pluralistic society that will inevitably experience more, not less, of a need for the ideas and concepts Schimmel so carefully explores and amplifies.

Ronald E. Bartholomew (ron.bartholomew@byu.edu) is visiting professor in the Department of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University and a member of the BYU Studies Academy. He received his PhD from the University of Buckinghamshire in 2006, and his publications include "Babylon and Zion: Buckinghamshire and the Mormons in the Nineteenth Century," *Records of Buckinghamshire* 48 (Spring 2008).

1. Schimmel is also author of *The Seven Deadly Sins: Jewish, Christian, and Classical Reflections on Human Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Dr. Schimmel received his BA from the City College of New York and MA and PhD from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. He has been a National Science Foundation Research Fellow at Harvard University and a visiting professor or research fellow at Brandeis University, University of Texas, and Bar-Ilan University.

2. To illustrate the virtue of forgiveness, President Gordon B. Hinckley told the story of a woman whose face was crushed by a twenty-pound frozen turkey thrown through her windshield by a teenage boy. After enduring hours of reconstructive surgery and still facing years of therapy, this woman insisted on a plea deal in order to reduce the offender's sentence from twenty-five years to six months, all because she was more interested in salvaging his life than exacting revenge. See Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Healing Power of Christ" *Ensign* 37 (May 2007): 67–68. President James E. Faust shared a story in a similar vein about an Amish community that offered immediate forgiveness to the family of the murderer of five of their daughters as an expression of their faith in Christ. See James E. Faust, "Forgiveness," *Ensign* 35 (November 2005): 83–84.

Sherman L. Fleek. *History May Be Searched in Vain:
A Military History of the Mormon Battalion.*

Spokane, Wash.: Arthur H. Clark, 2006

Reviewed by Stephen B. Sorensen

Basically, the Mexican War is an unknown conflict in American history. Most people do not know when it was fought, why it was fought, and, despite the name, who was involved. Yet from this war, the United States gained most of its western territory, including President James K. Polk's prize of California. In addition to ceding land to the United States, the war served as a training ground for an up-and-coming generation of American military officers who would achieve their own historical immortality in the American Civil War. Within the larger conflict are many interesting stories of personal and unit action that inspire and remind us of heroism, determination, and struggle despite seemingly impossible odds. It is in the context of this war that the Mormon Battalion was organized.

Many published and unpublished histories document the personal stories of those involved, but no one until now has made a serious scholarly attempt to explore the Battalion on a military basis. It is difficult to approach another work on the Mormon Battalion because the subject is tied to the family lore and spiritual history of so many people. It is part of the heritage that still gilds many perceptions today. None of this appears to ruffle author Sherman Fleek. Using his military and academically trained history background, he has made a lasting and very readable contribution to the scholarship on the unit by exploring what it truly was: a government-mustered collection of Mormon companies, formed into a battalion with a military objective in a time of war.

One way Fleek's book surpasses many of the previous accounts is in the manner that it attempts to strip away some of the folklore that has found place in some previous histories. Appropriate historical background is given, not only to the Mormons and their saga, but also to the smoke-filled back rooms of Washington, D.C., and the broader political motivation for organizing the Battalion. The Battalion's contribution is not downplayed

but is dealt with in an objective manner. There is no doubt that both sides of the bargain, the Mormons and the government, saw advantages to forming the military unit. More importantly, the author strategically places the Mormon Battalion in its 1846 historical context as a capable second string kept at the ready should serious efforts be required of the unit. The Battalion proved militarily adequate for this role. Also, the author understands the concept of American Manifest Destiny in its true character as a political philosophy only enabled through force of arms. The Mormon Battalion played an important role in being those arms for the government and in securing the southwestern United States and California.

Fleek stresses that the Battalion was formed as a combat unit in the Mexican War, and his proof is adequate. Also, there is no doubt in the author's mind or in his arguments that the Battalion would not have come about without the endorsement and evangelism of Brigham Young. Fleek details the unique circumstances of a military unit formed from a particular faith, with appointed leaders from that faith and the odd compromises that allowed several wives and some children to begin to accompany the Battalion on its march. His use of journal material from the soldiers adds a richness that comes from reading the language of the time. Fleek details the tension among the appointed Mormon officers, who, with limited experience, acted in a quasi-military, religious role to develop an inexperienced volunteer force into a reliable fighting combat unit.

However, there is one question that is explored less satisfactorily: what was the level of the Battalion's military preparedness? The question is raised but never fully dealt with. Aspects of the Battalion's training are noted, and some anecdotal statements are presented, but no in-depth exploration is made. The military historian is left wanting more. Fleek opens the door, but this is one of those areas that will have to be left for other works to explore. Also, there are some editing lapses in the book that are minor and a few redundancies that a careful review might have eliminated, but none of the errors are annoying or overly detracting from the completed work.

The author has generously mined the available secondary source material with reference to several primary works. The work is not exhaustive, which is a benefit to the general reader, but is greatly enhanced by the timely discovery and addition of the journal of non-Mormon Dr. George Sanderson, the Battalion's chief medical officer. Sanderson's journal adds an interesting perspective on the health and well-being of the Battalion and at the same time offers interesting military and social commentary. Through Sanderson's own words, it is clear that the oft-noted lack of

regard was reciprocal between the members of the Battalion and their chief surgeon.

One satisfying aspect of the text is Fleek's periodic expeditions away from the Battalion in order to show the broader action of the Mexican War and what was occurring as the conflict progressed. He successfully establishes important context, enhancing the reader's understanding and timing of the Battalion's journey. He refers to the combat actions of and personality sparks between generals Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott. Giving the broader context is an effective technique and clarifies that the Battalion's struggles and difficulties were not the only hardships of the war. Fleek spends precious little space detailing some of the nonessential military aspects of the Battalion's organization and march: the civilian caravan that is painstakingly split off and sent to Pueblo; the meddling of John D. Lee and others fomenting discord among the volunteers; the minor leadership squabbles between the men, the officers, and the Church leaders; and some bad behavior by certain individuals are touched on but not dwelt upon. Even the often-dramatized "Battle of the Bulls," named for the one hundred or so wild cattle that charged into the Battalion, is dispatched in a few short sentences as a less-than-significant distraction.

Fleek does detail many of the well-known personalities from American history that weave their way in and out of the Battalion's story. The detail provided on these people makes for satisfying reading. Scout Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, who as a baby was carried on the back of his mother, Sacagawea, during the Lewis and Clark expedition, links the westward expansion of the United States and the Corps of Discovery with the Battalion's military march. The collection of stories and anecdotes add depth to the narrative: Kit Carson, George Rosecrans, and Sterling Price are just a few of the other renowned figures of their day whose paths intertwined with the Battalion.

No military interpretation of the Mormon Battalion would be useful without an analysis of the officers involved. Fleek's analysis is one of the great strengths of his book. In addition to giving strong biographical information, he breathes life into Battalion commander James Allen and gives a proper understanding of Alexander Doniphan and his Missouri volunteers. Fleek gives Colonel Stephen W. Kearny his due and reinforces Kearny's place in history as one of the great leaders and characters of the emerging American military in the pre-Civil War era. His ability to organize, manage, and maintain the Army of the West during the Mexican War era is understood and appreciated from a military historian's eye. It is a well-deserved perspective when studying Kearny and his command,

particularly in light of how he secured California for the United States. In addition, Philip St. George Cooke is appropriately recognized as the outstanding frontier commander of his time. Fleek is not shy about voicing respect and admiration for Cooke, but he never steps over the line to become an apologist. Cooke comes across as a stern commander who hit problems head-on, solved them when he could, and relied on discipline and grit to survive. He clearly cared for the lives of his soldiers, and the records cited show the strength of the unit as a by-product of the strength of its commander. Fleek shows his level of respect for Cooke by naming the book after Cooke's now famous statement regarding the Battalion: "History may be searched in vain for an equal march of infantry." The book details the veracity of this statement in light of military history and interprets, with fairness, the reality of this claim. Often maligned A. J. Smith and Dr. George Sanderson are seen in a new light when viewed through the prism of military expediency and authority. Fleek is fair and even with both. John C. Frémont is appropriately exposed for his self-serving antics and treasonous behavior with the "Bear-Flaggers" in California.

This book is not a comprehensive study of command, although it is part of the work; neither is it a study of all the minutia of issues facing volunteer units in the Mexican War, yet it is part of that as well. However, it is not enlightening to define the book by what it is not instead of by what it is. This work serves as a launchpad for additional studies that need to be done. Fleek has created a solid foundation on which other works can build and explore other aspects of military history as it applies to the Mormon Battalion. Some examples might include comparisons of Battalion mortality rates with other units that did not see combat, military discipline exercised against members of the Battalion as opposed to other units, expenses and stores spent on the Battalion compared to other contemporary military units, and legal status and enlistment practices between state and federal militias. There is still plenty of fertile ground to be plowed.

Gratefully, Fleek has begun the process of seeing the Battalion as a military unit. As such, he concludes his story with the discharge of the Battalion and its Mormon volunteers when their service was completed in California. Appropriately, he sees no need to detail their journey from California back to the Great Basin.

The work does not stand as definitive on the Battalion in general, but it is vitally important in filling a long-neglected part of Battalion history. With that in mind, there is ample room for a "huzzah!" for this work and its author. Fleek's research has been sorely needed in the field of historical scholarship on the Battalion, and he has finally done the heavy lifting to

create a bedrock work for those seeking a solid military understanding of the Mormon Battalion and its unique character as a volunteer unit in the almost-forgotten Mexican War.

Stephen B. Sorensen (sorensenstephenb@qwest.net) is an instructor at the University of Utah and a speaker, researcher, and writer on nineteenth-century America and westward expansion. Sorensen has been a consultant for Old Deseret Village and has overseen the authentic group of pioneer reenactors for the sesqui-centennial wagon train reenactment from Omaha to Salt Lake City in 1997.

Mark A. Noll. *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis*.

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006

Reviewed by Mary Stovall Richards

In early September 1862, following disastrous Union losses, President Abraham Lincoln meditated on the role of God in human affairs and the attempts of humankind to discern divine will: "In great contests each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both *may* be, and one *must* be wrong. God can not be *for*, and *against* the same thing at the same time" (88–89). Lincoln's observation aptly summarized a major dilemma facing Americans, North and South, in the Civil War and the decades preceding it. How could each side claim the support of God for its position?

Mark A. Noll, the Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History at the University of Notre Dame, looks beyond the more obvious political, economic, and social lines of cleavage between opposing sections and instead focuses on their contradictory opinions of God's will, which transcended geographical lines. Even Northerners were divided among themselves in interpreting the Bible. In this collection of expanded lectures originally delivered at Penn State University and based on his analysis of writings of American and European theologians, Noll poses the questions: How could Protestants who had so much in common come to understand the Bible and God's will so differently? How was this divergence manifested in views on slavery, which ultimately led to the Civil War? And, why did this dissension result in a theological crisis for American Protestants?

Noll's answers in this well-written and insightful work are complex. To address these questions, he takes on a multitude of issues: background on the establishment of the United States as a primarily Protestant nation, arguments over divine approbation of slavery, the role of race in religious discussions of American slavery and the legacy of that discussion, Northern and Southern views on God's intervention in history, and viewpoints of European Christians on slavery and the Civil War. It is a tall order for a slim volume, but Noll makes every word count. In the process he

demonstrates convincingly that one cannot fathom American culture, slavery and the sectional crisis, and the Civil War without understanding the centrality of covenantal Protestantism to both shapers of thought and ordinary Americans in the mid-nineteenth century.

Thus, Noll's book offers perspectives not just on American Protestantism but also on the mind and values of American society generally. Protestantism became dominant in the United States, according to Noll, because it had wed religion and republicanism; not only were thousands converted during the Second Great Awakening, but the religion also offered a vision of America that coincided with the converts' political views. Protestant ministers argued that Americans were chosen people, part of God's covenant, which emphasized the connection between civic virtue and freedom. Further, Protestants had embraced the Enlightenment ideal of individual reason. An ordinary, diligent person could read and understand the Bible. Such views, Noll contends, empowered individuals as arbiters of biblical understanding to such an extent that those who challenged a reader's "common-sense" meaning of a text were not seen as mistaken but as maliciously distorting scripture. When the interpretation of the Bible focused on an issue—slavery—that divided the country economically, socially, and morally, the stakes were raised even higher as Southerners and abolitionists volleyed scriptures at each other. As Noll so eloquently comments, "The Book that made the nation was destroying the nation" (8).

Noll moves beyond an analysis of biblical proslavery and abolitionist arguments, which have been studied in depth by other scholars. Instead, he is interested in analyzing why abolitionists' arguments were decried even by some opponents of slavery in the North. He argues that abolitionists' repudiated biblical literalism, which allowed slavery, and instead emphasized the Bible's overall message of love and equality, which threatened the position of the Bible as the standard of truth. If one discounted verses permitting slavery, what else might one discard? Some ministers tried to sustain the position of the Bible but attack the specific variant of Southern slavery as unbiblical. Their arguments garnered little support because, as Noll maintains, they relied on a knowledge of biblical history and context, not just a surface reading of the text that was supposedly comprehensible to all.

Intertwined with support for Southern slavery were assumptions that the Bible sanctioned race-based African slavery. Racism was woven into arguments for black slavery, including those that focused on the Bible. Thus, even when slavery ended, Noll explains, a popular view of biblical support for racism remained.

Noll also examines Northern and Southern views of divine providence. Because orthodox believers held that God controlled history, both sections claimed to see the hand of God in the Civil War and understand what he was doing. Northerners regarded Union victory as directed by God, but Southerners had to explain defeat, which their ministers viewed as divine chastening of the faithful. Noll contends that such simplistic views of God's will amid the moral complexities of war undercut belief in providence among some intellectuals. In the aftermath of the war, they moved away from what Noll terms "theological certainties" (92) to scientific explanations for interpreting the world.

In one of the greatest contributions of the work, Noll analyzes the writings of European and Canadian Protestants and Catholics on the Bible and slavery. While he admits his research is still fragmentary, his conclusions illuminate differences between American and European views. With few exceptions, Protestants abroad condemned slavery by focusing on moral argument rather than a minute dissection of verses. Noll argues that because European Christianity relied more on a body of traditional scriptural interpretation rather than Americans' individualistic views, dissent over what the Bible taught about slavery was more easily settled.

While European Catholics disagreed among themselves on biblical support for slavery, many Catholic commentators emphasized Catholicism's efforts to ameliorate the conditions of slavery. They also emphasized the unity of biblical understanding that came from the writings of the church fathers. Catholic Cardinal Karl August von Reisach even used the birth of Mormonism as an example of what was wrong with Protestantism. A religious system in which individuals read the Bible for their own answers had led to the rise of numerous denominations, the "most fantastic" of which was Mormonism (150). While the cardinal acknowledged that Mormonism claimed religious authority—something he condemned Protestant churches for lacking—he deemed Joseph Smith's teachings "the most impudent fables" that "totally destroy the foundations of Christ" (152). Only the traditional authority of Catholicism could produce religious stability and unity.

Noll's work makes a major contribution to our understanding of how the early national public Protestant consensus was destroyed by slavery and the Civil War. Generals, not ministers, he points out, ultimately determined the meaning of scripture. In a poignant lament, he notes that Protestant theology was so shaken by the war that it could not marshal resources to answer the challenges posed by racism, higher criticism, evolution, and rampant industrial capitalism. After the Civil War, religion exerted less direct influence on public policy.

If the book has a weakness, it is its brevity. Noll crams every page with important points that cry out for more discussion. For example, his second chapter, “Historical Contexts,” is much more understandable to those readers conversant with his *America’s God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), which covers the same concepts in two hundred pages rather than thirteen. While Noll notes that he is not writing a monograph, such concision allows the reader little time to absorb an idea before confronting another. Yet, it is perhaps not a bad thing to say that a book has too many ideas rather than too few.

Last, *BYU Studies* readers who are not interested in slavery, the Civil War, or the history of theology may wonder why they should read this book. While Noll’s references to Mormonism are not his main point, he raises important questions about the use and abuse of scripture, particularly as a political tract, and effectively gives a sense of the stakes involved in reading sacred texts in particular ways. As Noll demonstrates, too often we see what we want to see.

Mary Stovall Richards is Associate Professor of History at Brigham Young University. She received her PhD at the University of Chicago, with her professional emphasis on the nineteenth-century South. Her publications have focused on women’s history, history of the family, and African American History.

Melissa Lambert Milewski, editor. *Before the Manifesto:
The Life Writings of Mary Lois Walker Morris.*

Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2007

Reviewed by Cherry B. Silver

In *Before the Manifesto*, readers will be drawn into the late nineteenth-century world of Mary Lois Walker Morris (1835–1919) by a happy blend of memoir and diaries, introduced by a capable documentary editor, Melissa Lambert Milewski. *Before the Manifesto* contains the multifaceted record of a Salt Lake City poet, plural wife, and Church worker, who writes about her life with passion, faith, and keen insights in a time of religious tension and social expansion.

Mary Lois Walker emigrated from England with her parents after the family joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At age seventeen, in St. Louis, Missouri, she married the young Welsh artist John Thomas Morris. Despite their devotion to each other, the marriage ended tragically in 1855 with the death of their son followed by John's demise from tuberculosis in Cedar City, Utah. On his deathbed, John, invoking the principle of levirate marriage, asked his older brother Elias to marry Mary Lois and rear up children to him. Brigham Young "approved the arrangement and set the date for the marriage in a year's time." Elias and Mary Lois were accompanied on their journey to the Endowment House in Salt Lake City by his first wife, Mary Parry, and two children. Mary Lois was sealed "for time" to Elias and "for eternity" to John (8–9, 11).

Together Mary Lois Walker and Elias Morris had eight children born between 1859 and 1882 with five surviving to adulthood. Their descendants became outstanding Church and community leaders: their son Nephi Lowell served as Salt Lake stake president and businessman, another son, George Quayle, served as an Apostle (1954–62), and their granddaughter Adele Cannon Howells served as the general president of the Primary (1943–51).

Mary Lois Walker Morris began writing diaries in a series of daybooks on January 1, 1879, and continued for forty years. She stopped writing just six months before her death. From these accounts, editor Melissa Lambert

Milewski selects passages written between 1879 and 1887 that are “among the most dramatic and significant in her life” (ix). Mary Lois and her husband lived together every other week until 1885 when prosecution against polygamy prompted their separation. The diaries convey her feelings as a plural wife going into hiding in 1885 and again in 1886. When Elias Morris was arrested and later tried in 1887, “she publicly denied their marriage” (ix). Charged with unlawful cohabitation with her between May 1, 1883, and December 31, 1885, Elias asked Mary Lois to testify that they had not lived together since 1882. She so testified, and he was acquitted. Thereafter they maintained separate residences.

An epilogue included in this volume covers another dramatic event. Mary Lois’s youngest daughter, Kate Morris, married her sister’s husband, George M. Cannon, in 1901, a decade after the Manifesto supposedly put an end to authorized Church plural marriages. Mary Lois stayed with Kate from 1902 to 1905 among the Mormon families in Colonia Juárez and seized the chance to study at the Juárez Academy. After the birth—and death—of Kate’s twins, Mary Lois’s son George brought her and Kate back. Mary Lois lived in Salt Lake City, and Kate returned to exile in Preston, Idaho.

What do these selections from her diary and life sketch, along with Milewski’s perceptive introductory essay, contribute to our understanding of religious practices and women’s history? Milewski is wise to cover contemporary concerns—particularly those of race, class, and gender. The diaries include entries that tell us people of color—African Americans in slavery, Native Americans, and Mexican nationals—“occasionally penetrated her awareness” (30). The editor summarizes these entries in her introduction (30–31). Milewski also contrasts social levels in Salt Lake City. On the timeline of Salt Lake’s development as a city, many began in poverty but rose through merit. The Morrises were such. Mary Lois helped support the family while Elias was in Wales on a mission (1865–69) and as his early business ventures underwent hard times. Milewski quotes text from Mary Lois’s 1878 millinery advertisement in the *Woman’s Exponent* (26). We learn from her autobiography that after the couple’s separation, she continued to live in the house Elias Morris built for her and drew an allowance from the Morris businesses.¹ For ready cash, she took in female college students as boarders, sold a little milk from their cow, and took help from her son George’s paycheck to support Kate’s university education and Nephi’s mission.² She creatively fulfilled her positions in the Church and maintained her artistic bent through sewing, writing poetry, reading, and home entertainments.

For many readers, the drama of Mary Lois's two family-related events—becoming a second wife to her husband's brother and lying to defend him from imprisonment for polygamy—centers the interest of the book within the field of gender studies. Morris's life sketch includes contradictory responses to plural marriage. First is her despair at the time of being sealed to Elias Morris in 1856. The young Mary Lois expressed intense sympathy for the first wife Mary Parry as well as personal dread:

So I kneeled on the altar in God's Holy House with the deepest dread in my heart that I had ever known. No physical strength could have drawn me there, had I consulted my own feelings. But God required it. I sensed keenly that it was no[t] my happiness alone that was sacrificed, but it was marring the happiness of others, which rendered the cup doubly bitter. I knew that nothing that I could do would remove the sting that comes to the heart of a first wife when her husband enters into the order of Plural Marriage. (124)

By Elias Morris's death in 1898, she saw him as her "benefactor," deserving of high respect, but almost a stranger (42). Furthermore, in her older years, she strongly encouraged Kate to enter into plural marriage. Addressing her older children, she wrote:

Some time previous to this, your sister Kate had decided to keep one of the laws of God which the world, with the enemy of souls at the bottom of it, has been fighting for the last seventy years.

And I will here bear this testimony, if I never bear it again, that God has sent to earth through this principle, some of the noblest spirits that ever left their Father's courts above. And so much faith have I in this Celestial order of marriage that I would go to the ends of the earth to sustain it, although I am verging onto my seventy-seventh year. The way is thorny and the path is steep. I have trodden it before them, and I hope that my children will have the courage and integrity to walk therein. I know such a path is "the refiner's fire and the fuller's soap." So we will leave our little Kate in the crucible and I know that God will stand by her if she trusts in him.³

Milewski expands the story by relating the negative reactions of sons Nephi and George to Kate's marriage along with hints that Mary Lois Morris herself encouraged Kate to become a polygamist wife (46). The editor uncovers older sister Addie's unhappy and even desperate response as reported in a descendant interview:

Despite the LDS church's official announcement ending polygamy in 1890, Addie's husband, George M. Cannon, married two plural wives in 1901, one of whom was Kate.⁴ According to family lore, Addie did not learn about her husband's plural marriages until after the weddings and

was so upset “when she found out that he had married her sister she tore her hair out by the roots. She was just horrified.”⁵

Not just events but intense emotions emerge from these reports.

What is omitted in this volume? Sections of Morris’s “Autobiography” covering the 1890s and events after 1905 are not published, understandably, because the book already numbers 574 pages, but regrettably, too, because we lose her fuller accounts of family and social life by focusing on material before the Manifesto of 1890. In the typescript “Autobiography,” one also finds detailed descriptions of the funeral festivities for her husband Elias, how she took in boarders and managed the family cow, illnesses and healings, the missions and marriages of her mature sons Nephi and George, the birth of grandchildren, and praise of her son Nephi’s house décor. All the descriptions are eminently readable and round out the picture of turn-of-the-century Mormon society. In unpublished sections, Mary Lois alludes to the economic contrasts between her two daughters married to George M. Cannon: there was the first wife, Addie, living comfortably in an attractive house in Forest Dale, and the second wife, Kate, with her little daughter, fighting dust and floods in Mexico, meeting crises of health in rented quarters in Preston, Idaho, or by 1907 tucked inconspicuously into her brother’s house in Salt Lake City.

I also regret that the published selections do not cover the expansive feminine social scene in Salt Lake City. A scan of the Emmeline B. Wells diaries, for instance, reveals Mary Lois Morris’s participation in the club movement beginning in the 1890s, where she was a presenter and officer in the Reapers’ Club. As program chair in 1902, Mary Lois went to Wells, the group’s founder, to clear a topic she proposed on religious studies, since Wells was “the mother and founder of the Club.”⁶ Also omitted is Mary Lois’s contribution as counselor to Camilla Cobb in the Salt Lake Stake Primary Association during years of expansion of the kindergarten movement. These Primary leaders rallied around her when she was widowed in 1898.⁷

If space had permitted, more characters could be indexed or included in the biographical register. When I recommended this volume to descendents of Gladys and Joseph C. Bentley for the excellent accounts of the Bentleys’ kindness to Kate and Mary Lois Morris in Colonia Juárez, I had to flip through the epilogue page by page to locate characters not in the index.

Nonetheless, this volume is a worthy addition to the Utah State University series. Its value lies in the alertness and acumen of the diarist, the intensity of the issues covered, and the skillful interpretations of the editor.

Cherry B. Silver (cherry.silver@att.net) received her PhD from Harvard University in 1964 and is a former instructor in American Literature at BYU and a former member of the BYU Studies book review committee. Along with Carol Cornwall Madsen, she edited *New Scholarship on Latter-day Saint Women in the Twentieth Century* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for LDS History, 2005).

1. Mary Lois Walker Morris, "Autobiography, 1895–1903," 1976(?), typescript in L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

2. Morris, "Autobiography," 253–55.

3. Morris, "Autobiography," 338–39.

4. The other was Ellen Christina Steffensen. www.familysearch.org.

5. Gabrielle Woods (daughter of George Q. Morris), interview, February 15, 2003, quoted in "Introduction," 44.

6. Morris, "Autobiography," 331–32.

7. Morris, "Autobiography," 269.

Eric A. Eliason. *The J. Golden Kimball Stories*.
Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007

Reviewed by Elliott Oring

In *The J. Golden Kimball Stories*, Eric A. Eliason offers an “as-complete-as-possible” collection of the oral narratives surrounding the figure of J. Golden Kimball (vii). He presents some 180 texts, drawn mainly from conversations with informants and from folklore archives. The texts are presented in eleven chapters. The first eight chapters are organized according to story theme: chapter 1 (ten texts) deals with J. Golden Kimball’s attempts to manipulate or trick his interlocutors; chapter 2 (thirty texts) with his responses to hostile Gentiles and self-satisfied Mormons; chapter 3 (twenty-six texts) with his pointed comments on Mormonism and its leaders; chapter 4 (nine texts) with his adherence to the Mormon health code; chapter 5 (twenty-two texts) with his views on the practice of swearing; chapter 6 (twenty-eight texts) with his preaching and counseling; chapter 7 (eleven texts) with his rebukes both to Mormon congregations and to Gentiles; and chapter 8 (five texts) with both self-imposed and Brethren-imposed efforts to repent. There is a certain amount of overlap in this arrangement, and readers may have difficulty locating particular stories when they look for them.

Because Eliason is presenting stories found in folk tradition, he wishes to illustrate some of the textual variations that mark orally transmitted narratives. Eleven narratives included in the volume are presented as variants of other texts and follow the texts they most resemble. Yet “Tithing” (58), which appears to be a variant of “Giving Your All” (56); “Patriarchal Blessing” (98), which appears to be a variant of “Parentage” (65); and “Vocabulary” (85), which is a variant of “Vocabulary Words” (83), are presented—and I am not sure why—as unrelated texts. The anecdotes included in the last three chapters of the book are meant to show how oral tradition works. The narratives in chapter 9 (ten texts) are meant to exemplify the distinction between the first-person accounts of people who actually spoke with J. Golden Kimball and the orally circulating anecdotes.

Chapter 10 (sixteen texts) is meant to show how the types of stories attributed to J. Golden Kimball attach themselves to other Church leaders. Chapter 11 (twelve texts) is meant to demonstrate how the stories can feed back into oral circulation from official Church sources.

A number of the anecdotes about J. Golden are attached to different figures in other cultural traditions. Eliason identifies several J. Golden stories that are closely related to jokes about other preachers, politicians, and local characters. Yet certain stories may be just analogues: texts that are similar not by virtue of diffusion and borrowing but by virtue of their confrontation of common problems and themes. For example, the first text below is from Eliason. The second text I found in a book of Jewish jokes published in 1941. Are they variants or analogues?

In his last years, he [J. Golden] met a friend in the street who said to him, "How are you, Golden? How are you getting along?" "Well, to tell the truth, I'm not doing so good. Getting old and tired. You know, Seth, I've been preaching this gospel nigh onto sixty years now, and I think it's time for me to get over to the other side to find out how much of what I've been saying is true." (70)

A pious Jew was on his deathbed, and his children surrounded him ready to listen to his parting words. Speaking slowly and heavily he said: "Listen, my children! You know how zealous I have been in behalf of my faith. I have sacrificed everything and deprived myself of worldly pleasures for the sole purpose of gaining a share in the world to come. Now I have reached my end, and I am ready to face my Maker. If I discover the whole thing is only a joke, wouldn't I laugh!"¹

I reckon that I have seen or heard about 20 percent of the texts in the first eight chapters of the book somewhere before. It would require some dedicated research to discover all the parallels and analogues to the J. Golden texts, but it is not clear that such an exercise would be worth the effort. The fact is that even migratory anecdotes are borrowed selectively and are shaped into a cohesive repertoire. This shaping is what gives the J. Golden Kimball narratives—whatever their original sources—their distinctive character.

In his effort to present a complete picture of the anecdotal tradition, Eliason leaves out some material that appeared in Thomas E. Cheney's *The Golden Legacy: A Folk History of J. Golden Kimball* published by Brigham Young University Press in 1973. Cheney's book was a mixture of J. Golden Kimball sermons, newspaper accounts, and snippets of biography, as well as anecdotes told about him. Consequently, the book is characterized as a folk history rather than as the documentation of a folk narrative tradition. If Eliason does not include a particular anecdote from Cheney's work (for example, "Heir-Conditioned") in his book, I presume

it is because Eliason found no evidence either among his informants or in the folklore archives for its oral circulation.

In addition to offering a representative collection of anecdotes, Eliason wishes to characterize the anecdotes' significance for the people who tell and appreciate them. Consequently, he sets the stories in their historical and cultural contexts. The fifty-three-page introduction discusses J. Golden Kimball's biography, the relationship between folklore and history, stories in the context of their telling, the evolution (or devolution) of Mormon swearing, social changes in the Mormon community, a statistical profile of the repertoire, and concepts of the hero in folk tradition. Thirty-nine pages of endnotes provide not only the sources of the texts but also detailed cultural information that makes the texts understandable to the non-Mormon reader. The cultural commentary varies from the most basic kind of information to esoteric aspects of Mormon behavior and practice. The latter is illustrated by the following story:

A visiting general authority commented that we had a remarkable record in our stake of 100 percent home teaching for ten out of twelve months for the past three years!

The stake president responded, "And if it weren't for Halloween and New Year's Eve we'd have made 100 percent every month!" (121)

This story is marvelous because there may be no amount of reading in Mormon history, theology, or sociology likely to make this joke comprehensible to an outsider. It is one of those jokes interwoven with the practices and circumstances of everyday Mormon life. Most active Mormons will understand the joke, but non-Mormons will have to read Eliason's explanation in the endnote.

I would offer a few comments on Eliason's conceptualizations of the corpus of J. Golden stories. In discussing the relation between the figure of J. Golden Kimball and the hero of traditional myth and legend, Eliason correctly observes that the latter was usually a man of *deeds*. In the jokes and anecdotes, J. Golden is a man of *words*. The stories always turn on something J. Golden says, not something he does. Consequently, Eliason labels J. Golden a "performer-hero" (33). The concept of performance holds a particular place in contemporary folklore studies that is too complicated to describe in a brief review. I would suggest, however, that the man of words is the norm in the joke genre. Contemporary jokes almost invariably end with something said rather than something done. I am not convinced that the notion of "performer-hero" adds to the understanding of the J. Golden cycle. Wry comments are not a peculiarity of J. Golden Kimball; they are made by a wide range of historical and fictional joke characters.

Eliason also characterizes J. Golden as a Mormon “trickster” (39) and compares him with tricksters in other traditions. Certainly J. Golden is similar to figures in African American, Jewish American, and Swedish American lore to which the term “trickster” has been applied. But the term is too easily conflated with tricksters in world mythological tradition, and these mythological figures seem distinct from J. Golden. Eliason states that “tricksters articulate a culture’s deepest beliefs about appropriate moral behavior by violating them spectacularly” (41). J. Golden Kimball, however, does not violate the deepest beliefs of the LDS Church. As Eliason notes, he transgresses only in matters of swearing and the consumption of coffee—proscriptions begun as matters of guidance that were elevated to stricter rules over time. In essential matters of faith and practice, J. Golden Kimball is rock solid. So J. Golden is a trickster, but only in a weak sense of the term. He shares little with the tricksters of mythological tradition.

Eliason employs the concept of a safety valve to explain the significance of the stories in the Mormon community—they release the “tension that results from social, religious, cultural, and biological demands and constraints” (35). The safety valve has often been invoked in the analysis of humor, but I am not sure that it is a necessary or even a desirable explanatory mechanism. I think it preferable to approach jokes in cognitive rather than emotional terms and regard them as commentaries rather than catharses. Jokes often crystallize around contradictions, conflicts, and stresses in a society. The anecdotes about J. Golden Kimball’s swearing and coffee drinking seem less a release of and relief from pent-up desire than a commentary on the Mormon culture of niceness, obedience, and conformity (37–38). While J. Golden’s honesty and directness have been repeatedly stressed, the fundamental honesty of his swearing has been downplayed. Swearing registers the emotional dimensions of a message. (That is why it invariably calls upon the vocabularies of bodily functions and sacred landscapes—the words are precharged with emotion.) J. Golden is always bluntly honest, and his swearing is not merely a failing but a part and parcel of his honesty. In the inhibition of irritation and anger and in the suppression of swearing, it can be argued that Mormons have suppressed something honest and direct about themselves. J. Golden’s fondness for coffee might be viewed similarly. In the great scheme of things, it is a minor failing. His faith, his work, his sincerity, his charity, his humility, and his tolerance decidedly outweigh it. How do humans fulfill the divine plan? The necessary answer to this question is “imperfectly.” The J. Golden anecdotes can serve as a commentary on such imperfection. As such, they give hope. As Eliason states, Latter-Day Saints “laugh at their failures and

foibles, not to justify them but to gain courage and strength to move on and overcome” (51). The jokes look a lot more like philosophy than catharsis.

If *The J. Golden Kimball Stories* has a flaw, it is that it tries to appeal to two audiences: scholars of oral tradition on the one hand and those “in search of a good laugh” on the other (xv). Consequently, the anecdotes in the collection are not numbered for easy reference, and the annotations and sources are relegated to the endnotes. For the scholar, this is an inconvenience. Nevertheless, Eliason’s volume is the first collection of J. Golden Kimball stories compiled and edited according to contemporary folkloristic standards. There is a concern to document the genuine oral tradition; there is an effort to situate the tradition in the context of Mormon history and culture. Therefore, *The J. Golden Kimball Stories* is the volume that scholars will consult and cite when they write about Mormon folklore or religious humor.

Elliott Oring (eoring@calstatela.edu) is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at California State University, Los Angeles. His book *Engaging Humor* was published by the University of Illinois Press in 2003.

1. S. Felix Mendelsohn, ed., *Let Laughter Ring* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1952), 68.

Douglas Thayer. *Hooligan, a Mormon Boyhood*.

Provo, Utah: Zarahemla Books, 2007

Reviewed by Richard H. Cracroft

Autobiography or personal history seems to be a favorite literary genre among the Latter-day Saints, probably because it deals with truth (not fiction), recreates our unique personal dramas of conversion, and enables us to render an accounting of our earthly stewardship. A *memoir* is a selective autobiographical narrative that focuses on the subject's role as a participant in or a witness of significant events. Douglas Thayer's *Hooligan, a Mormon Boyhood* is a memoir that makes growing up during the Great Depression in the Sixth Ward of Provo, Utah, a significant event.

In twenty-seven engaging chapters, Professor Thayer, who is in his (record) fifth decade of teaching English at BYU, recalls Provo as it was, circa 1930–46, before he left B.Y. High School to join the U.S. Army (too late for the war but still in time for the G.I. Bill). Provo, still in its pre-Second World War, preindustrial, impoverished simplicity, was, like Mark Twain's Hannibal, "a heavenly place for a boy," with its unspoiled, fishable, swimable (in the buff) river, huntable lake and marshes, and hikeable canyons. Freer than kids in the twenty-first century could ever imagine, Thayer grew up with a fishing pole in one hand, a .22 in the other, and oodles of unsupervised free time on both hands. After climbing with buddies to a lookout over Utah Valley, Thayer recalls how it was:

Yet, sitting on our ledge looking down, pleased but not knowing why, we were glad that we lived there in this place and in this time. For, whatever adults may have thought, the Sixth Ward, Provo, and Utah Valley belonged to us boys, all of it accessible to us because we were largely free to roam as we pleased, as long as the police, sheriff, and truant officer didn't haul us in and we didn't maim or kill ourselves or each other, or otherwise interfere with adults and their dreary lives. (12)

While *Hooligan* piles on detailed remembrances of vacant lots, underground forts, Flit fly-spray, rubber-band guns, quarantine signs, tree huts, maypoles, chewing fresh hot tar, Mercurochrome, and Trail Builder bandalos (“Out west where the sunset glows”), this memoir is much more than nostalgic rummaging through a bygone era, fun though that is. *Hooligan* is the universal story of growing up, flavored with a large twist of Mormon and stirred with a generous ladle of irony. Old Doug, armed with hindsight and experience, skillfully recreates the experiences of young Doug, a sensitive and observant boy who is puzzled by the mysteries of adulthood. Undergirding the boy’s story is the omnipresence of the mature Thayer who retells events of the boy’s life as one who is still intrigued by life’s mysteries and still fascinated by the journey of innocence to experience—but also as one who knows that the gains of adulthood and experience are bittersweet, offset as they are by the loss of the simple, carefree, uncomplicated blessedness of youth and innocence.

The ironies resulting from these mortal incongruities and polarities shape and inform the nonfictional *Hooligan* just as they affected Thayer’s two novels, *Summer Fire* and *The Conversion of Jeff Williams*, and his two collections of short stories, *Mr. Wahlquist in Yellowstone* and *Under the Cottonwoods and Other Mormon Stories*. *Hooligan* abounds with irony arising from the tension between young Doug’s desire to add the rare Perfect Boy pin to his Eagle Scout badge and his desire to let loose his natural propensities for “hooliganism” (37). He began early to see the benefit “of being good, or at least trying. Adult brothers and sisters in the gospel liked you better . . . if they thought you were good” (51). But righteousness was a private and lonely aspiration: “I don’t remember any of my friends saying they wanted to be good, and I certainly didn’t mention my decision” to them (51–52). Uncertain about the road to perfection, he often stumbled, Huck Finn-like, into the barrow pit separating the ideal boy and the real boy: “We were sometimes told we were supposed to be clean and pure. But when we were younger, no Sunday School or priesthood teacher or Scoutmaster ever defined that particular requirement in any graphic detail, and we were reluctant to ask” (17). One helpful sister in the ward “told me that she knew I would never swear and that should I ever be provoked or feel inclined to, I should simply say, ‘Oh, sugar!’” He adds, “Given my companions, it was advice I feared to follow” (52).

Thayer’s style underscores the ironic foundation of the book. Young Doug, a literalist, runs again and again into confusing adult clichés and puzzling idiomatic expressions: “money doesn’t grow on trees,” “we’re not made of money,” and “you’re still wet behind the ears.” Boys were “accused of having hollow legs, eating day and night, stuffing ourselves, always

being hungry, growing like weeds, having eyes bigger than our stomachs, all indicating how carefully we needed to be watched” (136).

His ironic vision focuses on the myriad of imagined terrors and dramas of boys in any era: the fear of imminent death from illness (which turns out to be growing pains); the fear that the bishop, “entitled to revelation,” has a built-in mind reader and sin-detector and might, one Sunday, “suddenly stand up as I or one of my priest friends knelt to say the sacrament prayer and say, ‘Stop! You are an ardent sinner and not worthy to bless the sacrament! Come with me to my office. You must repent!’” In describing a backyard sleepover, he recalls how the boys imagined fearful consequences for boyhood capers: “Later, the neighborhood fast asleep, the shadows dark, we dared each other to run around the block in our shorts”; they then ran, in shorts, barefooted and deliciously wicked, hiding in the bushes “if a car came down the street, terrified that a cop might reach out and grab you and put you in jail.” Then, safely back in their sleeping bags, “not knowing exactly when it happened, we fell asleep to the sound of crickets and the far-off lonesome wail of a train going through Provo to some faraway and distant place” (143). Nice writing, huh?

Irony—the tension between *ought-to-be* and *is*, between expectation and reality—lurks on every page of *Hooligan, a Mormon Boyhood*. Young Doug’s fervent prayers for directions to the whereabouts of a fishing hole filled with trout went unanswered and occasioned the boy’s first doubts. Still, he persevered in his resolve to be a good boy and resist temptations of the flesh, even when he was momentarily tested at a high school dance by the stark and alluring reality of a warm back exposed by a backless evening dress. Choosing the right when the choice was placed before him, he carefully avoided putting his hand on the girl’s bare back by spreading the clean pocket handkerchief (thoughtfully provided by his mother) over his right hand. Then, “properly insulated,” he put his hand on her back. His righteousness was instantly rewarded: “She thought I was cute and held me close with her long, naked arms” (181).

Hooligan, a Mormon Boyhood will become a classic of Mormon literature. You’ll find yourself reading passages aloud to others of your ilk; relishing a delightful memoir of growing up in a Provo that is no more; enjoying a gentle book fraught with comical, ironical observations about the human condition; and treasuring words which will be appreciated only by those who have ever been young and seeking perfection, and aren’t anymore.

Richard H. Cracroft (cracroftrh@msn.com) is Nan Osmond Grass Professor in English, emeritus, Brigham Young University. He also serves as Literature Editor of the *BYU Studies* Review Board.

Mark V. Olsen and Will Scheffer, creators. *Big Love*,
season 1 (2006) and season 2 (2007).
HBO Pictures

Reviewed by Kent R. Bean

I understand the inherent difficulties in writing an analysis about a series that deals with polygamy—and not polygamy in some distant time or place, but polygamy in present-day Utah. The practice of polygamy is such a difficult question precisely because it seems so premodern, and we Latter-day Saints have done such a fantastic job of embracing the conditions of modernity. (As a youth, I remember a fireside speaker referring to ours as a “space-age” religion, contrasting it against other religions whose doctrines hampered them from modernizing.) Some might object to a review of *Big Love* in *BYU Studies* because the series does not represent the Mormon image, and therefore it should not be discussed in a publication dedicated to Mormon issues.

Two clarifications will hopefully answer this objection. First, this is not a review proper. I am not reviewing *Big Love* as a television critic and giving it a thumbs-up or thumbs-down. Quite frankly, the entertainment value of the show is irrelevant. This review is an analysis of the series’ images and possible cultural impact. (Briefly: yes, the show is entertaining, but it does contain offensive material such as sexual situations and occasional harsh language.)

Second, while some might define *Mormon* exclusively as one who belongs to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormon image is broader than that. In *Big Love*, there are scenes that feature fundamentalist polygamists in southern Utah discussing Joseph Smith, the golden plates, Brigham Young, the trek west to Utah, and the mainstream Church’s decision to abandon polygamy. Despite the fact that we may want to control or contain the Mormon image, *Big Love* necessarily shows that others, such as HBO or actual polygamists, will lay claim to that image for their own purposes.

The dramatic impetus of the show revolves around the fact that Bill Henrickson (Bill Paxton) and his wives seem quite normal—except, of

course, that they are polygamists. One wife, Barb (Jeanne Tripplehorn), is rather controlling, but not in a mean way. Another wife, Nicki (Chloë Sevigny), has a shopping compulsion and seems rather cold and manipulative. The third wife, Margene (Ginnifer Goodwin), is young and inexperienced, and either over- or underdramatizes any event. Great pains are taken to make them and their problems seem plausible. If the creators of *Big Love* had made the series into a freak show of sorts—a *Sopranos*-esque series with polygamists engaging in blood feuds—I feel quite confident in saying that the series would have been short-lived. The series works because of the surprising *normalcy* of Bill and his wives.

That normalcy is made clear in two ways: by contrasting the Henricksons against (1) fundamentalist polygamists and (2) Latter-day Saints. In season 1, Bill is locked into battle with the “prophet” of “the compound,” a polygamist community located somewhere not too far south of Salt Lake City. Roman Grant (Harry Dean Stanton) loans Bill enough money to get his first hardware store going. Bill, however, expands to a second store and does not want to pay Roman any more money. The venal Roman cannot abide the thought of lost income, so he and Bill lock horns.

Roman is the quintessential example of the fundamentalist polygamist: he rules with an iron fist and is clearly interested in power, not God’s righteousness. He has numerous wives and is “pre-sealed” to a fifteen-year-old despite his seventy-six years. The people on his compound all wear western-style clothing to the wrist and ankle. Paradoxically, far from providing a clear argument against polygamy, this negative image only normalizes the Henricksons. Indeed, the Henricksons’ middle-class, bourgeois lifestyle seems quite rational in contrast.

Indeed, the contrast of Bill and his wives against Roman throws the entire term *fundamentalism* into question. This is a troubled term, given that the Church has officially repudiated the term *fundamentalist Mormon* on its website by declaring, “Since those who practice polygamy cannot be members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it is incorrect to refer to them as ‘Mormon fundamentalists.’”¹ In this review I refer to such people as *fundamentalist polygamists*. I am using the term categorically; that is, the term denotes a specific category and is the equivalent of *fundamentalist Christian* or *fundamentalist Islamist* in the sense that these people are clearly outside of the mainstream, both by their choice and by the mainstream’s insistence. But in *Big Love*, Bill and his wives clearly are *not* fundamentalists. While they pray and engage in religious ordinances, their lives are not inundated with religion as are Roman’s and his followers. Except for Nicki, they dress in modern clothing, much of it more revealing

than that worn by endowed Latter-day Saints. They watch TV, listen to iPods, and are well educated. And, as far as can be ascertained from the series, they have bought into the American dream as much as anyone.

The other image that serves to normalize the Henricksons is that of Latter-day Saints. I was surprised by the misrepresentation of Latter-day Saints in *Big Love*, given that the series went to great pains to portray the Henricksons with such care, and the writers were clearly familiar with Latter-day Saints and Utah culture (words and phrases like “LDS,” “garment line,” “seminary,” “choose the right,” and others are dropped with ease and without explanation). The Henricksons’ daughter works at a fast-food joint with an LDS girl who tries to befriend her. The non-LDS girls mock the LDS girl for her standards, and she responds with belligerence. She is initially portrayed as self-righteous and narrowminded, although, admittedly, as the series progresses, we see her character become more caring.

One of Bill’s wives, Margene, is befriended by her next-door neighbors, an LDS couple. Margene is desperate for some adult contact and at first enjoys their company. But they seem more intent on converting her and “solving” her problems by getting her a husband (they think she’s a single woman) than in simply being her friend and allowing the friendship to develop organically. I found these scenes uncomfortable because they rang strangely true, despite their oversimplification.

The most egregious stereotype is that of two Mormon elders sent by a well-meaning neighbor to Nicki. They stand erect, as if a ruler went down their backs. They are incredibly persistent in their attempts to gain entrance into her door, and she rebuffs them just as insistently. They return a while later to declare that they know she is a polygamist. “The polygamist lifestyle is wrong, ma’am. We would like to show you the way back to the one true church.” She denies the accusation of polygamy, but asserts that she needs no changing. The elders look at one another and turn from her doorstep. But before leaving they begin to take down her address in their notebook. Nicki yells, “Don’t think I don’t know what you’re doing! You’re writing my house off for all eternity!” They respond, “You’re in sin. We’re marking you down as uncooperative; not repentant. But we’ll continue to pray for you.” As they mount their bikes and ride away, Nicki yells after them, “Go on and pray for yourselves!” The entire scene is demeaning and laughable. I certainly cannot imagine two elders acting this way, as if they were neo-McCarthyites on a mission to ferret out polygamists in Utah. Latter-day Saints are shown to be paranoid and intolerant at even the hint of polygamy.

The series builds our sympathies around the Henricksons, since we spend most of our time with them. And in our postmodern age of tolerance for all, one is prompted by *Big Love* to wonder why they cannot simply be tolerated. Indeed, in an early episode, Roman Grant vocalizes just this sentiment to a reporter. After his son says, “Don’t forget the gays,” Roman explains that if the Supreme Court finds it appropriate to grant rights to gays, why not to all people? Of course our sympathies are not with Roman, but once he vocalizes this sentiment, it is out there to be considered. And since the Henricksons seem to be such nice people, well, why not?

Yet *Big Love* is not free from its own deconstruction. Barb’s sister says at one point, in an angry confrontation with Barb and Nicki, that polygamy was quaint in the 1900s, but today it is abhorrent. She is portrayed as a small-minded bigot, but I could not help but wonder if the onset of modernity did not make her right. In looking at the Henricksons, even if we put aside all arguments of hurt feelings and mean neighbors, we are still left with a father who is stretched so thin among work, feuding with Roman, and satisfying his three wives that he has little time for his children. Indeed, his three wives are so caught up in their jealousies with one another and vying for Bill’s attention that they cannot give to their children the kind of care that they need. For example, Bill’s daughter Sarah (Amanda Seyfried) goes to a wild drinking party with an acquaintance. (Interestingly, she is rescued from the party by her Mormon coworker who had earlier tried to talk her out of going.) Bill’s son Ben (Douglas Smith) has to ford the rapids of puberty on his own. He even begins to go to seminary to get help with his impure thoughts. But when his girlfriend exerts pressure on him, he relents and loses his virginity. His parents—all of them—are blissfully unaware of his plight.

Simply put, maybe Roman’s version of polygamy—*compound* polygamy, shutting oneself off from the world and living in a controlled environment—is the only way to juggle modernity with the practice. Of course, as *Big Love* makes clear, compound polygamy is an abhorrent solution. And while we may sympathize with Bill and Barb and Nicki and Margene, maybe certain principles, even “average” polygamy, cannot be reconciled with the modern world.

Kent R. Bean (kent.bean@snow.edu) received his PhD from Bowling Green State University in American Culture Studies. He currently teaches English at Snow College in Ephraim, Utah. He is the Film and Television Review Editor for *BYU Studies*.

1. “‘Myth-Conceptions’ about the Church,” November 20, 2006. <http://news-room.lds.org>.

McKay Daines, director. *The Dance*.
Salt Lake City: Flynn-Daines Productions, 2007

Reviewed by David A. Allred

The *Dance* is the first film released from Flynn-Daines Productions, a new player in the Mormon cinema movement. Written and directed by McKay Daines, the film was produced by Michael Flynn, who also produced the well-received *The Best Two Years* (2003). Like the recent film *Charly* (2002), *The Dance* is a reworking of 1980s Mormon literature: it is adapted from Carol Lynn Pearson's 1981 novel *Overheard at the Dance*.¹

Set at a stake dance near the campus of Harvard University, *The Dance* follows three couples over the course of a single night and shows the development of their romantic relationships. As a Mormon romantic comedy, the film revolves around the concept of eternal marriage and what it means for people at various points in their lives. The recently returned missionary Cameron (K. C. Clyde) has asked out Zoe (Kari Hawker), his older brother's ex-girlfriend who is not a member of the Church. Howard (Scott Christopher), a wise-cracking day trader in his midthirties, invites Alyson (Monique Lanier), a recently divorced mother of two, on her first post-divorce date. Finally, Shakespeare professor and dance organizer Charles (Michael Flynn) chaperones the dance with his wife Laura (Joyce Cohen), and they spend the night confronting a nagging and persistent sense of distance in their relationship.

Although it was made on a relatively low budget, the film has much to offer audiences. Framed with lines from Shakespeare, the plot is tightly constructed around love's ability to endure. The dialogue often shines, and Clyde's and Hawker's acting especially give their characters emotional depth. The cinematography gives the film a polished feel and captures some beautiful shots of the characters' interactions as well as of the film's setting.

At the same time, the film has some uneven aspects. Stilted or overblown characterization is occasionally a problem. For example, Frank Gerish, who was very good in *Brigham City* (2001), plays the DJ, a character

who is simply obnoxious as he exuberantly exclaims in Wolfman-Jack style, “Strap on your safety belts because tonight we all have daaaaaancin’ fever. And we’re gonna boogie, boogie, boogie.” Additionally, the lack of extras is glaring in the dance scenes, emphasizing the film’s low budget in comparison to other films audiences will be accustomed to.

Beyond the aesthetics, the film is interesting from the perspective of the still-evolving Mormon cinema movement. Many Mormon films since 2000—in what Randy Astle has described as the fifth wave of Mormon cinema—have been set in the Mormon West or in various missions throughout the world.² Like *Piccadilly Cowboy* (2007), which takes place in England, *The Dance* is set outside the Mormon corridor. This is an important move in filmic representations of Mormonism in that it affirms and explores the national and international aspects of Mormon experience.

The film also represents a recent trend in Mormon cinema to edit out Mormon-specific references in an attempt to attract wider audiences. This is true most obviously of Halestorm’s *Church Ball* (2006), but other recent films such as *Pride and Prejudice* (2003) and *Beauty and the Beast* (2007) also seek to find wider audiences by cutting culture-specific dialogue, locations, and images. *The Dance* also engages in this universalizing trend, adding just enough cultural markers that the film is recognizable as Mormon: a sign reads that the dance is sponsored by the Boston Stake; Howard jokes with Wolfman about whether he can call him “Brother”; and, when Zoe jokingly asks a bartender if Cameron can have a caffeine-free Coke, Cameron plays along by demanding “the hard stuff,” assuring, “Don’t worry about it. I’m not driving tonight!” Furthermore, Charles tells his wife that he feels she avoids him with her busy schedule and explains, “When we do get some one-on-one time, I feel like it’s compassionate service.”

At the same time, the film avoids deeper connections to LDS culture and doctrine, and this makes the film confusing at times. For example, the film largely avoids the words “Mormon” or “LDS,” and the absence can be glaring. When the dean of the Harvard Divinity School asks Charles to participate in a seminar on different religious perspectives on marriage, he names other participants by their faith—Muslims, Hindus, Orthodox Jews—but simply says, “I’d like you to speak on what you believe.” At another point, when Cameron explains temple covenants, including his commitment to live the law of chastity, he obliquely says only, “I’ve made certain promises I want to keep.” Remarkably, Zoe understands what he is saying, but the scene will have a watered-down feel for an LDS audience.

Such an approach contrasts with the deeper Mormon references in *States of Grace* (2005), *The Singles Ward* (2002), and even Michael Flynn’s

The Best Two Years (2003). Avoiding or limiting overt Mormon references may work for LDS audiences who watch movies for entertainment only; however, these same audiences have the option of seeing other entertaining films that are outside the Mormon cinema movement and have larger budgets. What is lost is one of the appeals of Mormon cinema: authentic, insider representations of Mormon culture in a medium that has largely ignored or been hostile to Mormonism.

David A. Allred (david.allred@snow.edu) is Assistant Professor of English at Snow College in Ephraim, Utah. He earned a PhD in English with an emphasis in folklore from the University of Missouri–Columbia.

1. Carol Lynn Pearson, *Overheard at the Dance* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1981).
2. “A History of Mormon Cinema,” *BYU Studies* 46, no. 2 (2007): 127–29.

Minerva Teichert: Pageants in Paint.

BYU Museum of Art Exhibit, July 27, 2007 to May 26, 2008

Reviewed by Richard G. Oman

Minerva Teichert's life reads like a cross between pioneer mother, Horatio Alger, Relief Society president, Annie Oakley, theologian, historian, social commentator, civic activist, student, and feminist. As such, it is not hard to figure out why she has become almost iconic as a human being, a woman, and a role model among the Mormon people. She is one-stop shopping for the Mormon Wonder Woman.

But what about her art? Over the last thirty years, her work has become increasingly familiar to her Mormon audience through Church publications, exhibitions at the Museum of Church History and Art and the BYU Museum of Art, as well as through film and a series of books.

Marian Wardle, the curator of BYU's exhibition (and granddaughter of the artist), laid out a framework in a 2007–2008 exhibit that helps us better see and understand Teichert's art. Like her art, this framework is a combination of formal aesthetics and didactic communication.

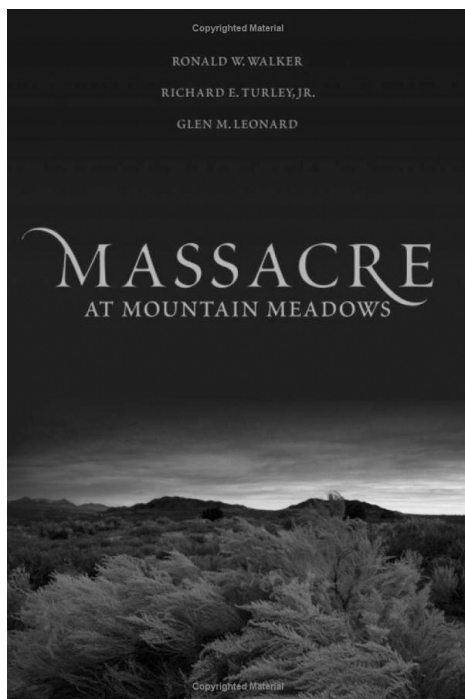
Wardle's basic thesis is that Teichert's artistic framework revolves around two organizing elements: pageants and murals. These in turn are broken down to help visitors understand how the artist uses gestures and poses, tableaux, processions, and dance and music in the creation of these pageant-like murals. Each of these components is carefully explained through images and text. The Teichert exhibit helped visitors understand the philosophical and aesthetic relationships between a Teichert mural and, for instance, the Hill Cumorah Pageant. Her murals become frozen pageants. The linkage is fascinating.

Murals are created to go on walls, usually large walls. In fact, they are designed to become part of the wall. Artists create this effect in two ways: first, a mural's depth of field is usually shallow, more like a procession across a stage, or a carefully posed group; and second, a mural often becomes part of the wall by avoiding the use of traditional frames. This is why Teichert often uses painted borders instead of frames.

Generally, most murals are quite large. They are usually designed for grand, public spaces. Teichert, however, uses mural techniques even for much smaller paintings that would never be “real” murals. So what was driving her toward this passion for murals? As a student of Teichert’s work for over thirty years, I think the answer lies in her passion to communicate and entertain. She used to say, “When the story is told, the picture is finished.” Another phrase she used was, “I paint so that those who run may read.” She really wanted her art to quickly and clearly connect with the public. Even her visually striking painted borders play an interpretive and clarifying role. For example, in one mural she depicts Indian women preserving food while the border depicts squirrels putting away nuts for the winter.

Why does Teichert’s art matter to us today? One of the roles of history is to give us perspective on our own time. There are strong contemporary strains that say art should be private not public, obscure rather than clear, tragic rather than celebratory. The public as a whole is not seen as a legitimate audience. When and if artists are public about their messages, they should play the role of society’s critic rather than champion traditional values and history. Artists are encouraged to follow these paths if they want to be seen as the creators of “serious art.” Teichert’s art shows us an alternative way of thinking about art. She also shows us that clarity, celebration, and sometimes even downright didacticism need not compromise quality and significance.

Richard G. Oman is Senior Curator at the Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City and the Arts and Exhibitions Editor on the BYU Studies Review Board. His publications include the book *Images of Faith: Art of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995) and an article coauthored with Doris R. Dant, “Behold the Condescension of God’: A Scriptural Perspective on Three Nativity Scenes,” *BYU Studies* 41, no. 3 (2002): 18–34.



Massacre at Mountain Meadows.
 Ronald W. Walker,
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—Richard Bushman, Howard W. Hunter Chair of Mormon Studies,
 Claremont Graduate University.