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FIG. 1. Nineteenth-century engraving of Carthage Jail by Frederick H. Piercy, 1853. Courtesy Church History Library.

Physical Evidence at Carthage Jail and What It Reveals about the Assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith

Joseph L. Lyon and David W. Lyon

Thursday, June 27, 1844, was a hot summer day in Carthage, Illinois. Joseph Smith, his brother Hyrum Smith, John Taylor, and Willard Richards sat in a bedroom in Carthage Jail (fig. 1). Illinois Governor Thomas Ford (fig. 2) had promised them protection while they voluntarily awaited trial on charges of civil disturbance. About ten miles south of Nauvoo was another river town named Warsaw. The editor of the *Warsaw Signal*, Thomas Sharp, had been advocating extrajudicial violence against the Mormons and the destruction of Nauvoo for some time. The Nauvoo City Council's decision to interfere with the opposition newspaper, the *Nauvoo Expositor*, in early June 1844 was the impetus that Sharp and other anti-Mormons used to have key Church leaders arrested.¹

The neighboring town of Warsaw had a local militia that was created and armed by the state of Illinois. In late June 1844, during the crisis caused by the destruction of the *Expositor*, the Warsaw Militia was called to active duty by Governor Ford and marched to Carthage, the county seat of Hancock County. On the morning of June 27, before he left Carthage for Nauvoo, Governor Ford discharged the Warsaw Militia from service.²

1. Glen M. Leonard, *Nauvoo: A Place of Peace, a People of Promise* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 362–68, 380–98.

2. 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), 6:565, 605–7 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

Joseph L. Lyon and David W. Lyon

The Lyon brothers first gained an interest in Nauvoo's history from their father, the late T. Edgar Lyon. Joseph recalls, "When I was eight or nine years old my father read Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad, or The New Pilgrim's Progress* to my twin brother, Ted, and me. In it, Twain makes fun of the various religious relics he saw on his journey to Europe and the Holy Land. I can still remember Twain's comment that he had seen enough wood from the 'true cross' to build a large church, and that in one church he had seen two skulls of Adam, the first his skull as a child and the second his skull when he reached adulthood. When we queried Dad about how such absurdities could happen, he told us well-meaning people may embellish historical facts to increase the faith of others, but such embellishment ultimately discredits the religion.

"When I visited Carthage for the first time in 1965, I was awe-struck by seeing the holes through the jailer's bedroom door, but I also wondered whether the door was actually from 1844 and if the holes might have been made later. When I learned in my medical training of the effects of damage to the base of the brain on speech, I realized that if Willard Richards's and John Taylor's accounts of Hyrum Smith's facial wound were true, it was not consistent with his being able to speak any last words. Both of these thoughts troubled me.

"During a 1995 visit to Carthage, I measured the diameter of the holes in the bedroom door and then set out to determine what type of firearm could have made such holes. My brother David and his wife MarGene served a mission to Nauvoo in 1996 and 1997, and he came up with the idea of inserting a laser pointer into the hole in the bedroom door to determine the pathway of the musket ball. He also measured the jailer's bedroom and the hallway in front of it, and he made the schematic included in this article. Later, I spoke with Glen Leonard, the former director of the Museum of Church History and Art, to obtain the diameter of the musket ball that stuck John Taylor's watch. In that conversation, I discovered there was no evidence that a musket ball struck the back of the watch. At this point I realized a much more detailed and thorough account was needed."

The discharged militia members marched out of Carthage but returned later in the day. At least sixty men³ stormed the jail, killing the Smith brothers and wounding John Taylor and Willard Richards.⁴ Even though LDS witnesses described the attackers as a group of Missourians and a mob,⁵ the murderers belonged to a military organization, and evidence suggests they retained their government-issued weapons when they returned to Carthage.

Much has been written of the assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith,⁶ but little attention has been paid to the crime scene in Carthage Jail. In this article, we examine eyewitness accounts of the assault, the layout of the crime scene, the physical evidence left in the jail, and the types of weapons used and the wounds they inflicted. We hope to shed new light on this tragic event and address previous misconceptions about what happened on that fateful day.

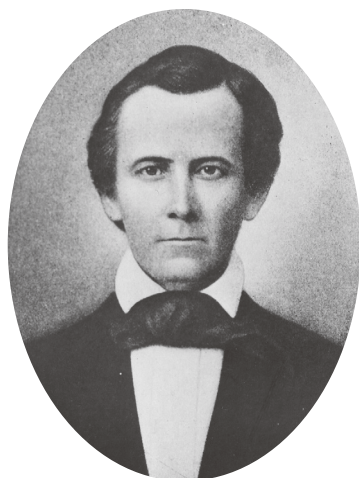


FIG. 2. Thomas Ford. Courtesy Church History Library.

The Eyewitness Accounts

John Taylor and Willard Richards (figs. 3 and 4) both left written accounts of the events of the martyrdom. Although there are many similarities, each account differs slightly in the details (see table of similarities and differences on pages 46 and 47).

3. *History of the Church*, 7:143–45.

4. E. Cecil McGavin, *Nauvoo the Beautiful* (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, 1946), 138–42.

5. Both John Taylor and Willard Richards refer to the attackers as a mob and as Missourians. Those who drove the Mormons from Far West, Missouri, in 1838 were state militia acting under the direction of their officers and the governor. In the twenty-first century, the word *mob* is viewed as a leaderless group acting on negative emotions.

6. For an examination of early accounts, see Dean C. Jessee, “Return to Carthage: Writing the History of Joseph Smith’s Martyrdom,” *Journal of Mormon History* 8 (1981): 3–19; Davis Bitton, “The Martyrdom of Joseph Smith in Early Mormon Writings,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 3 (1983): 29–39; and Davis Bitton, *The Martyrdom Remembered: A One-Hundred-Fifty-Year Perspective on the Assassination of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Aspen Books, 1994).



FIGS. 3 & 4. Engraving of John Taylor and daguerreotype of Willard Richards. Both men were in Carthage Jail with Joseph and Hyrum Smith on June 27, 1844. Taylor, pictured here in an 1852 engraving, recorded his account in the late 1850s. Pictured here from a detail of a photograph by Charles R. Savage on October 9, 1868, Richards wrote and published his eyewitness account seven weeks after the Martyrdom. Courtesy Church History Library.

Willard Richards. Written soon after the event, Willard Richards's account was published in the *Times and Seasons* on August 1, 1844. "Generals Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Mr. Taylor, and myself, who were in the front chamber, closed the door of our room against the entry at the head of the stairs, and placed ourselves against it, there being no lock on the door, and no catch that was usable.

"The door is a common panel, and as soon as we heard the feet at the stairs head, a ball was sent through the door, which passed between us, and showed that our enemies were desperadoes, and we must change our position.

"General Joseph Smith, Mr. Taylor and myself sprang back to the front part of the room, and General Hyrum Smith retreated two-thirds across the chamber directly in front of and facing the door [figs. 5 & 6].

"A ball was sent through the door which hit Hyrum on the side of his nose, when he fell backwards, extended at length, without moving his feet.

"From the holes in his vest (the day was warm, and no one had his coat on but myself), pantaloons, drawers, and shirt, it appears evident that a ball must have been thrown from without, through the window, which entered

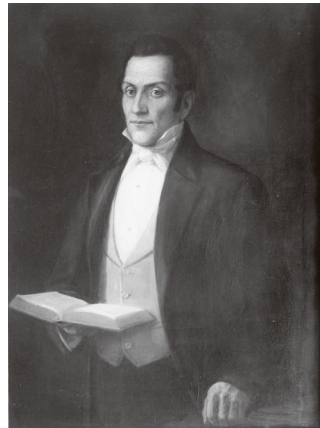
his back on the right side, and passing through, lodged against his watch, which was in his right vest pocket, completely pulverizing the crystal and face, tearing off the hands and mashing the whole body of the watch. At the same instant the ball from the door entered his nose.

“As he struck the floor he exclaimed emphatically, ‘I am a dead man.’ Joseph looked towards him and responded, ‘Oh, dear brother Hyrum!’ and opening the door two or three inches with his left hand, discharged one barrel of a six shooter (pistol) at random in the entry, from whence a ball grazed Hyrum’s breast, and entering his throat passed into his head, while other muskets were aimed at him and some balls hit him.

“Joseph continued snapping his revolver round the casing of the door into the space as before, three barrels of which missed fire, while Mr. Taylor with a walking stick stood by his side and knocked down the bayonets and muskets which were constantly discharging through the doorway, while I stood by him, ready to lend any assistance, with another stick, but could not come within striking distance without going directly before the muzzle of the guns.

“When the revolver failed, we had no more firearms, and expected an immediate rush of the mob, and the doorway full of muskets, half way in the room, and no hope but instant death from within.

“Mr. Taylor rushed into the window, which is some fifteen or twenty feet from the ground. When his body was nearly on a balance, a ball from the door within entered his leg, and a ball from without struck his watch, a patent lever, in his vest pocket near the left breast, and smashed it into ‘pie,’ leaving the hands standing at 5 o’clock, 16 minutes, and 26 seconds, the force of which ball threw him back on the floor, and he rolled under the bed which stood by his side, where he lay motionless, the mob from



FIGS. 5 & 6. Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Courtesy Church History Library.

the door continuing to fire upon him, cutting away a piece of flesh from his left hip as large as a man's hand, and were hindered only by my knocking down their muzzles with a stick; while they continued to reach their guns into the room, probably left handed, and aimed their discharge so far round as almost to reach us in the corner of the room to where we retreated and dodged, and then I recommenced the attack with my stick.

"Joseph attempted, as the last resort, to leap the same window from whence Mr. Taylor fell, when two balls pierced him from the door, and one entered his right breast from without, and he fell outward, exclaiming, 'Oh Lord, my God!' As his feet went out of the window my head went in, the balls whistling all around. He fell on his left side a dead man.

"At this instant the cry was raised, 'He's leaped the window!' and the mob on the stairs and in the entry ran out.

"I withdrew from the window, thinking it of no use to leap out on a hundred bayonets, then around General Joseph Smith's body.

"Not satisfied with this I again reached my head out of the window, and watched some seconds to see if there were any signs of life, regardless of my own, determined to see the end of him I loved. Being fully satisfied that he was dead, with a hundred men near the body and more coming round the corner of the jail, and expecting a return to our room, I rushed towards the prison door, at the head of the stairs, and through the entry from whence the firing had proceeded, to learn if the doors into the prison were open.

"When near the entry, Mr. Taylor called out, 'Take me.' I pressed my way until I found all doors unbarred, returning instantly, caught Mr. Taylor under my arm and rushed by the stairs into the dungeon, or inner prison, stretched him on the floor and covered him with a bed in such a manner as not likely to be perceived, expecting an immediate return of the mob.

"I said to Mr. Taylor, 'This is a hard case to lay you on the floor, but if your wounds are not fatal, I want you to live to tell the story.' I expected to be shot the next moment, and stood before the door awaiting the onset."⁷

John Taylor. John Taylor's account was written in the late 1850s, over a decade after the martyrdom. He began, "I was sitting at one of the front windows of the jail, when I saw a number of men, with painted faces, coming around the corner of the jail, and aiming towards the stairs. The other

7. *History of the Church*, 6:616–22. This source contains two accounts, one written by the editor and the other by Willard Richards titled "Two Minutes in Jail," taken from *Times and Seasons* 5 (August 1, 1844): 598–99, a reprint from the *Nauvoo Neighbor*.

brethren had seen the same, for, as I went to the door, I found Brother Hyrum Smith and Dr. [Willard] Richards already leaning against it. They both pressed against the door with their shoulders to prevent its being opened, as the lock and latch were comparatively useless. While in this position, the mob, who had come upstairs, and tried to open the door, probably thought it was locked, and fired a ball through the keyhole; at this Dr. Richards and Brother Hyrum leaped back from the door, with their faces towards it; almost instantly another ball passed through the panel of the door, and struck Brother Hyrum on the left side of the nose, entering his face and head. At the same instant, another ball from the outside entered his back, passing through his body and striking his watch. The ball came from the back, through the jail window, opposite the door, and must, from its range, have been fired from the Carthage Greys, who were placed there ostensibly for our protection, as the balls from the firearms, shot close by the jail, would have entered the ceiling, we being in the second story, and there never was a time after that when Hyrum could have received the latter wound. Immediately, when the ball struck him, he fell flat on his back, crying as he fell, 'I am a dead man!' He never moved afterwards.

"I shall never forget the deep feeling of sympathy and regard manifested in the countenance of Brother Joseph as he drew nigh to Hyrum,

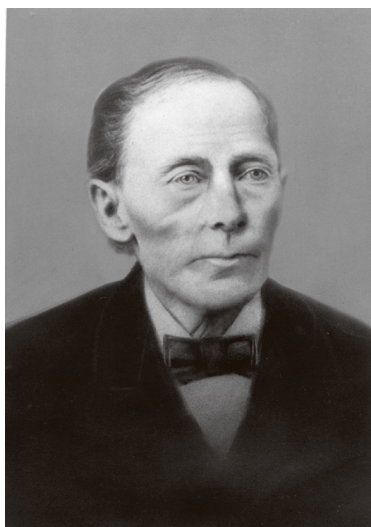


FIG. 7. Cyrus Wheelock. Brother Wheelock loaned his pistol to Joseph Smith during a visit in Carthage Jail. Courtesy Church History Library.

and, leaning over him, exclaimed, 'Oh! my poor, dear brother Hyrum!' [Joseph], however, instantly arose, and with a firm, quick step, and a determined expression of countenance, approached the door, and pulling the six-shooter left by Brother [Cyrus H.] Wheelock [fig. 7] from his pocket, opened the door slightly, and snapped the pistol six successive times; only three of the barrels, however, were discharged. I afterwards understood that two or three were wounded by these discharges, two of whom, I am informed, died. I had in my hands a large, strong hickory stick, brought there by Brother [Stephen] Markham, and left by him, which I had seized as soon as I saw the mob approach; and while Brother Joseph was firing the pistol, I stood close behind him. As

soon as he had discharged it he stepped back, and I immediately took his place next to the door, while he occupied the one I had done while he was shooting. Brother Richards, at this time, had a knotty walking-stick in his hands belonging to me, and stood next to Brother Joseph, a little farther from the door, in an oblique direction, apparently to avoid the rake of the fire from the door. The firing of Brother Joseph made our assailants pause for a moment; very soon after, however, they pushed the door some distance open, and protruded and discharged their guns into the room, when I parried them off with my stick, giving another direction to the balls. . . .

“Every moment the crowd at the door became more dense, as they were unquestionably pressed on by those in the rear ascending the stairs, until the whole entrance at the door was literally crowded with muskets and rifles. . . .

“After parrying the guns for some time, which now protruded thicker and farther into the room, and seeing no hope of escape or protection there, as we were now unarmed, it occurred to me that we might have some friends outside, and that there might be some chance of escape in that direction, but here there seemed to be none. As I expected them every moment to rush into the room—nothing but extreme cowardice having thus far kept them out—as the tumult and pressure increased, without any other hope, I made a spring for the window which was right in front of the jail door, where the mob was standing, and also exposed to the fire of the Carthage Greys, who were stationed some ten or twelve rods off. The weather was hot, we all of us had our coats off, and the window was raised to admit air. As I reached the window, and was on the point of leaping out, I was struck by a ball from the door about midway of my thigh, which struck the bone, and flattened out almost to the size of a quarter of a dollar, and then passed on through the fleshy part to within about half an inch of the outside. I think some prominent nerve must have been severed or injured for, as soon as the ball struck me, I fell like a bird when shot, or an ox when struck by a butcher, and lost entirely and instantaneously all power of action or locomotion. I fell upon the window-sill, and cried out, ‘I am shot!’ Not possessing any power to move, I felt myself falling outside of the window, but immediately I fell inside, from some, at that time, unknown cause. When I struck the floor my animation seemed restored, as I have seen it sometimes in squirrels and birds after being shot. As soon as I felt the power of motion I crawled under the bed, which was in a corner of the room, not far from the window where I received my wound. While on my way and under the bed I was wounded in three other places; one ball entered a little below the left knee, and never was extracted; another entered the forepart of my left arm, a little above the wrist, and,

passing down by the joint, lodged in the fleshy part of my hand, about midway, a little above the upper joint of my little finger; another struck me on the fleshy part of my left hip, and tore away the flesh as large as my hand, dashing the mangled fragments of flesh and blood against the wall. . . .

“It would seem that immediately after my attempt to leap out of the window, Joseph also did the same thing, of which circumstance I have no knowledge only from information. The first thing that I noticed was a cry that he had leaped out the window. A cessation of firing followed, the mob rushed downstairs, and Dr. Richards went to the window. Immediately afterward I saw the doctor going towards the jail door, and as there was an iron door at the head of the stairs adjoining our door which led into the cells for criminals, it struck me that the doctor was going in there, and I said to him, ‘Stop, Doctor, and take me along.’ He proceeded to the door and opened it, and then returned and dragged me along to a small cell prepared for criminals. . . .

“Soon afterwards I was taken to the head of the stairs and laid there, where I had a full view of our beloved and now murdered brother, Hyrum. There he lay as I had left him; he had not moved a limb.”⁸

Physical Features of the Crime Scene

Carthage Jail is a two-story stone building that faces south. On the afternoon of June 27, 1844, Joseph and Hyrum Smith, John Taylor, and Willard Richards had been allowed to move from the jail cells that occupy the north end of the second floor to the jailer’s bedroom, which is on the southeast side of the second floor of the building.

Access to the second floor is obtained through the jail’s front door on the west end of the south wall, then up a steep, narrow staircase (fig. 8) built against the west wall. At the head of the stairs, a platform begins and forms a hallway that provides access to the bedroom on the right. We refer to this as a hallway, although it has no wall on the north and



FIG. 8. Narrow stairway in the Carthage Jail. Photograph by Joseph Lynn Lyon.

8. *History of the Church*, 7:102–7.

west sides, but is bounded by a railing on the west over the stairwell. We measured the distance from the jail's west wall to the wall that forms the west wall of the jailer's bedroom as 97 inches. There is a 3-inch space from the jail's west wall to the stairs. The stairs are 35 inches wide, and there is a 15-inch space between the east edge of the stairs and west edge of the platform that provides access to the bedroom. The platform then runs along the east edge of the stairs to provide access to both the bedroom and the attic. The bedroom door opening begins 26.25 inches from the inner north wall formed by the south wall of the dungeon. The doorway opening is 33.5 inches wide. The hallway in front of the bedroom door is 44 inches wide and is bounded on the east side by the bedroom wall and on the west by a railing. The hall continues about 54 inches past the bedroom door to a door that provides access to the attic. This door opening is 25.5 inches wide. A narrowed platform about 16 inches wide continues past this door to the south wall, ending in a 70-inch-wide platform that looks down over the stairwell.⁹

The jailer's bedroom is 15 feet 8.25 inches wide measured east to west by 15 feet 3.5 inches long measured north to south. There are three windows, one facing east and two facing south. The east window opening starts 74 inches from the north wall, and this window, including its casing, is 45 inches wide. The windowsill is 24 inches wide. The wall that forms the west wall of the bedroom is made of hand-split oak lath covered with plaster.¹⁰

Physical Evidence of the Assassination

The only physical evidence of the shooting of Joseph and Hyrum Smith that still remains at Carthage Jail are two bullet holes through the door of the jailer's bedroom (fig. 9).¹¹ There were additional bullet holes in

9. When standing on the platform looking north you will see the jailer's bedroom door to your right, the stairwell directly beneath you, the north wall of the cells directly ahead, and the door that provides access to the jail cells in front of you and to your left. Unless otherwise noted, all measurements in this article were taken by the authors.

10. Joseph A. McRae and Eunice H. McRae, *Historical Facts regarding the Liberty and Carthage Jails* (Salt Lake City: privately published by the McRaes, 1954), 116. Page 119 has a picture of one of the interior walls of the jail (unidentified as to which room) with the plaster stripped off to show the laths.

11. We considered the possibility that the bedroom door may have been a replacement for the original door and possibly the bullet hole and bullet nicks were made at a later time; however, ample evidence negated this. Seven of the eight doors in the jail (the exception being the front door) are of the same wood, and all are handmade. The section of the door around the latch with the partial

FIG. 9. Bullet holes in bedroom door. These holes are the only extant physical evidence of the shooting of Joseph and Hyrum Smith that still remains at Carthage Jail. Notice that the second hole on the side is in a piece of wood that was cut from the door by a souvenir hunter but later returned by one of his descendants. Photograph by John W. Welch.



the walls, window casing, and ceilings of the bedroom, but these are no longer present and must have been repaired by the mid-1860s. In 1866, the *Carthage Republican* reported that in 1857 bullet holes were still visible in the window casing of the east window, the walls, and the bedroom door, but that by 1866 the damage, excepting the bullet holes in the door, had been repaired.

When the plaster was stripped from the walls during remodeling in the late 1930s or 1940s, no musket balls were found in the plaster and oak lath. Writing in 1885, James W. Woods, one of Joseph Smith's attorneys, claims to have counted thirty-five bullet holes in the walls of the room.¹²

bullet holes was removed sometime after the martyrdom as a souvenir by a resident of Carthage. A Church missionary couple sent to be caretakers of the jail in the 1930s, the McRaes, heard of its existence and prevailed on the resident's descendants to return it. The piece of wood was restored to the door, and its grain matched that of the surrounding door. McRae and McRae, *Historical Facts*, 99. Another item of interest related to the bedroom door was not mentioned in other accounts we found. On inspecting this door in June 1999, we found that a wedge of wood had been crudely cut, probably with a knife blade from the inside top edge of the door, a long time ago. The wedge was about twelve inches long and an inch at the top then tapering downward. Perhaps a souvenir hunter from many years ago thought the door historic enough to cut a good-sized piece off it.

12. McRae and McRae, *Historical Facts*, 116; James W. Woods, "The Mormon Prophet: A True Version of the Story of His Martyrdom; Reminiscences of an Old Timer, Who Was Joe Smith's Attorney," *Ottumwa Democrat*, May 13, 1885, reprinted in *Journal History of the Church*, June 27, 1844, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, microfilm copy

A drawing made by Frederick Piercy in 1853 of the west wall of the bedroom has five discrete holes, four above the line of the window sills, and what appear to be two clusters of about three to four holes.¹³ The holes below the level of the windowsill could not have been fired into the room from outside. Only the four balls higher up could have come from outside the room. The two clusters low down had to have been made by someone standing in the room and firing into the west wall. The accounts by Willard Richards and John Taylor do not mention musket balls hitting the west wall of the bedroom.

The door to the jailer's bedroom is a handmade panel whose style is known as the Christian door, about 0.5-inch-thick panels that are flat on the hall side but raised on the bedroom side. The door is hinged on the north side to swing into the room as one enters from the platform. The door is made of hardwood, likely black walnut. One of the two bullet holes is on the south edge of the door, 46.5 inches above the floor. This is a partial hole, occupying about 0.5 inches of space, where a musket ball grazed the edge of the door.¹⁴ Even though it is partial, the hole we measured is approximately 0.75 inches in diameter and is angled downward and to the south. This bullet hole is in a piece of wood that was cut out of the door by a souvenir hunter and returned by one of his descendants.¹⁵ The cutout in the door starts 42.25 inches above the floor and extends to 48 inches above the floor. The cutout is several inches above the current doorknob. The grain and color of the wood in the cutout match that of the door.

The current door latch is an external, metal-box-type latch mounted on the bedroom side of the door with a doorknob mounted on the hall side of the door below the cutout piece of wood. In 1844, the door likely

in Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University. James Woods claimed to have counted thirty-five bullet holes in the walls of the room. However, his testimony of the actual martyrdom was unreliable in several details. For example, Woods confused the two brothers, saying that Joseph was wounded in the face and abdomen, but actually those were Hyrum's wounds. Woods did go to the bedroom and spend some time looking at it and making a count of holes in the walls and ceilings.

13. Frederick Hawkins Piercy, *Route from Liverpool to Great Salt Lake Valley*, reprint, ed. Fawn M. Brodie (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1962), illustration xvi.

14. John Taylor describes one ball shot through the keyhole and another through the panel, striking Hyrum Smith in the face. *History of the Church*, 7:102.

15. McRae and McRae, *Historical Facts*, 98, 99.

was held shut by a simple metal latch near the location of this bullet hole.¹⁶ There is no evidence of bullet holes in the doorjamb, nor is there evidence of a latch plate being mounted there. The McRaes, a missionary couple sent by the Church in the 1930s to be caretakers of the jail, noted that while the doors were made of walnut, the door casings were made of oak. The couple also reported that all the interior doors were original to the jail, but the front door was a replacement.¹⁷

The second hole in the door is in an upper panel, 10 inches from the south edge of the door and 51.75 inches above the floor. This hole is circular on the corridor side of the door and approximately 0.69 inches in diameter. There is a circular hole on the bedroom side of the door of the same diameter, and pieces of wood have been blown out of the wood panel above and below the exit hole. The type of damage to the wood is compatible with that done when a high-velocity ball exits from a hard substance such as dry wood and is called spalling. Both holes are approximately 0.05 inches larger than the 0.64-inch diameter of the ball fired by the U.S. Model 1795 and Model 1816 69-caliber musket (the weapons most likely used in the attack). The soft lead balls likely flattened slightly when hitting dried hardwood, or perhaps the fingers and knives of many visitors over the years have expanded the holes slightly.

The pathway of the musket ball that made the hole in the door panel was reconstructed using a laser pointer wedged into the bullet hole in the door (figs. 10a and 10b). The ball was traveling in a downward direction and was aimed slightly to the right (or toward the south side of the room when the door was closed). If the door was closed when the musket was fired, the ball would have struck the east wall just below the east window, between 17 and 23 inches above the room's floor. Considering the bullet path and the length of the Model 1816 musket, the butt of the musket would have been about 65.5 inches above the floor if the muzzle was pressed against the door when fired.

16. The accounts by Willard Richards and John Taylor both mention a door latch, not a doorknob. Frederick Piercy's drawing, done in 1853, shows a door latch mounted several inches higher than the current doorknob.

17. McRae and McRae, *Historical Facts*, 113, 120.

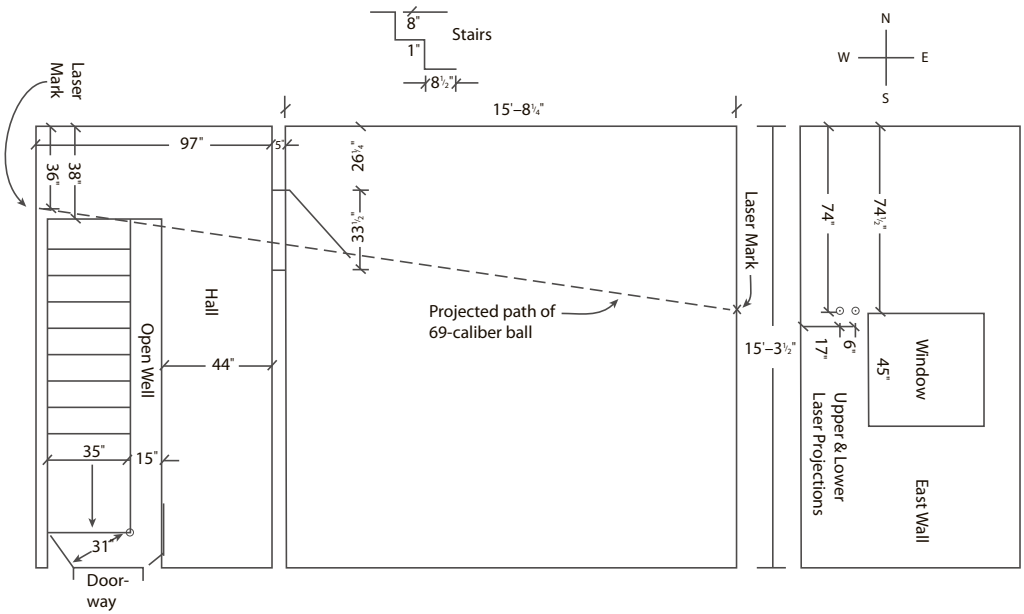


FIG. 10a. Pathway of the musket ball that made the hole in the door panel was reconstructed using a laser pointer wedged into the bullet hole in the door. Based on diagram by David W. Lyon.

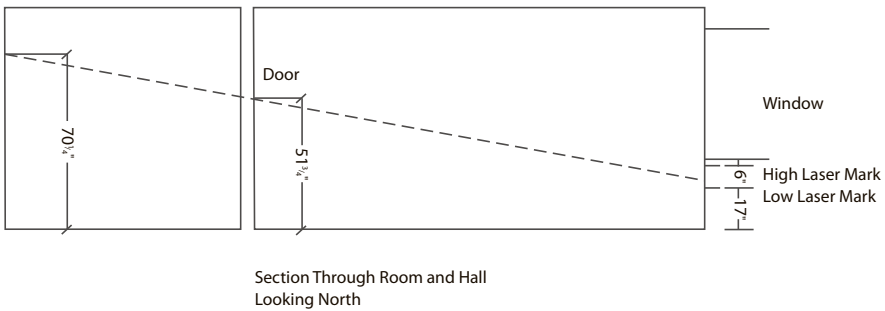
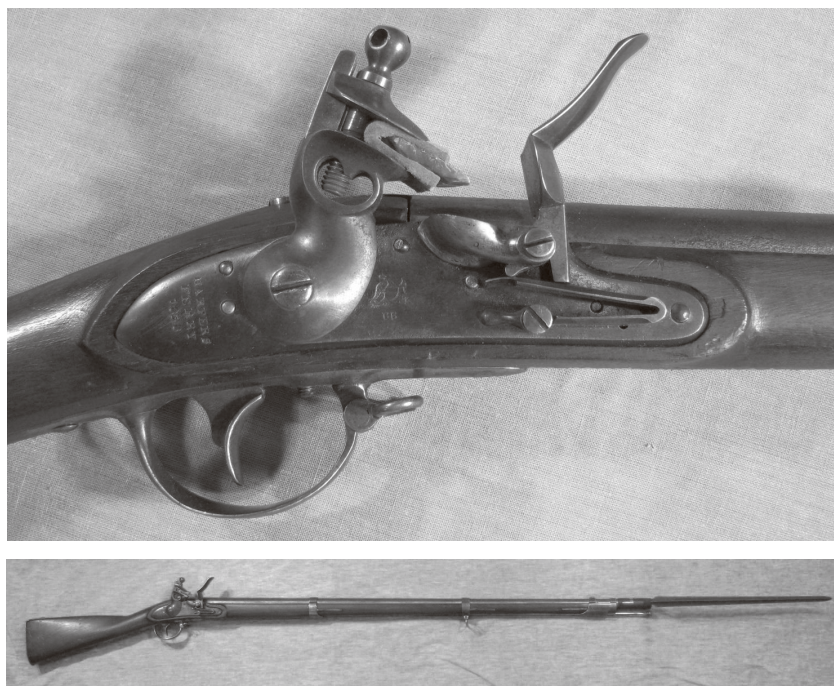


FIG. 10b. If the door was closed when the ball was fired, it would have struck the east wall just below the east window, between 17 and 23 inches above the room's floor. Based on diagram by David W. Lyon.



FIGS. 11 & 12. A U.S. Model 1816 flintlock-ignited musket and a detail of the firing mechanism (*top*). Photographs by Joseph Lynn Lyon.

The Firearms

The reports of John Taylor and Willard Richards, both present in the room with Joseph and Hyrum Smith, state that the attackers (members of the Warsaw Militia) were armed with muskets, though John Taylor mentions that muskets and rifles were fired through the door of the bedroom.¹⁸ In the early and mid-nineteenth century, the federal government provided each state with U.S. military firearms for use by local militias. The U.S. Model 1816 flintlock-ignited musket (figs. 11 & 12) was the firearm most likely issued to the militias of Hancock County, including those of Carthage, Warsaw, and Nauvoo,¹⁹ though it was possible that some U.S.

18. *History of the Church*, 6:616–22; 7:102–7. John Taylor's comment appears in 7:103. Unfortunately, he did not further amplify this statement.

19. When Governor Ford came to Nauvoo the day Joseph and Hyrum Smith were martyred, Ford told the assembled citizens that the large number of privately owned firearms held by the Saints was a cause of prejudice among their neighbors against them (see *History of the Church*, 6:623). We believe the presence of these privately owned muskets was a decisive factor in keeping the men in surrounding

Model 1795 muskets were also issued.²⁰ The 1816 musket was made in much larger numbers than the 1795 musket, and most 1795 muskets did not survive the War of 1812.²¹

The U.S. Model 1795 and 1816 muskets were flintlock-ignited, smooth-bore weapons with a bore diameter of 0.69 inches or 69 caliber.²² Willard Richards says that during the attack the Carthage Greys, the Carthage militia unit that was supposed to defend the prisoners, “elevated their firelocks.”²³ A “firelock” was another name for a flintlock musket. The Model 1795 musket had an overall length of 59.5 inches, and the Model 1816 musket was 57.5 inches long. The bayonet issued with both muskets added an additional 16 inches to the overall length. As unlikely as it seems, given the limited space within the jail, Willard Richards mentions muskets with attached bayonets being thrust through the doorway into the bedroom where the murders occurred. After Joseph Smith leaped from the jail’s east

communities from attacking Nauvoo at the time of the Smiths’ murders and in the weeks thereafter. See Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 114–15, 377.

20. An alternate explanation was that a 69-caliber pistol was used to shoot through the door. This was also a possibility, but it was highly unlikely. The United States made only a thousand Model 1816 flintlock pistols in 69 caliber, then changed to 54-caliber pistols, and by 1830 had produced about thirty thousand pistols in this caliber. The thousand 69-caliber pistols were sold as surplus with the adoption of the 54-caliber pistol, since musket ammunition was not suitable for use in a pistol. Norm Flayderman, *Flayderman’s Guide to Antique American Firearms and Their Values*, 9th ed. (Iola, Wis: Gun Digest Books, 2007), 328–29. Neither Willard Richards nor John Taylor mentions the mob being armed with or discharging pistols.

21. The U.S. Model 1795 and 1816 muskets were made at the two U.S. armories at Springfield, Massachusetts, and Harpers Ferry, Virginia, as well as by a number of independent gunmakers who received government contracts. About 150,000 Model 1795 muskets and 675,000 Model 1816 muskets were manufactured between 1795 and 1840 at the two federal arsenals; an additional 100,000 Model 1816 muskets were made by government contractors. Flayderman, *Flayderman’s Guide*, 538–40, 553–54. Midwest militia units were using the percussion-converted, smoothbore Model 1816 muskets as late as 1863. General Ulysses S. Grant reported exchanging about 60,000 smoothbore militia muskets for new, rifled, British-manufactured muskets imported by the Confederacy after the fall of Vicksburg in July 1863. Most of General Grant’s troops at Vicksburg were raised in the Midwest, including Illinois, and were armed with muskets supplied to the militia units of each state. Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, ed. Caleb Carr (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), 306.

22. Caliber is a measurement of the diameter of the bore of a firearm measured in hundredths of an inch; for example, a 69-caliber musket has a barrel with an internal diameter of 0.69 inches.

23. *History of the Church*, 6:617.

window, this eyewitness “withdrew from the window, thinking it of no use to leap out on a hundred bayonets, then around General Joseph Smith’s body.”²⁴ Because commercial firearms did not provide an attachment for a bayonet, Willard Richards’s account establishes that the men who killed Joseph Smith were armed with military muskets and that some of the Warsaw Militia had mounted their bayonets on their muskets preparatory to attacking the jail.

The bore of the Model 1795 and 1816 muskets had a metal tube with a smooth, 0.69-inch inside diameter similar to that found on modern shot-guns. A smoothbore musket was faster to load than a musket with a rifled barrel because the bullet did not have to be hammered down the barrel so the ball engaged the riflings when exiting the barrel. The ball used with the 1795 and 1816 muskets had a diameter 0.05 inches smaller than 0.69 inches. Both muskets were loaded from a rolled paper container called a cartridge. The cartridge held the correct amount of gunpowder and a 0.64-inch-diameter lead ball weighing 397.5 grains (or about nine-tenths of an ounce). The paper of the cartridge also covered the ball and was designed to make up the 0.05-inch difference in diameter between the barrel and the ball as it was rammed down the barrel. Ammunition may have been supplied by the federal government or manufactured locally from lead and gunpowder.

To load the firearm, the soldier leveled the musket and pulled the cock (a device on the right side directly above the trigger that held a piece of flint in its jaws) to the half-cocked position. He next removed a paper cartridge from a leather-covered box on his belt, tore the bottom off with his teeth, poured part of the powder into a pan on the right side of the musket, and closed a spring-loaded lid called a frizzen over it. He raised the musket vertically, poured the remainder of the powder (about 100 grains or about a quarter of an ounce) down the barrel, and placed the musket ball that was still wrapped and tied in the end of the cartridge paper in the musket’s muzzle (probably giving the paper a little push to keep it from falling off the end of the barrel). The soldier then withdrew the ramrod stored under the barrel and rammed down the cartridge-paper-covered lead ball until it rested on top of the powder charge. The musket was leveled again, and the cock was pulled all the way back. Next, the musket was brought to the shoulder and the trigger pulled. This released the cock, which swung forward driven by spring tension, striking the flint on an upright, curved metal projection on the frizzen, pushing the frizzen up, and showering sparks into the gunpowder. The gunpowder in the pan was ignited by the sparks, and the flame traveled via a hole on the side of the barrel to the

24. *History of the Church*, 6:620–21.

main charge of gunpowder. The powder then ignited, and the gas generated from its ignition propelled the lead ball down the barrel.

Due to the smoothbore barrel and the use of a round ball, the effective range of such muskets was about 100 yards. Both the 1795 and 1816 muskets had a sight on the front barrel band only, and, typical of all smoothbore muskets of the day, they were not very accurate. (To achieve accurate fire from any handheld firearm, a sight at the front and rear of the weapon is necessary to guarantee proper alignment of the barrel when the weapon is discharged. With only a front sight, the barrel is only pointed in the general direction of the target.) The military accepted this limitation, viewing musket fire as covering an area occupied by enemy troops with deadly lead balls, and so did not bother with the expense of adding a rear sight. A smoothbore musket can best be compared to a modern 12-gauge hunting shotgun (bore diameter 0.73 inches), but the musket fired a large lead ball rather than many tiny balls (birdshot).²⁵

The Initial Assault

With an understanding of the firearms, we can now analyze the events of the assassination. The members of the Warsaw Militia rushed the jail shortly after 5:00 p.m. on the afternoon of Thursday, June 27, 1844. An eight-man squad from the Carthage Greys had been charged with the defense of the jail. They were to provide the initial protection for the prisoners against an attack, and, if one occurred, the squad would be joined by the remainder of their company who were camped in the town square, about 600 yards away. The Carthage militiamen who were guarding the jail were reported to have been aware of the assassination plot and to have

25. In 1843 and 1844, experiments were conducted to test the gunpowder being produced at the Washington Arsenal using an 1816 musket loaded with 80 grains of black powder. Using a ballistic pendulum, the velocity of a 0.64-inch lead ball at the musket's muzzle was estimated at 1,500 feet per second and the energy at the muzzle of 2,060 foot-pounds. Captain Alfred Mordecai, "Experiments on Gunpowder Made at the Washington Arsenal in 1843 and 1844." Copy in possession of John Spangler, Salt Lake City. Modern black-powder loading manuals could not confirm this and suggested muzzle velocities on the order of 1,000 to 1,200 feet per second with an 80-grain powder charge. C. Kenneth Ramage, ed., *Lyman Black Powder Handbook*, 12th ed. (Middletown, Conn: Lyman Publications, 1997), 142. Since there were no values given for a 69-caliber ball, we have interpolated between the 58-caliber and the 75-caliber data. Cartridges were also issued that contained a 0.64-inch ball and three 0.33-inch balls. These cartridges were used primarily for guard duty and referred to as "buck and ball." There is no evidence that such were used by those who killed the Smith brothers.

agreed to fire blanks (muskets loaded with powder held in place with cartridge paper but without a lead ball) at the Warsaw Militia to make it appear as if they had put up resistance.²⁶

The accounts of John Taylor and Willard Richards state that the guards did fire at the attackers, but without any effect. Besides attempting to drive off the attackers, the shots from the guards at the jail were to alert the remainder of the Greys to an attack so they could come to the jail. John Taylor states that the Carthage Militia stood off 10 to 12 rods (55 to 66 yards) and fired at the jail windows, suggesting the Greys were trying to kill him and the other men in the room.²⁷ Once the main body of the Carthage Militia became aware of the attack, the attackers would have had only a few minutes to murder Joseph Smith and make their escape.

The Warsaw militiamen charged through the front door of the jail, ran up the stairs, and fired into the door leading to the prison cells at the immediate head of the stairs.²⁸ The staircase was narrow (35 inches) and steep (the steps rise 8 inches), so the attackers likely had to mount it single file.

The attackers then confronted an unanticipated problem. The prisoners were not in the cells with metal bars, where the men would have been easy targets, but in a bedroom, which was accessible through a single wooden door.

Realizing that Joseph Smith was not in the prison cell at the head of the stairs, the attackers turned to their right. Joseph and his companions had closed the door to the jailer's bedroom when they first heard shouts and shots.²⁹ Both Hyrum Smith and Willard Richards held the door shut. John Taylor said the latch on the door was worthless and that he and others had tried to repair it before the assassination.³⁰

In the hands of inexperienced troops, or under the pressure of a conflict, the muskets of the day could take up to a minute to load. The men at the top of the stairs, having fired into the prison cell at the head of the stairs, now had empty muskets, so it was not possible to immediately fire through the bedroom door. This pause gave the men in the bedroom time to better position themselves against the door.

26. Woods, "Mormon Prophet"; B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 2:279–81 (hereafter cited as *Comprehensive History*).

27. *History of the Church*, 7:104.

28. *History of the Church*, 6:619. The front door to the jail had been replaced sometime in the past. McRae and McRae, *Historical Facts*, 120.

29. *History of the Church*, 6:616; 7:102.

30. *Comprehensive History*, 2:284.

The two bullet holes through the bedroom door were evidence that two muskets were fired into the door by the attackers. Willard Richards and John Taylor both mention two shots being fired through the door. The first shot was fired through the keyhole³¹ and the second through the upper door panel on the south side. Based on the holes, the musket muzzles were pointing at a downward angle and to the right (or south) when both holes were made. The angle toward the south suggests the shots were fired by men standing slightly to the north of the door opening. The buttstocks of the muskets when making these holes would have been higher than the shoulder height of the average man of that day (about 5 feet 6 inches) and the butt being about 5 feet 5 inches above the floor.

To reconstruct how this might have happened, we measured a 44-inch space horizontally from a 33-inch-wide door and used a bench to simulate the railing of the jail hallway. Because of the length of the 1795 and 1816 muskets and the narrowness of the hallway, a man could not have shouldered his musket in the normal way (with the barrel parallel to the floor) and fired into the closed door when he was standing in the hallway at the head of the stairs. However, as will be discussed herein, lack of space was not an insurmountable obstacle.

Two or three attackers probably began pushing on the bedroom door; the narrow space in front of the door and the width of the door (33.5 inches) made it unlikely that more than three men could have stood and pushed. Inside the room, two or three of the four men were holding the door,³² knowing their lives depended on keeping it shut. There would have been a contest of strength between the attackers and their intended victims.

Some of the men lower down on the stairs likely began passing up loaded muskets in exchange for those already discharged. One of the militiamen probably decided to drive the prisoners away from the door by firing his musket at the door latch. The door was slightly open because the hole goes through the hallway part of the door and cannot be seen from the bedroom side of the door, nor is there evidence of damage to the oak doorjamb. To fire in the space at the top of the stairs, a militiaman had to hold the musket above his shoulder and absorb the recoil with his hand and arms. The recoil from a musket held in this fashion would have been uncomfortable, but a shot at such a position was possible.

A second musket was probably passed up the stairs and a second shot fired through the door panel. Because of the height of the bullet hole and its downward angle, the firer of this shot must also have stood in the

31. *History of the Church*, 7:102.

32. *History of the Church*, 7:102.

hallway, holding the musket with the trigger guard above his shoulder, and absorbed the recoil with his hands and wrists.

Two factors help determine the number of men who could push on the door and fire into the bedroom. First is the muzzle blast, and second is the side blast from the muskets. The 69-caliber musket ball is 0.05 inches smaller than the 0.69-inch bore diameter so it can be rammed down the barrel of the musket and still be surrounded with a thin sheet of paper to act as a block and better capture the force of the expanding gases. When a smoothbore flintlock musket is fired, a cloud of burning powder particles is thrown out in a circular pattern around the musket ball. These particles move at over 1,000 feet per second and can penetrate clothing or skin.

During our tests, we fired into a piece of dried walnut wood with a 69-caliber musket from point-blank range (fig. 13). We also fired at pocket watches held in hand-sewn pockets, and the flame from the hot gas generated by the burning powder set the cotton fabric on fire with every shot (fig. 14). If one man were pushing on the door and a second man next to him fired his musket with the muzzle near the door, the first man would be sprayed with burning powder particles thrown out by the discharge of the musket.

The second factor is the risk of damaging a neighbor's eyes or setting his clothing on fire from the burning powder in the musket's side pan and the discharge from the musket's touchhole when the main powder charge is fired.³³ When the powder in the pan is ignited, burning powder particles are thrown out from the pan several inches. When the powder in the pan ignites the powder charge in the barrel, there is a lateral discharge over the pan, to a distance of five feet or more, of a tiny, high-pressure jet of hot gas equivalent to the pressure driving the ball down the barrel. This jet of hot gas can damage skin and eyes. The burning powder and gas jet from the side of the musket meant the attackers could not have stood too close to each other without risking burned clothes or eye damage.

One point that has not been addressed in previous studies of the martyrdom is the amount of white smoke generated when black powder is fired. The amount of white smoke is substantial and this was a major factor in all battles fought with black-powder weapons; it probably was the reason for the phrase "the fog of war." The top of the stairs and the bedroom would have become extremely smoky once repeated firing started. This

33. While shooting one day Joseph Lyon was hit on left side of his face with burning powder particles from a 54-caliber flintlock pistol that was fired from about five feet to his left. It was quite painful even though the grains of powder did not break the skin.

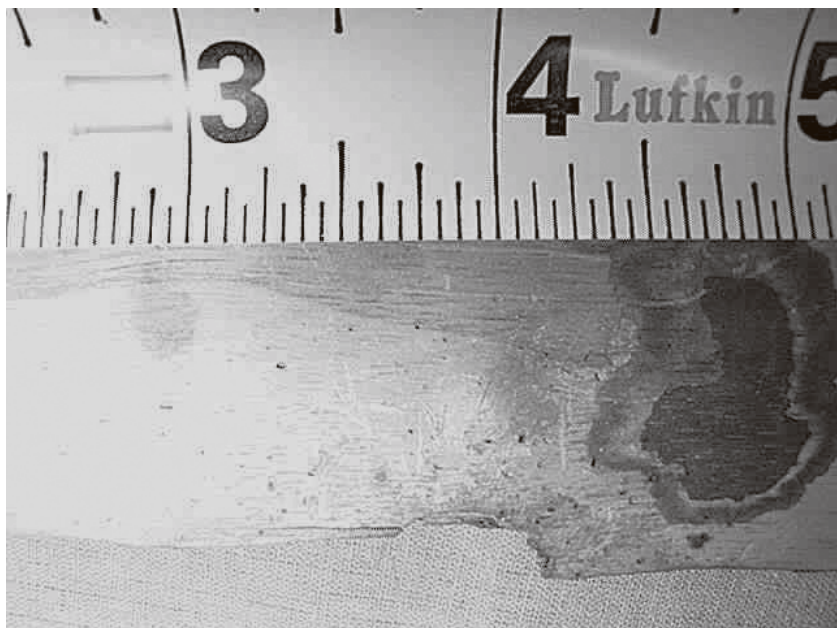


FIG. 13. A piece of dried walnut with a 69-caliber musket fired from point blank range. Notice the tiny holes in the wood surface caused by unburned particles of black powder being driven into the wood. Photograph by Joseph Lynn Lyon.

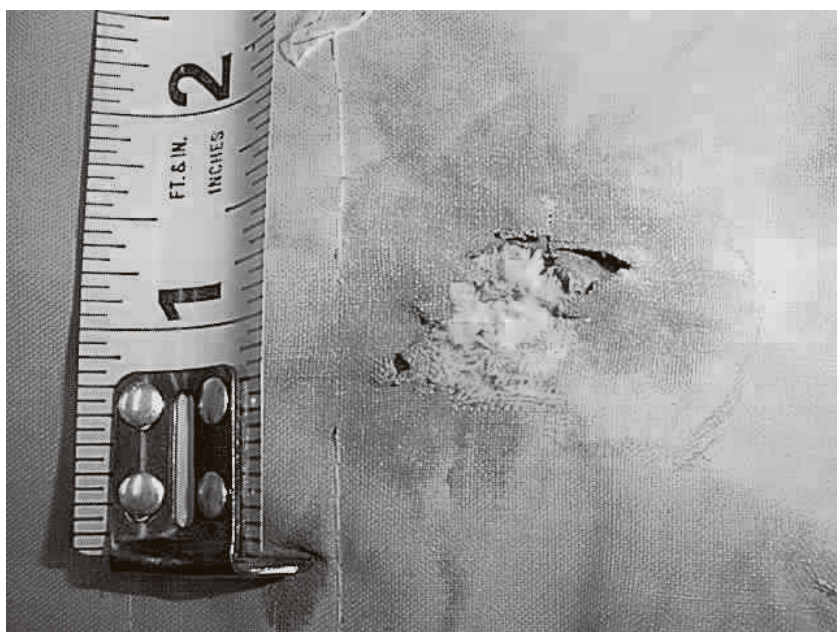


FIG. 14. Pocket watches held in hand-sewn pockets. The flames from the powder burned the cotton fabric with every shot. Photograph by Joseph Lynn Lyon.

smoke undoubtedly made it difficult to see clearly into the room for several seconds after each musket discharge.

Shots through the Door

Of the first two shots fired into the room, Willard Richards's account states, "As soon as we heard the feet at the stairs head, a ball was sent through the door, which passed between us," causing the men to spring back from the door. He says a second "ball was sent through the door which hit Hyrum on the side of his nose."³⁴ John Taylor believes the first ball actually came through the keyhole of the door, while the second entered through the door panel itself.³⁵

The accounts of Willard Richards and John Taylor declare that the second ball struck Hyrum Smith. Both eyewitnesses say that Hyrum Smith had stepped away from the door after the first musket ball was fired and was then shot through the door by the second ball. John Taylor explains, "Dr. Richards and Brother Hyrum leaped back from the door, with their faces towards it; almost instantly another ball passed through the panel of the door, and struck Brother Hyrum on the left side of the nose, entering his face and head."³⁶

If Hyrum Smith were standing fully erect to his 74-inch height³⁷ as people tend to be when they leap backward, the ball through the door at 51.75 inches height would have struck him in the upper abdomen, not the face. Since the ball was traveling downward, the farther he stepped back from the door, the lower on his torso would have been the entrance wound.

We believe the second musket ball, shot through the upper panel of the door, was the ball that struck Hyrum Smith on the left side of his face, but we believe this occurred while he was still braced against the door, and his leap backward was a reaction to being shot. Discrepancies between the eyewitness accounts and the physical evidence necessitate additional commentary.

Hyrum Smith's left shoulder likely was braced against the door when the second ball was fired through the panel.³⁸ That means his head must have been bent forward, with his left cheek turned toward the door and his face parallel to the floor. The musket ball struck the left side of his face, just

34. *History of the Church*, 6:619.

35. *History of the Church*, 7:102.

36. *History of the Church*, 6:617, 619; 7:102.

37. Pearson H. Corbett, *Hyrum Smith: Patriarch* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1963), 86.

38. *History of the Church*, 7:102.

medial to the left eye, then exited from underneath his jaw to the right of the midline. Others have misidentified the wound to the floor of his mouth as an entrance wound rather than an exit wound.³⁹ Had the wound in his neck or in the floor of his mouth been an entrance wound, the ball would have done extensive damage to the top of the skull. The photographs of Hyrum Smith's and Joseph Smith's skulls made in 1928 show no damage to the top of either skull.⁴⁰

Also, identifying this wound as an exit wound would explain the bloodstains on the right side of Hyrum Smith's clothes. A review by Richard Neil Ord and Gayle G. Ord of the clothing Hyrum Smith was wearing at the time of the assassination found the majority of bloodstains on the right front of the shirt, with a small amount of blood on the shirtfront and a blood splatter on the left shoulder.⁴¹

The current owner of the vest, Eldred G. Smith, said Hyrum Smith's vest was so blood soaked on the upper right side, that a triangular shaped piece of fabric from the top and bottom of the right arm-hole extending to the right lapel was cut out. It is our assumption that this fabric was also cut out to remove the clothes from the body because rigor mortis had set in, and the fabric was likely blood soaked, as was the shirt underneath it.⁴² The right lapel of his vest was about 2 inches shorter than the left lapel because of the removal of this wedge (fig. 15). Hyrum Smith's shirt (a pullover) was split up the front and down



FIG. 15. Hyrum Smith's vest. Notice that a wedge of the material was cut out, making the right lapel about 2 inches shorter. Eldred G. Smith Family Collection. Photograph by Joseph Lynn Lyon.

39. *History of the Church*, 6:617; Shannon M. Tracy, *In Search of Joseph* (Orem, Utah: Kenninghouse, 1995), 57. See also, "Findings of the Coroner's Jury on the Carthage Tragedy," *Deseret Evening News*, September 12, 1890.

40. Richard Neil Ord and Gayle G. Ord, "Artifacts of the Martyrdom," unpublished draft manuscript in authors' possession; Tracy, *In Search of Joseph*, 41–43, 52–53.

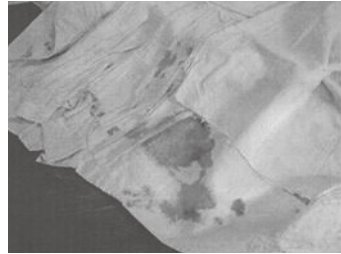
41. Ord and Ord, "Artifacts of the Martyrdom." Photographs of the clothing are printed in Tracy, *In Search of Joseph*, 75–77.

42. We had not noticed that the vest had a large piece of fabric removed from the right side until Eldred Smith pointed it out and told us he had stitched the fabric together to hide the defect.

the right arm to remove it from his body. This cut in the fabric was sewn together when we inspected the shirt. The bloodstains on the right front of the shirt were likely made by blood from the exit wound on the floor of his mouth soaking through the front of the vest and onto the shirt (see figs. 16 & 17).

After Hyrum Smith was shot in the face, he was also shot in his lower back and in both legs. His clothing shows no evidence of bloodstains around these wounds, but the clothing may have been washed, removing or reducing some of the stains.⁴³ Since Hyrum Smith fell on his back and did not move after he was shot,⁴⁴ the extensive bloodstains on his right sleeve could only have come from a wound on the right side of his neck or the floor of his mouth. Wounds in either of these places likely would have severed major blood vessels, causing massive blood loss and resulting in less bleeding from the other wounds.

In further support of a downward-angled gunshot traversing Hyrum Smith's face and exiting from the right side of his neck we offer the following evidence. The men who reburied Hyrum Smith's body in fall 1844 reported, "It was found at this time that two of Hyrum Smith's teeth had fallen into the inside of his mouth, supposed to have been done by a ball at the time of the martyrdom, but which was not discovered at the time he was laid out, in consequence of his jaws being tied up."⁴⁵ A musket ball that struck the left side of his face and traveled downward would have knocked



FIGS. 16 & 17. The shirt and trousers Hyrum Smith wore the day he was murdered. Eldred G. Smith Family Collection. Photograph by Joseph Lynn Lyon.

43. Joseph L. Lyon, "Hyrum Smith's Clothes and Pocket Watch," notes on a visit with Eldred G. Smith, Salt Lake City, April 26, 1999, in authors' possession.

44. *History of the Church*, 6:619; 7:102, 107.

45. *History of the Church*, 6:629. A musket ball shot through the floor of the mouth would have passed upward through the hard palate, through the bottom of the skull, and into the brain. The short distance between the hallway and Hyrum Smith's body means the ball would have passed through the top of the skull, shattering it. In the pictures of the Smith brothers' skulls taken in January 1928 at the time of their reburial, there was no evidence of fractures to the top or back of either skull. Compare with Tracy, *In Search of Joseph*, 52, 53.



FIG. 18. Deathmasks of Hyrum Smith (*left*) and Joseph Smith (*right*). Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art.

out two or more of the left upper molars. These molars were undoubtedly being held in place by the mucous membrane lining of his mouth and attached at one end to the fragment of his upper jaw when he was first buried. By the time his body was viewed again three months after his death, the mucous membrane would have decomposed, and the two left upper molars would have dropped into his mouth.

We inspected a copy of Hyrum Smith's death mask at the Museum of Church History and Art in Salt Lake City (fig. 18). The mask showed that Hyrum Smith's left cheekbone was depressed about 2 millimeters compared to the right cheekbone. This depression appeared only on the left side of his face and extended over that area from the left side of his nose to the left side of the mask. The most likely cause of such a depression is a fracture of the left maxillary bone. We also obtained access to a copy of Hyrum Smith's death mask owned by Grant Fairbanks, a Salt Lake City plastic surgeon.⁴⁶ The wound to the left side of Hyrum Smith's face was 1 inch to the left of the midline of his face and was plugged with cotton when the mask was made, thus stretching the skin around the wound. The cotton had been pushed toward Hyrum Smith's nose when the mask was

46. Joseph L. Lyon, "Cast of Hyrum Smith's Death Mask," notes of a meeting with Grant Fairbanks, M.D., April 25, 1999, copy in authors' possession.

Effect of an 1816 Musket Ball on a Simulated Human Skull

John Spangler, a collector of historic military firearms, and Joseph L. Lyon, one of the authors, performed an experiment to estimate the damage done to a skull by a 69-caliber musket ball when fired through a piece of hardwood similar to the door at Carthage Jail.¹ We obtained an artificial skull made of a synthetic material and used in training neurosurgery residents to cut out sections of bone from the human skull.²

We used a rectangular box made of 0.75-inch pine boards to hold a hardwood board and the skull. The skull sat on a wadded newspaper at the back of the box behind a piece of well-dried, 0.8-inch-thick black walnut board, held in place by half-inch wood cleats at the bottom and the middle. The black walnut wood was likely similar to the wood used in the door of the jailer's bedroom. Our goal was to replicate the amount of resistance to a musket ball that the bedroom door would have offered. The skull was positioned on its side with the back lifted up so the ball would pass through the walnut, strike the skull over the left maxilla just under the left eye, and exit without striking the bones forming the floor of the cranium.

We used a 397-grain, 0.64-inch musket ball. We propelled the ball with 75 grains of commercially available rifle grade black powder, the same type used in Model 1795 and 1816 military muskets. This load was less than the 80- to 100-grain load typically used in U.S. muskets because the age of the firearm made us reluctant to use the full powder charge. But our purpose was to determine if a musket ball fired through a piece of hardwood had sufficient energy to fracture the maxillary bones of the human skull. The ball was fired in a 69-caliber Model 1816 musket, converted to percussion-cap ignition for use in the Civil War.³ (*continued*)

1. Notes describing test of firepower of a Model 1816 musket, conducted by John Spangler and authors, May 12, 2001, copy in authors' possession.

2. Even though it duplicated the hardness of the human skull, including the thickness and resistance to breaking, this imitation did not replicate some of the finer details of a human skull.

3. A flintlock-ignited musket was not available to the authors for this experiment. A percussion-cap-ignited musket, the next

The musket was discharged about 2 inches from the walnut board. The force of the ball striking the skull knocked the left maxilla and the base of the right maxilla off the skull and threw them about 15 feet from the box. Had this been the skull of a living person, the overlying soft tissue (skin, muscles, fascia) would have prevented the maxillae from being blown off the skull. However, we concluded that after being fired through a piece of dried walnut a musket ball still had sufficient force to fracture the maxillary bones.

We also wanted to determine what the effect would be if the musket ball had been moving parallel to the floor and struck the back of Hyrum Smith's skull as the eyewitness accounts suggest. We repositioned the skull so it faced another walnut panel and was parallel to the bottom of the box. Using the same powder charge, we fired another ball through the walnut board into the right maxilla, medial and slightly below the right eye socket. The musket barrel was parallel to the floor of the box when discharged and was about 1 inch from the walnut board.

The musket ball created a fracture of the skull that extended from the point of entry diagonally across the bridge of the nose and then upward 7 inches into the left frontal bone. Much of the right side of the face, including the right eye socket, maxilla, temporal bone, half the right parietal bone, and the entire occipital bone were fractured, pulverized, or blown off the skull. The entire occipital bone, which forms the back of the skull, about 4 inches long by 3.5 inches wide, was blown to small fragments, leaving a massive exit wound.

We concluded that if Hyrum Smith had been struck by a ball from a 69-caliber musket fired through the door that then traversed his skull parallel to the floor, it would have left a massive exit wound at the back of his skull. However, neither eyewitness account mentions such a wound nor was such a wound evident when his skull was exhumed and photographed in 1928.

best alternative, was used instead. The difference in muzzle energy between a flintlock-ignited musket and a percussion-cap-ignited musket was negligible, so the results of the experiment would have been similar regardless of which weapon was used.

made, exposing the outer edge of the bullet hole. The diameter of the hole was 0.7 inches, consistent with a wound inflicted by a 69-caliber musket ball. We also confirmed this dimension with the mask at the museum.

The pictures of Hyrum Smith's skull taken in January 1928, just before his final interment, showed that the left and right upper jawbones and nasal bones were missing from his skull and that the bone edges were rounded, suggesting they had been exposed to the elements for a long time.⁴⁷ These missing bones from Hyrum Smith's skull undoubtedly were fractured by the force of the musket ball that struck him just below his left eye. As the overlying tissue decayed, the bones fell away and were lost when the skeletal remains were exhumed. The photographs of his skull also showed no evidence of damage to the occipital (back) area of the skull.⁴⁸ This was the area where a musket ball traveling parallel (or almost parallel) to the long axis of his body would have struck if he were shot while standing erect.

A downward-angled wound through the skull also resolved one physically impossible aspect of the eyewitness accounts of Hyrum Smith's death. Both report Hyrum Smith as saying immediately after he was shot in the face, "I am a dead man!" and then falling backward on the floor.⁴⁹ If he were standing erect (6 feet 2 inches) with his face vertical to the floor when struck by the musket ball, as the accounts of Willard Richards and John Taylor suggest, the ball would have struck his brain stem (medulla oblongata) at the base of his brain. The brain stem controls speech, respiration, and all muscular movements. Any damage to this vital part would have rendered him instantly speechless and paralyzed all muscles, making a verbal statement impossible. But if his face were tilted forward, parallel to the floor, the musket ball would have severed the arteries in the floor of his mouth and exited on the right side of the neck, under the jawbone. He would have had difficulty speaking from the injury to his

47. Tracy, *In Search of Joseph*, 41–43.

48. The skull we have identified as Hyrum Smith's was originally identified as Joseph Smith's. Shannon Tracy asserted that the skulls of the Smith brothers were misidentified when they were reburied in 1928 by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now Community of Christ). We concur with this assertion. The skull identified by the excavators as Hyrum Smith's had no hole in the left maxilla, but a small defect to the right maxilla. The skull identified as Joseph Smith's was missing the bones of the nose, the floor of the mouth, the frontal sinuses and upper jaws. This would be consistent with a traumatic fracture to these structures such as that caused by a 69-caliber musket ball striking the left maxilla. Tracy, *In Search of Joseph*, 48–60.

49. *History of the Church*, 7:102; 6:620.

tongue, but it would have been possible before blood loss led to unconsciousness and death.

To test whether a 6-foot-2-inch man bracing against a door would have been hit in the face by a shot fired 51.75 inches above the floor, we enlisted the aid of a man of that height and had him brace himself against a door opening to his right. If he braced with his left shoulder and turned his head to the right, his face was between 49 and 54 inches above the floor.

Retaliation

When Hyrum Smith fell to the floor, the attackers pushed the door partly open. After seeing his brother mortally wounded, Joseph Smith responded to the murderers. Because of the continual death threats he had received by the various militia units in Carthage and overheard by many Mormons present, he had been given a six-barreled, percussion-cap-ignited, Allen “pepper box” revolver earlier in the day by Cyrus H. Wheelock for protection.⁵⁰ Designed to be carried in a pocket, these pistols were produced in three calibers: 28, 31, and 36.⁵¹

Common sense dictates that Joseph Smith probably waited until the attackers had fired a volley into the room. Then standing on the right side of the partly open door to protect himself and holding the revolver around the door, he would have pulled the trigger six times.⁵² Three of the six barrels were fired. The balls from the pistol struck three men, two in the upper arm and a third in the face. None of these wounds was immediately fatal, though one of the men was said to have died later from the injuries.⁵³ The wounded men would have had to walk or have been carried down the stairs. Because of the narrow hallway and stairs, this likely caused a lull in the firing. During this short lull, the men in the room probably tried to rectify the problem that caused three barrels to misfire, but no evidence suggests they were successful.

50. *History of the Church*, 6:617, 620; 7:102–3. Writing about Joseph Smith’s assassination for *Atlantic Monthly* in 1869, John Hay, who knew many of the attackers personally, reflected their anger that the victims were armed and blamed the “Jack Mormon” sheriff of Hancock County, Miner Deming, for allowing the prisoners to have firearms. John Hay, “The Mormon Prophet’s Tragedy,” *Atlantic Monthly* 24 (December 1869): 676.

51. Flayderman, *Flayderman’s Guide*, 56–57.

52. *History of the Church*, 6:620; 7:103.

53. *History of the Church*, 7:103. B. H. Roberts quoted John Hay, who said that four men were wounded and that three of the wounds were in the upper arms and one in the face. One man was said to have died at a later time from an arm wound. See *Comprehensive History*, 2:285 n. 19.



FIG. 19. Pistols given to Joseph and Hyrum Smith while they were in Carthage Jail. Courtesy Richard Neitzel Holzapfel.

However, this firing by Joseph Smith produced enough fear to restrain the attackers from immediately rushing through the door and killing everyone in the room. Records show that Hyrum Smith was also armed with a single-shot pistol given to the prisoners for their defense by John S. Fullmer.⁵⁴ This pistol was not fired during the attack, but it is now in the possession of the Church Museum of History and Art along with the one Joseph Smith fired (see fig. 19).

When Joseph Smith's pistol was empty, the only defense left to the men in the room was their walking sticks. Undoubtedly, both John Taylor and Willard Richards put pressure on the door to prevent it from being pushed open completely, and both report striking at the musket barrels with their canes to deflect the bullets downward.⁵⁵

Since Willard Richards, John Taylor, and Joseph Smith were still trying to push the door shut after it was partially forced open, at least one of the attackers would have had to continue pushing on the door, while others fired around him. That man might have resisted the prisoners' efforts by holding a musket butt in the space between the doorjamb and the door.

54. *History of the Church*, 6:607–8.

55. *History of the Church*, 7:103–4.

The attackers did not hit anyone in the northwest corner of the room. This suggests that the door and the narrow hallway blocked those trying to shoot into this corner of the room.

As the frequency of musket fire increased, John Taylor left the temporary safety of the door and ran to a window; he says he did this to look for friends and to escape.⁵⁶ Perhaps he also hoped to draw the attackers away from Joseph Smith and be mistaken for him. John Taylor undoubtedly waited until immediately after a volley was fired, which would have given him a few precious seconds before musket fire resumed—otherwise he never would have reached the window without being shot. This action required considerable courage because the door had been forced partly open and the south and east windows were visible to the men firing from the hallway. John Taylor reached the window, then turned the left side of his body to the bedroom door before mounting the windowsill. While in this position, he was shot from the doorway in the left thigh and fell to the floor. He lost all control over his muscles and fell limp for a brief period.⁵⁷

Although John Taylor believed he started to pitch headfirst out the window and was saved only when a musket ball struck his watch (fig. 20), Neil and Gayle Ord have established—based on the linear dents in the back of the watch—that his watch was not hit by a musket ball, rather the watch broke as he fell across the edge of the windowsill before falling to the floor.⁵⁸ John Taylor then regained muscle control and crawled or rolled under the bed in the southeast corner of the room.⁵⁹ While making his way toward the bed, he was shot from the door three more times. The fact that he was shot once in the thigh, fell to the floor, lay still for a few seconds without being shot again immediately, and then started crawling toward the bed before being



FIG. 20. John Taylor's pocket watch, which probably broke as he fell on the window sill. Courtesy Museum of Church History and Art.

56. *History of the Church*, 7:104.

57. *History of the Church*, 7:104–5.

58. Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 397 n. 47; Ord and Ord, "Artifacts of the Martyrdom."

59. *History of the Church*, 6:620.

shot three more times suggest that the attackers were firing volleys of two to three muskets every twenty to thirty seconds.⁶⁰

The men at the door probably knew what Joseph Smith looked like and that the man they had just wounded was not the man they sought. Joseph Smith must have realized that the attackers' fear of another firearm in the room would soon diminish, and they would shortly burst into the room and kill him and Willard Richards.

Joseph Smith probably then decided he might be able to save Willard Richards's life by moving into the line of fire and attempting to jump from the east window, which was the nearest window to Joseph Smith's haven in the northwest corner of the room. This action would draw the attackers outside. He would have timed his run to the east window immediately after a discharge of muskets from the door, knowing it took several seconds to replace the fired muskets. This pause would have given him a few seconds free from musket fire. He reached the east window and must have had his legs part way out when, as reported by Willard Richards, he was shot two times from the door and once by someone outside the jail.

60. In our minds, John Taylor's account is subject to two interpretations concerning the window to which he ran. His 1856 account said, "I made a spring for the window which was right in front of the jail door, where the mob was standing." *History of the Church*, 7:104. The south window in the bedroom looks down on the front door of the jail, and there were people standing in front of that door. John Taylor's use of the words "jail door" could also refer to the door to the jailer's bedroom, but he refers to the bedroom door simply as "the door" adding no modifier in the other parts of his account. He does use the words "jail door" once again in his account: "Immediately afterwards I saw the doctor going toward the jail door, and as there was an iron door at the head of the stairs adjoining our door which led into the cells for criminals, it struck me that the doctor was going in there, and I said to him, 'Stop, Doctor, and take me along.' He proceeded to the door and opened it, and then returned and dragged me along to a small cell prepared for criminals." Here, John Taylor uses "jail door" to mean the entrance into the iron-barred cells on the north end of the second floor. B. H. Roberts wrote, "[John Taylor] rolled under the bed, which was at the right of the window in the south-east corner of the room." *History of the Church*, 6:618. Willard Richards adds, "Joseph attempted, as the last resort, to leap the same window from whence Mr. Taylor fell." Willard Richards's account was written closer to the event, so the east window is most likely, but it presents a problem. To reach the relative safety under the bed, John Taylor would have had to crawl backward, facing the door and dragging his already wounded left leg. This would have been much more difficult than crawling forward if he was wounded by the south window. We know this because he was again wounded in his left arm, hip, and leg before reaching the bed, so his left side had to be facing the bedroom door.

The men who prepared Joseph Smith's body for burial reported a wound to the lower abdomen and another wound to the right hip. (This wound may have been an exit wound from the abdominal wound, but it is impossible to tell from their description.) The men also reported a wound to the right breast, a wound under the heart, and a wound in the right shoulder near the neck. The coroner's jury mentions two wounds, one to the right side of the chest and one in the right neck near the shoulder, but the jury mentioned only some of the wounds to both bodies.⁶¹ Willard Richards's account says Joseph Smith was shot twice from the door and once from below.

We think it most likely that Joseph Smith had turned the right side of his body toward the door and was trying to get his left leg out the window when he was first shot and that these shots came from the doorway. When John Taylor was shot, he fell back into the room, but Joseph Smith's upper body must have been very near the window opening, and the shots from the door likely caused him to fall out the window rather than back into the room. We think the wound on his left side under his heart came from someone standing below the east window. The shot would have been fired at an upward angle. The ball would have been traveling upward and likely traversed his chest cavity, exiting in the area above the right collarbone near the right shoulder. The pathway of a musket ball fired at this angle would have struck his heart and/or the great vessels associated with it. Such a shot would have been immediately fatal. He then fell through the open window to the ground below.

It could not have taken Joseph Smith more than twenty seconds to cross the room, mount the wide windowsill, and get his left leg part way out the window. This again gives us an estimate of the time it took the attackers to pass loaded muskets to those firing through the door. Joseph Smith's final act of self-sacrifice ensured that there were two friendly eyewitnesses to the murders.

Situation in the Hallway

Reloading their weapons would have been a difficult task for the men in the hallway. To reload a flintlock musket required about 62 to 64 inches of space. The leveled musket occupied 42 to 44 inches of space in front of the loader, while the person occupied the remaining 20 inches. Soldiers performed drills to load and fire their muskets rapidly with the claim that

61. "Findings of the Coroner's Jury." For example, only two of Hyrum Smith's six wounds are mentioned.

well-drilled troops could fire three shots per minute,⁶² but the narrow hallway in front of the bedroom door would have restricted movement and slowed down this process. The length of the floor in front of the door was 3 feet 8 inches wide in front of the door; the distance from the cellblock south wall to the door was 2 feet 2.5 inches, with the door adding another 2 feet 9.5 inches and the width to the stair railing 3 feet 8 inches.

John Taylor reported more and more muskets being pressed into the room and attributed this to men on the stairs pushing those in front of them into the room.⁶³ Given the space limitations of the hallway and the danger of standing close to the side of a flintlock musket, we think a more likely explanation was that the men standing on the stairs and outside the front door of the jail passed their loaded muskets up the stairs to the small number of men closest to the bedroom door, who then fired into the room. Afterward, the fired muskets were passed down the stairs in exchange for loaded muskets. This type of reloading was common when muskets were muzzle loaded on battlefields. The process would have shortened the time interval between the musket volleys and given the impression that more men were standing in front of the door.

A 69-caliber musket ball fired through the door would have had sufficient energy to severely wound or kill anyone on the other side of the door; yet only two shots were fired through the door. Since the door was being held firmly shut, the simplest course of action for the attackers would have been to fire multiple times through the door, killing or wounding anyone attempting to hold it closed. The fact that only two balls were fired through the solid part of the door confirm the eyewitness accounts that the attackers were able to force the door partly open quickly and then begin firing into the room.⁶⁴ The southeast corner where the bed was located would have been the one first exposed, then the area on the south wall over the

62. Richard Bruce Winders, *Mr. Polk's Army* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 92–94; Ernest F. Fisher Jr., “Weapons and Equipment Evolution and Its Influence upon the Organization and Tactics in the American Army, 1775–1963,” unpublished manuscript, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1963, File 2-3.7, AB.Z, U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH), Washington, D.C. A summary can be found at http://www.history.army.mil/StaffRide/Antietam/Small_Arms.htm.

63. *History of the Church*, 7:103. John Taylor states, “Every moment the crowd at the door became more dense, as they were unquestionably pressed on by those in the rear ascending the stairs, until the whole entrance at the door was literally crowded with muskets and rifles.” He did not further define the use of the word rifle.

64. *History of the Church*, 6:619–20; 7:102–4.

front door to the jail. As the door was forced further open, the east wall would have been exposed.

Once committed to this course of action, the attackers continued firing into the room, pushing the door farther and farther open, trying to reach the northwest corner where they knew Joseph Smith was. The unpleasant surprise of finding the prisoners armed undoubtedly caused the attackers to remain in the hallway and try to kill those in the room without exposing themselves.

We believe three men were the maximum that could have fired into the room with any degree of personal safety. This assertion is based on the space at the head of the stairs and the hazards to those standing nearby when a flintlock was fired. Our belief is supported by the number of men Joseph Smith is said to have wounded and by the wounds to John Taylor and Joseph Smith. John Taylor received a wound in the thigh, fell to the floor and lay there briefly, then crawled toward the bed in the southeast corner of the room, where he received three more wounds. Joseph Smith's wounds suggest that he was shot two or three times from men at the bedroom door, while one shot was believed to have been fired by someone standing under the window. This suggests that shots were coming from the door in twos and threes with a pause of several seconds between them.

Some of the attackers may have positioned themselves in the short space to the south of the door. These men would have had the best angle to shoot toward the northwest corner of the room, but the width of the platform would have made it impossible to aim their muskets into the room without thrusting the muzzles partway through the doorway and running the risk of having the barrels knocked down. Willard Richards comments that as the door was pushed farther open, musket barrels protruded into the room about half their length (roughly 2.4 feet).⁶⁵

Based on the evidence from the wounds received by those in the room, the accuracy of those firing into the room was poor, despite the 15-foot maximum range. The initial wounds John Taylor and Joseph Smith received were not immediately fatal and in John Taylor's case not fatal at all. John Taylor's initial wound was in his thigh. Joseph Smith's initial wounds were in his upper thigh/lower abdomen.⁶⁶ This suggests problems in aiming the muskets, difficulty with visibility, and an inability to hold the muskets steady in the cramped space at the top of the stairs.

65. *History of the Church*, 6:620.

66. *History of the Church*, 6:620, 627; Willard Richards to Brigham Young, June 30, 1844, in *History of the Church*, 7:147–48; Jesse, “Return to Carthage,” 17 n. 30.

In addition, the musket barrels were being vigorously deflected downward by the canes of John Taylor and Willard Richards.

Wounds Received

Willard Richards made three reports about the Smiths' wounds. The first was in his June 27, 1844, recital for the *Times and Seasons*, "Two Minutes in Jail." The second was in a letter to Brigham Young three days later, on June 30.⁶⁷ The third was in a letter to the Saints in England, dated July 9, 1844.⁶⁸ Willard Richards reported six wounds in Hyrum Smith's body. These were as follows: (1) a wound to left of his nose; (2) a wound under his chin to the right of the midline (which we believe was an exit wound for the ball that struck the left side of his face); (3) a wound through his lower back without an exit wound at the front of his abdomen, but with sufficient force to shatter the watch in his vest pocket; (4) a graze wound to his breast bone; (5) a wound just below the left knee; and (6) a wound to the back of the right thigh. Four of these wounds were confirmed by defects found in Hyrum Smith's clothing.⁶⁹

Joseph Smith was shot through the right upper thigh, right lower abdomen, right breast, right shoulder near the neck, and under his heart—with a likely exit wound behind the right clavicle. The wound in his right hip and shoulder may have been exit wounds. Unfortunately, none of his clothes have survived.

Several accounts claim that Joseph Smith's body was propped against the well and that he was shot in the chest by four of the militia acting under

67. *History of the Church*, 6:619–20, 627; Willard Richards to Brigham Young, June 30, 1844, in *History of the Church*, 7:147.

68. Willard Richards and John Taylor to Elder Reuben Hedlock and the Saints in the British Empire, July 9, 1844, in *Journal History*.

69. *History of the Church*, 6:619–20. The clothes Hyrum Smith was wearing when he was shot are in the possession of his great-grandson Eldred G. Smith. There was an entrance hole through the left trouser leg, another hole through the back of the right trouser leg, and a hole through the back of the right side of his vest, pants, and shirt. The right edge of the front of the vest had also lost an irregular section of fabric approximately two inches wide by three inches long. The defect in the vest was larger at the top and came to a point at the bottom. It had been stated that this defect was made by a musket ball that struck Hyrum Smith's chest and then continued into the floor of his mouth. But the defect in the fabric was broad at the top, coming to a point at the bottom, instead suggesting it was made by a musket ball exiting the skull and tearing the fabric from the top downward. The lack of damage to the top of the skull also suggested the damage to the fabric was made by an exiting musket ball. Lyon, "Hyrum Smith's Clothes and Pocket Watch." See also Tracy, *In Search of Joseph*, 75–77.

the direction of Colonel Levi Williams.⁷⁰ Another account claims one of the Warsaw militiamen drove a bayonet through his body and left him transfixed to the well casing.⁷¹ None of the wounds reported by Willard Richards to Brigham Young supports these stories.⁷²

John Taylor was shot first through his left thigh, then, several seconds later while making his way to the bed, he was hit in his left leg below the knee, in his left forearm, and in his left hip.⁷³ He also believed he had been hit in the abdomen by a ball from outside the window that shattered his watch, but Neil and Gayle Ord have established that the watch was not hit by a musket ball but rather was shattered when John Taylor fell against the windowsill after being shot from the door.⁷⁴ Willard Richards's left earlobe was grazed by a musket ball.⁷⁵

The musket balls fired from the hallway—and that struck the four occupants of the room—total at least thirteen: Hyrum Smith, five; John Taylor, four; Willard Richards, one; Joseph Smith, three or possibly four. One account written forty-one years after the martyrdom claims there were thirty-five holes in the walls.⁷⁶ Given the number of wounds received by those in the room and the account by Wood, we think it likely that somewhere between forty-five and fifty-five musket balls were fired into the room. Since it was probable that no more than three men were able to fire into the room at any given time, they would have had to reload or receive loaded muskets up to eighteen times to inflict the damage catalogued here.

Willard Richards titled one of his reports of the martyrdom “Two Minutes in Jail.” We think the actual time was longer, perhaps as long as nine minutes. First, it would have taken twenty to thirty seconds to exchange muskets with those firing, and with only three men able to fire

70. See Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 397 n. 50.

71. Woods, “Mormon Prophet.”

72. Willard Richards to Brigham Young, June 30, 1844, in *History of the Church*, 7:147. The wounds reported by Willard Richards in Joseph Smith's body do not support the story that he was propped up against the well and shot by a firing party of four men after he fell to the ground. Willard Richards counted four wounds in Joseph Smith's body, two of them in the chest. Both of the chest wounds are believed to have occurred when Joseph Smith was trying to jump from the window. The wound Willard Richards mentioned above Joseph Smith's clavicle probably was an exit wound; had he been shot after falling to the ground, we would expect Richards to have found three or four more chest wounds.

73. *History of the Church*, 6:618; Willard Richards to Brigham Young, June 30, 1844, in *History of the Church*, 7:147.

74. *History of the Church*, 7:104; Ord and Ord, “Artifacts of the Martyrdom”; Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 397 n. 47.

75. *History of the Church*, 6:619.

76. Woods, “Mormon Prophet.”

into the room and between forty-five and fifty-five shots fired into the room at an interval of between twenty and thirty seconds, it would have taken between five and nine minutes to fire into the bedroom that many times. Second, the attackers were also confronted with two unexpected developments: the intended victims were not in the jail cells and they were armed. Remember, the men in the room wounded at least three of the attackers. All of this increased the time it took to complete their murder of Joseph Smith.

Wound to Hyrum Smith's Lower Back

The most perplexing physical aspect of the assassinations was the wound to Hyrum Smith's lower back. We can reconstruct the wound from his clothes. The ball entered the lower part of his back on the right side, about 47 inches from his trouser cuff. The ball then traversed his abdomen, striking the pocket watch in his right vest pocket with sufficient energy to smash the crystal and the ceramic face of his watch, but the ball did not penetrate the skin of the abdominal wall. Both John Taylor and Willard Richards claim the ball that produced this wound came through the open east window.⁷⁷ John Taylor believes a member of the Carthage Greys fired the shot. This was possible, yet it was just as likely that a member of the Warsaw Militia fired the shot.

We explored the possibility the shot came in through the window from two perspectives: a shot from a tree and a shot from the ground. A drawing made by Frederick Piercy on site in 1853 and published in 1855, eleven years after the martyrdom, shows a tree on the southeast corner of the jail lot. However, this tree was too far to the southeast to provide a pathway to the bedroom where Hyrum Smith was standing. A second tree was in line with the east window but was too small to support the weight of a man.⁷⁸

This left the possibility of a shot from the ground. We calculated the distance from the jail a shooter would have required to hit Hyrum Smith in the lower back. If the bullet pathway increased 1 inch from the back to the front of his body, assuming a standard 10-inch-body thickness, then a musket would have to have been fired from 32 yards away. If the rise on the

77. *History of the Church*, 7:102; *History of the Church*, 6:617, 619–20.

78. *Comprehensive History*, 2:256; Piercy, *Route from Liverpool*, illustration xv. No trees are evident in a woodcut published in William M. Daniels, *A Correct Account of the Murder of Generals Joseph and Hyrum Smith at Carthage, on the 27th Day of June; 1844 by Wm. M. Daniels, an Eye Witness* (Nauvoo, Ill.: John Taylor, 1845), nor in an engraved version of the image in a later publication. See the illustration in Leonard, *Nauvoo*, 393.

bullet is reduced to half an inch, the distance would increase to 64 yards, and if dropped to 0.25 inches, the distance would lengthen to 128 yards.

We stood outside Carthage Jail about 25 yards from the jailer's bedroom door on June 16, 1999, at about 4:20 p.m. (CDT or 5:20 p.m. CST), approximately the same time as the assassinations likely occurred and eleven days earlier in the year. The day was sunny, as it was in 1844. The sun shone above the roofline of the jail, and the east window was in shadow. We could not see individuals in white shirts standing in the jailer's bedroom unless they stood at the windowsill. Considering these circumstances and the poor accuracy of a smoothbore military musket, we concluded that if a shot from the ground hit Hyrum Smith, then it was not an aimed shot, rather one that found its mark by chance.

We also concluded that either the ball came from some distance away or that Hyrum Smith's skin absorbed a substantial amount of energy. The skin is the most elastic organ in the body and when struck from within will stretch outward considerably. Even a bullet from modern firearms will stretch the skin outward several inches. The damage to Hyrum Smith's watch was sufficient to break the crystal, knock off the hands, knock off most of the enamel finish from the watch face, split the front of the watch case, and indent the watch face about 0.125 inches. Yet the damage to the watch was substantially less than that expected from a 69-caliber musket ball fired with a powder charge equivalent to a pistol (see figs. 21 and 22, pictures of Hyrum Smith's watch and a watch struck by a 69-caliber



FIG. 21. Damage to a twentieth-century pocket watch with a metal face protector. The watch was hit with a 69-caliber musket ball driven by a black-powder charge of 20 grains, equivalent to that fired by a smoothbore musket about 100 yards away. Photograph by Joseph Lynn Lyon.

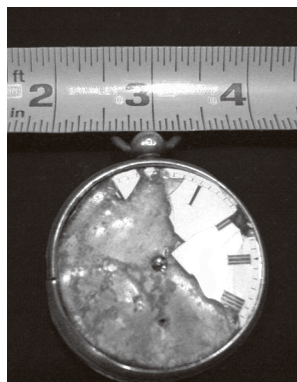


FIG. 22. Face of Hyrum Smith's pocket watch hit by a 69-caliber musket ball on June 27, 1844. Photograph by Joseph Lynn Lyon.

musket ball fired with a velocity equivalent to a shot fired from about 75 yards away). However, the diameter of the depression the ball left in the face of Hyrum Smith's pocket watch was consistent with what we expected from the impact of a 69-caliber musket soft-lead ball.⁷⁹ There was a circular depression on the face of the watch between the 4 o'clock and 8 o'clock positions. The depression was asymmetrical, being 0.75 inches at its longest diameter and 0.70 inches at its shortest. When we fired musket balls into eight different pocket watches, the balls made irregular holes through the watchcases, varying in width from 0.535 inches to 0.85 inches and in height from 0.30 inches to 0.92 inches.

Although the wound to Hyrum Smith's lower back may have occurred after he was dead, the eyewitness accounts and the physical evidence do not support this option. Both Willard Richards and John Taylor agree that Hyrum Smith fell to the floor on his back and did not move again, and neither eyewitness mentions Hyrum Smith being shot again after Joseph Smith was killed. John Taylor could see Hyrum Smith's body from the head of the stairs, where he was waiting to be moved after Joseph Smith's death, and declared the body had not moved.⁸⁰ Willard Richards says that after the attackers ran outside the jail, some returned while he was hiding John Taylor in the iron prison cell. However, the men turned and ran as soon as the cry "The Mormons are coming" was heard.⁸¹ This and the fact that the attackers knew their shots would summon the main company of the Carthage Greys, encamped on the town square about 600 yards away, precluded any lingering at the jail. The Greys were said to have arrived within a few minutes of the start of the attack, just in time to see the attackers running into the woods.⁸²

The suggestion that the wound on Hyrum Smith's lower back was made after his death also was not supported by the clothing he was wearing at the time of the martyrdom. Such a wound, if made after death, would have been made by someone firing at very close range into his body after turning the body over. There is no evidence of powder burns, or their residue, on the light-colored fabric of the vest where the ball entered his back.⁸³ If Hyrum Smith were shot after death, it would have been at very

79. Lyon, "Hyrum Smith's Clothes and Pocket Watch."

80. *History of the Church*, 7:107.

81. *History of the Church*, 6:621; 7:102–7.

82. *History of the Church*, 6:621.

83. While testing an 1816 musket's effect on pocket watches on June 26, 1999, we fired a musket about six inches from a cloth pocket holding a pocket watch. The muzzle blast set the fabric on fire and left a charred hole, about one inch in diameter, in the cloth.

Comparison of Information about the Martyrdom

Evidence—eyewitness and/or physical evidence

Event or Action		Richards	Taylor	John Hay	Doctor	Lawyer	Physical Evidence	Others
Location at Time of the Attack								
	Jailer's bedroom	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Bullet holes in door	
	Coats removed	Richards said every-one but himself had removed their coats.	Yes					
	Vest	Mentions Hyrum's vest				Defects in Hyrum's vest		
Initial Indication of Attack								
	Sees men rushing jail		Yes					
	Initial shots by the murderers	Yes	No—first shot men-tioned is the one through the keyhole				No evidence	
	Second shot through door latch	Yes	Yes				Damage to edge of door	
	Shot through door panel	Yes	Yes		Yes		Hole present	
	Painted faces	No mention	Yes					
Hyrum Smith's Wounds								
	Back	Yes	Yes				Hyrum's watch	
	Left side of nose	Yes	Yes				Death mask	Damage to skull
	Throat	No	No					Coroner's jury
	Front of chest	Yes	No					
	Other balls hit him	Yes	No					
Joseph Smith Retaliates								
	Type of pistol used	Six-shooter	Six-shooter	Six-barreled revolver	Allen pepperbox		Museum	
	Number wounded	No	Two or three	Four	One			
John Taylor Runs to the Window								
	Runs to window and is shot	Yes	Yes					
	Ball hits watch	Yes	No—"fell inside, from some, at that time, unknown cause"					
	Falls to the floor	Yes	Yes					
	Crawls toward bed	Yes	Yes					
	Is hit three more times	Mentions Taylor being shot						
	Is hit again but doesn't give a number	Yes		Mentions				

Joseph Smith Runs to Window					
Runs to window	Yes	Mentions			
Left leg out of window	No	No			Wounds to right side
Is shot through right side	Yes	No			Men who dressed body for burial
Is shot through chest	Yes	No			
Falls out of the window	Yes	Yes		Yes	
Is shot after falling from window	Yes	No mention			
Willard Richards Runs to the Window					
Sees bayonets	Yes	No			
Richards moves Taylor to the cell area	Yes	Yes	Indirectly—says they found Taylor in the cell but doesn't say how he got there		
Doctor Arrives					
Extracts ball from Taylor	No	Yes	Not directly		
Dresses wounds	No	Yes	Yes		
Blood stains	No	No	Yes		
Anyone shot after Joseph's death	No mention	No mention			
Number of shots fired into the room				35	
Mention of pistols except Joseph's and Hyrum's	No	No	Yes—"Smith had two six-barreled revolvers"		
Physical Evidence					
Hyrum's clothes	Preserved by family and currently in possession of Eldred G. Smith				
Jailer's bedroom door with gunshot damage	Present at the jail and attested to by several newspaper accounts dating from the 1860s to the present				
Bloodstains	Were present until sometime in the 1980s when they were removed				

close range given the 4-foot-9-inch to 4-foot-11-inch length of the musket and the short stature of people of that era. Yet there is no charring of the vest, trousers, or shirt that he was wearing.

We propose another possible explanation of the wound. Remember that Hyrum Smith was pushing against the door with his left shoulder. When he was shot through the face, he stood up, releasing pressure on the door. The door swung partway open, striking his left shoulder and turning him to face away from the door, exposing the right side of his back to the opening. One of the attackers, with his musket held under his right arm about 49 inches above the floor, fired through the door opening and the ball struck Hyrum Smith in the back. The force of the ball then turned him another 180 degrees, and he fell to the floor with his head away from the door.

The lack of bloodstains on the back of Hyrum Smith's underwear, shirt, trousers, and vest was surprising. Even with a massive arterial hemorrhage from the wound in the floor of the mouth, a substantial amount of blood would have been isolated in the venous system of the legs and abdomen and would have remained in liquid form for several minutes. Gravity would have caused some of this blood to flow from the wound in his back. If Hyrum Smith had fallen on his left side, this blood would have settled to this side of his body, but if he had fallen on his back, as John Taylor and Willard Richards state, then a substantial amount of blood should have exited from the wound for several minutes after he was shot. We have no explanation for the lack of blood on the back of these items of clothing, but it is possible that the clothes were washed sometime in the past by a family member.

With the cooperation of Eldred G. Smith, a great-grandson of Hyrum Smith, we inspected and measured the clothes he was wearing when shot. The musket ball that hit Hyrum Smith's watch passed through the back of the vest, trousers, shirt, and underwear. All of these holes measured between 0.5 inches to 0.62 inches, were slightly elongated, and were located 47 inches above the cuff of the right pant leg. The pants also had a hole through the back of the right leg and through the front of the left leg, where he was shot after falling to the floor (fig. 23). There was no exit wound from either of these wounds, and the entrance holes in the fabric were elongated toward the head, suggesting both balls entered at an upward angle. When Hyrum Smith fell, his right leg must have fallen outward in a frog-leg position. (Some of the wounds to his legs were on the sides and back of his legs, not the front, and his right leg must have been splayed out exposing the back, not the front.) The wounds to the right thigh and lower left leg were made by attackers firing from the door and were likely the result of the musket barrels being knocked downward by Willard Richards and John Taylor. The fabric defect on the left knee was 0.625 inches by 1.5 inches, and the fabric defect over the right thigh was more irregular but about



FIG. 23. Hyrum Smith's pants. Notice the damage from a bullet hole on the left knee and right hip. Eldred G. Smith Family Collection. Photograph by Alan Wood.

0.625 inches in diameter. There was also a 0.625-inch hole in the vest with a linear defect on the right front side of the vest measuring 0.62 inches by 1.5 inches, about an inch below it, and a corresponding defect in the right shirtfront. The circular nature of the upper hole and the irregular nature of the lower hole suggest damage caused by a ball traveling downward. The most likely diameter of the ball that made these holes is 0.64 inches. The holes in the various pieces of clothing were only slightly smaller than the diameter of the musket ball that made them, and the fabric probably stretched a little rather than being completely destroyed.

Summary

This multidisciplinary investigation of the martyrdom has examined the accuracy of the firsthand accounts and evaluated the crime scene. The surviving physical evidence is consistent with an assault by men armed with 69-caliber muskets—the standard musket issued to militia units in Illinois. That military muskets were used is supported by Willard Richards's mention of bayonets,⁸⁴ by the diameter of the bullet holes in the door, by the diameter of the bullet holes in Hyrum Smith's clothing⁸⁵ and face, and by the dent in his watch.

The limited space at the head of the stairs, the difficulty of reloading a muzzle-loading musket, and the wounds to John Taylor and Joseph Smith suggest that no more than three men were firing into the room at any time. The number of shots fired indicates the attackers had only minutes to kill the men in the room. The fact the attackers remained in the hallway, rather than entering the room to shoot the four men, is best explained by the fear of the firearms possessed by the men in the bedroom. Once Joseph Smith had discharged his six-barreled pistol, his companions used only their walking sticks for defense, but the attackers did not know this and continued firing from the hallway until they were sure they had killed the religious leader.

Joseph Smith sacrificed himself by running into the line of fire from the open door. This act ensured that there were two friendly eyewitness accounts of the martyrdom and it revealed his courage and selfless dedication to the people he loved.

84. *History of the Church*, 6:620.

85. *History of the Church*, 6:619–20, 627; Tracy, *In Search of Joseph*, 56–57; and our physical investigations as noted above.

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The Rich Man, Lazarus, and Doctrine & Covenants 104:18

Steven C. Harper

No revelation more emphatically sets forth the law of consecration than Doctrine and Covenants 104:13–18. The scriptures have long declared the first principle of consecration—“the earth is the Lord’s” (Exodus 9:29). Section 104 affirms that principle with crystal clarity: “I, the Lord, stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine” (D&C 104:14). In decreeing the doctrines of stewardship and accountability over the abundance of the earth, the Lord requires that the rich share with the poor: “If any man take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with *the wicked*, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment” (104:18, 1981 edition, emphasis added).

This potent passage in Doctrine and Covenants 104 obviously draws on the New Testament story of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19–31, especially verse 23. In the Savior’s story as recorded in Luke, the rich man had “fared sumptuously” in life while a “beggar named Lazarus” waited in vain for some of his table scraps. When the two men died, angels carried Lazarus into Abraham’s bosom while the rich man went to hell. “And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments,” ironically begging Lazarus to relieve his suffering. Section 104:18 evokes this story and applies it to Latter-day Saints.

An interesting detail in the three earliest manuscripts of Doctrine and Covenants 104 (one of which was recently published in *BYU Studies*¹) links this revelation more closely to this New Testament passage than has previously been noticed. For example, the text in the manuscript that the Joseph Smith Papers Project has termed Revelation Book 2, often called the Kirtland Revelation Book, says that if one does not share

In an article for the *Ensign* recently posted online, Elder Marlin K. Jensen, Church Historian and Recorder, announced that the Joseph Smith Papers will soon publish the Book of Commandments and Revelations, the earliest manuscript book of Joseph Smith's revelations.¹ The Book of Commandments and Revelations became the repository for transcribed texts of Joseph's revelations no later than early 1831. Its more than two hundred pages are full of the earliest known copies of many of the revelations now in the Doctrine and Covenants, written largely in the handwriting of John Whitmer, who was called as Joseph's transcriber (D&C 47). Among other heretofore unknown texts, the book contains a revelation on securing a copyright for the Book of Mormon in Canada. Some early Latter-day Saints wrote of this revelation, but the Book of Commandments and Revelations contains the only known text of it. Many of the known revelations can be dated more specifically with the information in the Book of Commandments and Revelations. Moreover, Whitmer often provided a short historical introduction to the revelations that enables us to better understand why the texts were revealed in the first place. A list of contents at the end of the book restores lost knowledge. With these pieces of the documentary record, we can learn when section 20 was revealed, where the Church was organized, what questions prompted section 29, and more about the mysterious James Covill of sections 39 and 40.

It is exciting that this rich document will soon become available to the public as part of the Joseph Smith Papers, Revelations and Translations Series. Upcoming issues of *BYU Studies* will feature several painstaking studies of the Book of Commandments and Revelations by the scholars who have edited it.

—Steven C. Harper, document editor

1. Marlin K. Jensen, "The Joseph Smith Papers: The Manuscript Revelation Books," *Ensign*, forthcoming in print, available online by going to lds.org, then click "Gospel Library," click "Magazines," click "Ensign," click "The Joseph Smith Papers: The Manuscript Revelation Books."

according to the Lord's law, "he shall with *Dives* lift up his eyes <in hell> being in torment"² (fig. 1).

Dives is the Latin word for *rich*, *opulent*, *wealthy*.³ In Greek, the story of Lazarus and the rich man begins in Luke 16:19 with the words "*Anthrōpos de tis ēn plousios*," which the King James translation renders naturally as "There was a certain rich man." The Latin Vulgate Bible translated this clause verbatim as "*Homo quidam erat dives*."⁴ Although the Greek word *plousios* and the Latin word *dives* both clearly mean "rich," in the

Middle Ages the word *dives* came to be used as the proper name of the rich man in this story, due largely to the asymmetry of the parable—the poor man's name is specified while the rich man is unnamed.⁵ In the English language, *Dives* occurs as a proper name for the parable's rich man as early as 1393, when it appeared in the "Summoner's Tale" in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.⁶ It continued to be used as a proper name through the nineteenth century, as in William Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* in 1848.⁷

When the Church first published this revelation as section 98 in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, the name "*Dives*" in the manuscript was replaced with the phrase "the wicked" in the printed version. This editorial change, made under the supervision of the First Presidency and Presiding Elders of the Church, clarified that although it may indeed be difficult for the rich to enter heaven (see Matthew 19:24), it is wickedness and not riches per se that will keep them out.

Just as the presence of *Dives* in the earliest manuscripts clearly links Doctrine and Covenants 104 to Luke 16, the use of "the wicked" makes the essential meaning of both texts unmistakable. The unrighteous rich in Zion who, like the rich man in Christ's story in Luke 16, do not impart of their substance to the poor will some day have great cause to regret that wickedness.

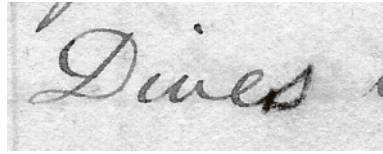


FIG. 1. Detail from the Book of Commandments and Revelations, page 193. *Dive* is in the handwriting of John Whitmer, and the final *s* in red pencil appears to be in the handwriting of William Phelps. Manuscript in the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

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1. Max H Parkin, "Joseph Smith and the United Firm: The Growth and Decline of the Church's First Master Plan of Business and Finance, Ohio and Missouri, 1832–1834," *BYU Studies* 46, no. 3 (2007): 43. The word *Dives* was incorrectly transcribed as *Diveles* in the transcription Dr. Parkin used for his article.
2. Kirtland Revelation Book, 102, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.
3. P. G. W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), s.v. *dives*.
4. Jerome, Vulgate Bible, Bible Foundation and On-Line Book Initiative, ftp.std.com/obi/Religion/Vulgate.
5. Henry J. Cadbury, "A Proper Name for Dives (Lexical Notes on Luke–Acts VI)," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 81, no. 4 (1962): 399–400.
6. Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 95, line 1877. The passage reads, "Lazar and dives lyveden diversly, and divers gerdon hadden they therby."
7. William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1969), 658. The passage, in chapter 57, reads, "'There must be classes—there must be rich and poor,' Dives says, smacking his claret—(it is well if he even sends the broken meat out to Lazarus sitting under the window)."

What Does It Mean to Be a Christian?

The Views of Joseph Smith and Søren Kierkegaard

David L. Paulsen

The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) and the American prophet Joseph Smith (1805–1844) both radically critiqued nineteenth-century Christian culture. Though Søren often directed critiques specifically toward the State Church of Denmark,¹ his ultimate target was Christianity as a whole, or simply “Christendom.”² Joseph’s critique singled out no specific church; he also focused on Christianity as a whole. While Søren advanced his critique with a copy of “the New Testament in his hand,” he emphatically insisted he was “without authority.”³ In contrast, Joseph claimed his critique was based on divinely invested authority and on revelation, which, he said, came to him both directly and in the form of ancient texts he translated with divine aid.

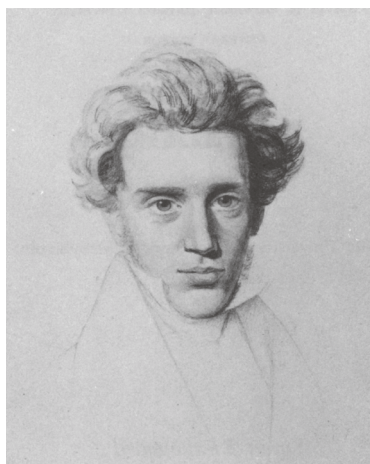
Søren and Joseph both called for drastic change in contemporary Christianity. Although it is clear that Kierkegaard sought to initiate reform in the lives of individual Christians, the goals he hoped to achieve on a churchwide level remain ambiguous. Nonetheless, his desired starting point was clear: an official Church acknowledgment that Christianity as taught and practiced in Denmark was not the Christianity of the New Testament.⁴ Mere reform was not enough for Joseph, who asserted the only solution was a literal restoration of New Testament Christianity, claiming God had called him to perform such a function.⁵ Indeed, Joseph viewed the Church that God restored through him as the kingdom of God, “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30).

Notwithstanding important differences, I find Søren’s and Joseph’s critiques of nineteenth-century Christendom mutually reinforcing and illuminating. To begin to clarify the content of their critiques and the extent of their congruence is the modest task of this paper. Assessment of

their views is largely deferred; however, self-examination in light of them may commence at once. I begin by providing some historical context for these men and their critiques.

SØREN KIERKEGAARD (1813–1855)

Søren Kierkegaard is widely recognized today as a towering figure in the philosophy of religion. But this has not always been so. His major books, published in printings of five hundred, sometimes did not sell out the first



Søren Kierkegaard

editions, and his greatest philosophical work, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, sold only seventy copies during his lifetime.⁶ However, Søren foresaw that others would be slow to recognize the significance of his work. In 1850, he wrote, “Circumstances are still far from being confused enough for people to make proper use of me. . . . But they must come to see that things will nonetheless end with circumstances becoming so desperate that they will have to make use of desperate people like me.”⁷

Kierkegaard invites us to ponder what he called “the essential questions”—those closest to our centers as feeling, thinking, acting individuals: What does it mean to exist? What does it mean to be a human being? What does it mean to be an individual? What does it mean to die? For Søren, all of these questions coalesced in what he considered the most important inquiry of all: What does it mean to be a Christian?⁸ The probing of this last question is the central thread that runs through and ties together his entire authorship.⁹ All told, he dealt with this question, directly or indirectly, in twenty-one extraordinary books and in over eight thousand pages of journals and papers.¹⁰ Søren’s underlying aim in his voluminous production was not primarily theoretical. Instead, his purpose was to provoke Christian self-examination with a view to repentance or, as he otherwise put it, to introduce Christianity into Christendom.

In the last year of his life, Søren began a scathing assault on established Christian culture, climaxing with his famous (or infamous) *Attack upon Christendom*. The time for gentleness was past; what was needed

was a sledgehammer.¹¹ When an anonymous critic accused Kierkegaard of constantly “ringing the fire alarm,” he corrected the accuser by saying he had not sounded the alarm but started the fire in an effort to “smoke out illusions” of Christianity.¹²

Søren commenced his attack with a series of twenty-one articles published in a Copenhagen newspaper, *The Fatherland*, from December 1854 to May 1855 and he capped it off with a series of tracts called *The Moment*, which he published from May until October 2, when he fell to the ground paralyzed with an illness that was never clearly diagnosed. Kierkegaard himself considered his sickness to be psychic—the toll incurred by his efforts to root out the corruption embedded in Danish Christianity.¹³ He was taken to Frederik’s Hospital, where he died on November 11, reportedly lucid to the end.

Among the regular visitors Søren welcomed during his last illness was Pastor Emil Boesen, a close friend since his youth. One day Boesen asked Kierkegaard if he relied on Christ’s grace. Søren answered, “Naturally, what else?”¹⁴ Another day Boesen asked, “Won’t you take the Holy Communion?” Søren responded, “Yes, but not from a pastor, from a layman.” Boesen replied that that would be difficult. Then, Søren said, he would die without it: “I have made my choice. . . . The pastors are civil servants of the Crown; civil servants of the Crown have nothing to do with Christianity.”¹⁵

JOSEPH SMITH (1805–1844)

Joseph’s canonized account of his First Vision provides a useful background for understanding his critique of Christendom, as well as a core framework for comparing his perspective with Søren’s. In 1820, fourteen-year-old Joseph was living in upstate New York where there was, according to his account, “an unusual excitement on the subject of religion” (JS–H 1:5). This religious fervor created a significant stir and division among the people. Joseph was profoundly affected by the ensuing commotion: “During this time of great excitement my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness. . . . So great were



Joseph Smith. Courtesy Church History Library.

the confusion and strife among the different denominations, that it was impossible for a person young as I was, and so unacquainted with men and things, to come to any certain conclusion who was right and who was wrong” (JS–H 1:8).

While struggling with this question, Joseph came across the following passage while reading the Epistle of James: “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5). Following James’s counsel, Joseph went to the woods near his home to pray for direction. In response to his supplication, God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared to him. He wrote:

I saw two Personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!* . . . I asked the Personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right . . . and which I should join. . . . I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” (JS–H 1:17–19)

In explaining why “they were all wrong,” the Lord made six sweeping indictments of nineteenth-century Christianity. These indictments summarize much of what I herein refer to as Joseph’s¹⁶ critique of Christendom. Considered one by one, they will serve as a roadmap for our comparison of Joseph’s and Søren’s views.

I. “THEY WERE ALL WRONG”

Joseph

In an 1832 journal entry referring to his First Vision, Joseph asserted “there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the new testament.”¹⁷ Along the same lines, in explaining his First Vision to early followers, Joseph was known to relate how he “was told there was no Christian church on the face of the earth according to the ancient pattern, as recorded in the New Testament.”¹⁸

Søren

In his *Attack upon Christendom*, Søren repeatedly asserted that New Testament Christianity was no longer to be found. Consider the following representative texts.

March 22, 1855: “First and foremost, and on the greatest possible scale, an end must be put to the whole official . . . falsehood which . . . conjures up and maintains the illusion that what is preached is Christianity, the Christianity of the New Testament. Here is a case where no quarter must be given.”¹⁹

March 26, 1855: “The religious situation in our country is: Christianity (that is, the Christianity of the New Testament—and everything else is not Christianity, least of all by calling itself such), Christianity does not exist—as almost anyone must be able to see as well as I.”²⁰

And on March 28, 1855: “O Luther, thou hadst 95 theses—terrible! And yet, in a deeper sense, the more theses, the less terrible. This case is far more terrible: there is only one thesis. The Christianity of the New Testament simply does not exist. Here there is nothing to reform.”²¹

During the last few months of his life, Kierkegaard broke a lifelong habit and ceased attending church, advising others to do the same. In May 1855, he wrote: “Whosoever thou art, whatever thy life may be, my friend—by ceasing to take part (if in fact thou dost) in the public function of divine worship as it now is, thou hast one guilt the less and a great one, that thou dost not take part in treating God as a fool, and in calling that the Christianity of the New Testament which is not the Christianity of the New Testament.”²²

II. “THEIR CREEDS WERE AN ABOMINATION IN HIS SIGHT”

Joseph

Joseph did not claim that the denominational creeds contained no truth, but only that whatever truth they contained was mixed with falsehoods: “I cannot believe in any of the creeds of the different denominations, because they all have some things in them I cannot subscribe to, though all of them have some truth.”²³ Among the doctrines Joseph said had been corrupted by these creeds were those pertaining to the nature of God and the trinity²⁴ as well as those dealing with the purpose, proper mode, and authority to perform the ordinances of baptism²⁵ and the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.²⁶ Perhaps most fundamentally,

Joseph held that some creeds erred in teaching that the heavens were closed and God had ceased to communicate with man on earth.²⁷

Apart from creedal doctrinal error, Joseph found fault with the creeds because of (1) their restrictive nature, (2) their causing division and contention among Christians, (3) their privileging orthodoxy (right doctrine) above orthopraxy (Christian practice), and (4) their substituting human constructions for revelation.

Joseph was particularly opposed to the dogmatic and restrictive nature of the creeds. "I want to come up into the presence of God," he explained, "and learn all things; but the creeds set up stakes, and say, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;' which I cannot subscribe to."²⁸ On another occasion, he stated:

The most prominent difference in sentiment between the Latter-day Saints and sectarians was, that the latter were all circumscribed by some peculiar creed, which deprived its members the privilege of believing anything not contained therein, whereas the Latter-day Saints have no creed, but are ready to believe all true principles that exist, as they are made manifest from time to time.²⁹

Further: "Methodists have creeds which a man must believe or be kicked out of their church. I want the liberty of believing as I please, it feels so good not to be trammelled."³⁰

Second, the conflicting creeds defined boundaries between sects that created confusion, contention, and division.³¹ Referring to the diverse and contradictory nature of the various creeds, Joseph reasoned: "Is God the author of all this? If not of all of it, which does He recognize? Surely, such a heterogeneous mass of confusion never can enter into the kingdom of heaven."³²

Third, Joseph worried that preoccupation with right doctrine (orthodoxy) sometimes led to a disregard for necessary Christian practice (orthopraxy). Though he in no way minimized the importance of doctrine, he stressed the priority of orthopraxy over orthodoxy. For Joseph, it was unacceptable to merely profess belief in God, even if one's beliefs were correct. He explained, "Any man may believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and be happy in that belief, and yet not obey his commandments, and at last be cut down for disobedience to the Lord's righteous requirements."³³ To receive salvation, according to Joseph, "We must not only do some things, but everything which God has commanded."³⁴

Finally, Joseph knew that human constructions based on human wisdom were suspect; the only reliable source of correct doctrine was God. Therefore, when declaring doctrine, Joseph credited heaven as the source. For example, before discussing the "organization of Spirits in the eternal

world,” he said, “I am going to take up this subject by virtue of the knowledge of God in me, which I have received from heaven.”³⁵ Indeed, Joseph claimed, “Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject.”³⁶

Søren

Søren, too, saw problems in postrevelatory, human theological constructions. From his perspective, New Testament Christianity was pure and undefiled—something against which modern Christianity should constantly check itself. Consequently, he bemoaned any changes to Christianity that stripped it of its original boldness: “Christianity was an imposing figure when it stepped vigorously forth into the world and spoke its opinion, but from the moment it tried to set bounds through the pope or wanted to throw the Bible, or later still the creed, at the people’s head, it became like an old man who thinks that he has lived long enough in the world and wants to retire.”³⁷ New Testament Christianity, Søren explained, was so imposing because it was a paradox for all.³⁸ There were no professors of religion or professional clergy to explain away the ultimate paradox of Christianity, that “the eternal, essential truth . . . has come into existence in time.”³⁹ Established churches sought to mitigate the paradoxical nature of Christianity and offer the masses a cheapened understanding of it.

Like Joseph, Søren feared orthodoxy would surmount orthopraxy. He warned against allowing the particulars of one’s creed to supersede the quality of one’s faith. “If a man is to be a Christian,” Kierkegaard maintained, “it is doubtless requisite for him to believe something *definite*; but it is just as certainly requisite for him to be *quite definite* that ‘he’ believes. In the same degree that thou dost direct attention exclusively to the definite things a man must believe, in that same degree dost thou get away from faith.”⁴⁰

Along the same lines, Kierkegaard declared that the attempt to encapsulate Christianity in a creed was an “ultimate misunderstanding.”⁴¹ He viewed Christianity not as a doctrine, but rather as an “existence-communication,” something to be lived, not just contemplated.⁴² “Surely a philosophical theory that is to be comprehended and speculatively understood is one thing,” said Søren, “and a doctrine that is to be actualized in existence is something else.”⁴³ Creeds were an “ultimate misunderstanding” because they categorized Christianity as the former rather than the latter.

Most fundamentally, then, Christians were to live Christianity, not just theorize about it.⁴⁴ Like Joseph, Søren stressed the priority of Christian praxis over theory. His apparent de-emphasis of doctrine was dialectically

designed to provoke us to self-examination and repentance and, thus, to bring back into equilibrium a pendulum that had swung too far—at least in nineteenth-century Denmark—toward speculative theologizing.

III. “THOSE PROFESSORS WERE ALL CORRUPT”

Joseph

Whatever Joseph may have thought about the framers of the classic Christian creeds, it is clear he often complained about the priests and pastors of the local churches themselves. He said, “The sectarian priests are blind, and they lead the blind, and they will all fall into the ditch together. They build with hay, wood, and stubble, on the old revelations, without the true priesthood or spirit of revelation.”⁴⁵

Even as a teenage boy anxious to tell of his vision of the Father and the Son, Joseph encountered bitter dissonance from denominational leaders whom he referred to as “professors of religion”: “I soon found, however, that my telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion. . . . Men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me” (JS-H 1:22).

An 1832 journal entry provides more insight as to whom he believed the Lord was designating as “corrupt.” Joseph recorded, “Thus applying myself to them [the scriptures] and my intimate acquaintance with those of different denominations led me to marvel exceedingly for I discovered that they did not [adorn] their profession by a holy walk and Godly conversation agreeable to what I found contained in that sacred depository this was a grief to my Soul.”⁴⁶

Many of Joseph’s views were drawn directly from revelations that came to and through him; others he gleaned from ancient texts he claimed to have translated by the power of God. One such text was the Book of Mormon, a record of the Lord’s dealings with his prophets on the ancient American continent. These prophets foresaw nineteenth-century professors of Christendom displaying corruption of many guises, including intellectual arrogance, materialistic self-seeking, insensitivity to or even disdain for the poor, and classism. Consider the words of Jacob: “O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men. When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore

their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish" (2 Ne. 9:28).

Nephi also prophetically foretold many modes of corruption, specifically lamenting the "gold," "silver," "silks," "scarlets," "fine-twined linen," and "precious clothing" that are the "desires of [the] great and abominable [that is, apostate] church" (1 Ne. 13:4–8). He also relates the failings of the Christian professors specifically to their pride, intellectual arrogance, and classism (2 Ne. 26:20–21, 29).

To avoid these types of corruption, the church described in the Book of Mormon at times maintained a lay ministry, which Joseph reinstituted and which remains today in the church he restored. Two different accounts in the Book of Mormon describe such a lay-leadership structure:

And the priests were not to depend upon the people for their support; but for their labor they were to receive the grace of God, that they might wax strong in the Spirit, having the knowledge of God, that they might teach with power and authority from God. (Mosiah 18:26)

And when the priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people, the people also left their labors to hear the word of God. And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God they all returned again diligently unto their labors; and the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers, for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; and thus they were all equal, and they did all labor, every man according to his strength.

And they did impart of their substance, every man according to that which he had, to the poor, and the needy, and the sick, and the afflicted; and they did not wear costly apparel, yet they were neat and comely. (Alma 1:26–27)

Søren

Regarding priestly corruption in Christendom, Kierkegaard's critique seems to be in close correspondence with Joseph's. As we have seen, Søren had no tolerance for pastors who were royal officials—employees of the state.⁴⁷ But he also felt that the very idea of a professional clergy presented an inherent and irresolvable conflict of interest. Because the pastor's financial and social well-being is tied to the appointments of the state or the generosity of his congregation,⁴⁸ his loyalty to Christianity becomes compromised, as other factors inevitably deter him from preaching the demands of discipleship:

To be specific, [the pastor] has the reason that he wants to have a good standing with the people, who would perhaps get angry if he represented

Christianity more truthfully. He has the reason that it is his bread and butter, and he must take care to speak in such a way that the congregation is not niggardly with the offering. In short, he has the reason that he himself is stuck in the same worldliness as the congregation.⁴⁹

Being involved in such worldliness was not consistent with the message of Christianity. Ironically, as Søren pointed out: “A pastor is one who is respected and honored and esteemed in society for proclaiming that we should not seek after worldly honor, esteem, and wealth.”⁵⁰ He derided pastors as opportunists who coasted along the comfortable crest of Christianity’s popularity. Strikingly like Nephi, Søren even lamented the love and wearing of costly apparel:

Thanks be to you, ye silk and velvet priests, who in ever more numerous troops offered your services when it appeared that profit was on the side of Christianity; thanks be to you for your Christian zeal and fervor in behalf of these millions, of kingdoms and lands, of a whole world of Christians. . . . For if things were to remain as they were, if only a few poor, persecuted, hated men were Christians, where was the silk and velvet to come from?⁵¹

Even more appalling, the results of such opportunism adversely affected the poor and outcast, for in such a religious system, serving the poor did not offer the same benefits to priests as serving those with power and wealth:

But, true enough, to the priest the king is infinitely more important than the beggar. “A beggar, what help will he be to us? We might have to give him money.” . . . “But a king, a king! That is prodigiously important for Christianity.” . . . [For] when the whole nation has become Christian, . . . then come silk and velvet, and stars and ribbons, and all the most exquisite refinements, and the many thousands per year.⁵²

Kierkegaard noticed that those to whom Christianity should offer the most concern and care—the poor and the suffering—sadly were those who were most neglected:

If Christianity relates to anyone in particular, then it may especially be said to belong to the suffering, the poor, the sick, the leprous, the mentally ill, and so on, to sinners, criminals. Now see what they have done to them in Christendom, see how they have been removed from life so as not to disturb—earnest Christendom. Rarely do they have a pastor, and then he is a mediocre one. Christ did not separate them in this way; it was for them especially that he was a pastor.⁵³

Although Søren spoke out strongly against a professional, especially a state-sponsored, clergy, perhaps he reserved his sharpest criticism for those who were “professors” as a result of academic training and

appointment—especially professors of Christian theology. He felt that the message of Christianity was not so difficult as to require the learned writings of specially trained men in order for common people to know how to be Christian—the New Testament had made it clear enough. Actually, said Kierkegaard, the need and usefulness of professors came about because of “the fact that [the requirements of Christianity are] not to our liking—and therefore, therefore, therefore we must have commentaries and professors and commentaries. *It is to get rid of doing God’s will that we have invented learning . . . we shield ourselves by hiding behind tomes.*”⁵⁴ In a scorching declamation preserved in his *Journals and Papers*, he wrote:

There are passages in the N.T. whereby bishops, priests, deacons (no matter how little they approximately resemble the original sketch) can be justified, but find the passage in the N.T. which mentions professors of theology. Why does a person involuntarily laugh if to that passage which declares that God ordained some to be prophets, others to be apostles, others to be directors of the congregation, there is added: “some to be professors of theology?”⁵⁵

In comparing Joseph and Søren, we must not forget that their respective critiques of intellectual arrogance stemmed from quite different theological perspectives. Kierkegaard held that reason’s inability to grasp religious truth, and thus the arrogance of any theologian or professor of religion attempting so to do, was not simply due to our fallen nature, but rather to the nature of God himself. Because God is wholly transcendent and wholly “Other,” any of his manifestations in the temporal world will necessarily conceal his true nature. Furthermore, God’s revelation will be self-contradictory, as evidenced by his supreme self-manifestation as the crucified man Jesus. Thus, reason can *never* grasp religious truths, as it is unable to believe by virtue of the absurd.⁵⁶

Joseph, while occasionally emphasizing our inability to *fully* grasp religious truths through reason (see, for instance, Mosiah 4:9), held no such extreme view. Rather, he often cited the reasonableness of the doctrines he taught as evidence of their truth. For Joseph, reason was a necessary companion to revelation, only undesirable when separated therefrom. Thus, despite their different motives for doing so, both Joseph and Søren distrusted an all-powerful, rational capability, especially as it was employed by unauthorized, dispassionate professors of religion.

IV. “THEY DRAW NEAR TO ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEARTS ARE FAR FROM ME”

Joseph

The contention and hostility that Joseph observed among competing Christian clergy was perhaps his first indication that, despite the lip service they gave to Christian love, their hearts were far indeed from the Lord. When Joseph was seeking to know which of the churches was true, he noted “the great love” and “the great zeal” among new converts and clergy in the midst of “th[e] extraordinary scene of religious feeling,” where all people enjoyed the opportunity to freely “join what sect they pleased.” Such feelings of mutual congeniality, however, were short-lived:

When the converts began to file off, some to one party and some to another, it was seen that the seemingly good feelings of both the priests and the converts were more pretended than real; for a scene of great confusion and bad feeling ensued—priest contending against priest, and convert against convert; so that all their good feelings one for another, if they ever had any, were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions. (JS-H 1:6)

Joseph understood the dangers of flattery (which he called “a deadly poison”⁵⁷) and ostentatious verbosity by those who made an external show of their religiousness. “Outward appearance is not always a criterion by which to judge our fellow man,” Joseph counseled. “But the lips betray the haughty and overbearing imaginations of the heart; by his words *and* his deeds let him be judged.”⁵⁸ Thus, Joseph tried to avoid fanfare in his own preaching: “I do not calculate or intend to please your ear with superfluity of words or oratory, or with much learning; but I calculate to edify you with the simple truths from heaven.”⁵⁹ He once remarked, “I love that man better who swears a stream as long as my arm, and administering to the poor & dividing his substance, than the long smoothed faced hypocrites.”⁶⁰ Righteousness, according to Joseph, was not dependent on a person’s ability to eloquently articulate beliefs. “To be righteous is to be just and merciful. If a man fails in kindness justice and mercy he will be dam[n]ed.”⁶¹

Søren

Søren also observed that speech and action are often separated by a chasm of hypocrisy. For him, there were some truths—indeed, the most meaningful ones—that could never be realized if hypocrisy were present. Objectively, truths may be articulated, but they cannot be appropriated

without fervent commitment to living them, hence the idea of Christianity being an “existence-communication.” Søren continually emphasized the roles of *passion* and *inwardness* as essential components in an individual’s path to becoming a Christian—two qualities completely incompatible with hypocrisy. Thus, a distanced, noninvolved objectivity becomes intrinsically at odds with the inner, subject-centered nature of true Christian discipleship. “Christianity explicitly wants to intensify passion to its highest, but passion is subjectivity, and objectively it does not exist at all.”⁶²

In this light, Søren asks us to ponder the following scenario and consider where more truth is to be found:

If someone who lives in the midst of Christianity enters, with knowledge of the true idea of God, the house of God, the house of the true God, and prays, but prays in untruth, and if someone lives in an idolatrous land but prays with all the passion of infinity, although his eyes are resting upon the image of an idol—where, then, is there more truth? The one prays in truth to God although he is worshiping an idol; the other prays in untruth to the true God and is therefore in truth worshiping an idol.⁶³

Kierkegaard warns us of becoming Sunday-only Christians, who outwardly appear Christian yet inwardly remain empty, for “Sunday vistas into eternity are so much air.”⁶⁴ Instead, it is crucial that individuals’ dedication to living the Christian life saturates all parts of their existence. “It is in the living room that the battle must be fought, lest the skirmishes of religiousness become a changing-of-the-guard parade one day a week.”⁶⁵ On this point, the pastor has a responsibility to make Christianity’s requirements clear. Soft, lulling tugs are not enough: “If the pastor’s activity in the church is merely a once-a-week attempt to tow the congregation’s cargo ship a little closer to eternity, the whole thing comes to nothing, because a human life, unlike a cargo ship, cannot lie in the same place until the next Sunday.”⁶⁶

V. “THEY TEACH FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN”

Joseph

In his preface to the Book of Commandments (now found in LDS scripture as section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants), the Lord discloses that people often substituted their own doctrinal constructions in place of his teachings: “For they have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant; . . . they seek not the Lord to establish

his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world” (D&C 1:15–16).

“All men,” Joseph taught, “are naturally disposed to walk in their own paths as they are pointed out by their own fingers and are not willing to consider and walk in the path which is pointed out by another, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, although he should be an unerring director, and the Lord his God sent him.”⁶⁷

One of the most prominent motifs woven throughout the Book of Mormon centers on the dangers of “priestcraft”: “for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world” (2 Ne. 26:29). The Book of Mormon teaches that in the last days many men would declare their own doctrine, fashioned and formed to fit the image of the world. Nephi warns of a time when many churches would be built up “and preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own learning, that they may get gain and grind upon the face of the poor” (2 Ne. 26:20). As such churches neglect the poor and pander to the wealthy, the demands of Christian discipleship are subtly and quickly mediated and softened to allow both church and world to prosper side by side:

And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God—he will justify in committing a little sin; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this; and do all these things, for tomorrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God. (2 Ne. 28:8–9; see also 2 Ne 28:12–13)

Joseph never aimed for popularity with the doctrines he taught. He, much like Søren, strongly emphasized that Christian discipleship requires the imitation of Christ, rather than complacently following the pleasing doctrines of men. He said that Christ’s command to “do the work, which ye see me do” contains “the grand key-words for the society to act upon.”⁶⁸ Indeed, in the Book of Mormon, the resurrected Lord instructs on this point very succinctly: “What manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, even as I am” (3 Ne. 27:27).

Joseph, like Søren, recognized that the Christian sects of his day went astray in their teaching of the doctrine of grace (to be described below). While emphasizing the need to work out our own salvation, he also taught that people are powerless without Christ’s grace and humbly acknowledged his own personal dependence on it. “I only add, that I do not, nor never have, pretended to be any other than a man ‘subject to passion,’

and liable, without the assisting grace of the Savior, to deviate from that perfect path in which all men are commanded to walk.”⁶⁹ Thus, Joseph, while determined to emulate the Savior, reverberated the Book of Mormon admonition that even “after all we can do,” it is still only through Christ and his grace that we may inherit salvation (2 Ne. 25:23). Joseph once told his followers, “I don’t want you to think that I am very righteous, for I am not,” illustrating that even those called as prophets need repentance and grace.⁷⁰ Joseph’s emphasis on works never lessened the importance of human dependence on the grace of Christ. A passage from the Book of Mormon illustrates this:

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, reconcile yourselves to the will of God, and not to the will of the devil and the flesh; and remember, after ye are reconciled unto God, that it is only in and through the grace of God that ye are saved.

Wherefore, may God raise you from death by the power of the resurrection, and also from everlasting death by the power of the atonement, that ye may be received into the eternal kingdom of God, that ye may praise him through grace divine. (2 Ne. 10:24–25)

Throughout his life, Joseph labored diligently to demonstrate that although he was a man like all others, the revelations that came through him were from the Lord and not merely his own musings.

Søren

Similar to Joseph, Søren heavily criticized the clergy of his day for teaching a watered-down, nondemanding form of Christianity that did a deep disservice to Christ and the message of the New Testament:

Everyone must be measured by the Pattern, the ideal. We must get rid of all the bosh about this being said only to the Apostles, and this only to the disciples, and this only to the first Christians, &c. Christ no more desires now than He did then to have admirers (not to say twaddlers), He wants only disciples. The “disciple” is the standard: imitation and Christ as the Pattern must be introduced.⁷¹

In Kierkegaard’s eyes, official Protestantism, with its state support and royal pastors, taught a diluted version of Christianity, focused solely on grace, without simultaneously stressing the demands of discipleship.⁷² The result, he asserted, was a false and crafty humility that served as an excuse for not attempting to imitate Christ, by claiming greater modesty in simply adoring him (or to have unmerited advantage through him). But too often “I cannot” is used to conceal what is really “I will not.”⁷³ Human beings, according to Søren, were capable of much more: “The symbolical

books of the Church recognize that there are various degrees of blessedness in the hereafter⁷⁴—why don't the preachers say anything about that? It is just possible that one or another of their hearers might wish to aspire to a higher degree."⁷⁵

As Søren saw it, Christendom's emphasis on grace without first teaching the demands of Christian discipleship led to the conclusion that God had made salvation possible not for the man who works and struggles at perfection and then works and struggles even more, but for the man who revels in sin and indulgent pleasure throughout his life:

The doctrine of "grace" is moved a whole stage too high. Christianity has demanded the genuine renunciation of the worldly, has demanded the voluntary, and then, on top of this, one is to acknowledge that he is nothing, that all is grace. Christendom removes the former entirely—and then lets grace move up; it grafts "grace," if you will, directly onto the secular mind.⁷⁶

But, as Søren pointed out:

There is always a secular mentality that no doubt wants to have the name of being Christian but wants to become Christian as cheaply as possible. This secular mentality became aware of Luther. It listened; for safety's sake it listened once again lest it should have heard wrongly; thereupon it said, "Excellent! This is something for us. Luther says: It depends on faith alone. . . . So we take his words, his doctrine—and we are free from all works—long live Luther!"⁷⁷

Unfortunately, according to Kierkegaard, Christian ministers had become adept at "applying Christianity *tranquillizingly*."⁷⁸ They gave congregations what congregations thought they wanted, and the result was a religion with "the quality of refined hypocrisy."⁷⁹

Søren, like Joseph, was deeply aware of his (and of every human being's) need for grace. Referring to this necessity, he wrote, "No man is saved, without grace—not even an Apostle."⁸⁰ But this need becomes glaringly evident in the face of our recognition of the demands of Christian discipleship and our failure, despite earnest endeavor, to meet those demands. Thus, for Kierkegaard, grace and works interrelate dialectically: "First one must realize that the model is a crushing demand [by imitating the model]. But thereupon the model, Christ, transforms itself into grace and mercy, and tries to take hold of you in order to bear you up. But so it is that through the Model you have died to the model."⁸¹ As Walter Lowrie observes, Kierkegaard feared that (in Protestantism) "grace was so much talked about because it was regarded as a dispensation to sin, or at least as an excuse to give up striving. Grace can be abused like the sacraments, 'by which men relieve themselves of the duty of loving God.'"

Lowrie continues, quoting Kierkegaard: “Severity first—i.e. the severity of ideality—and then gentleness. I myself have as much need as anybody of being spoken to gently, my soul is as much disposed to speak gently—but in a time of confused thinking the first must be put first, lest gentleness be an occasion for slothful indulgence.”⁸²

In a passage very much paralleling 2 Nephi 25:23 (“by grace . . . we are saved, after all we can do”), Søren wrote, “Christianity’s requirement is: Thy life shall as strenuously as possible give expression to works—and then one thing more is required: that thou humble thyself and admit, ‘But none the less I am saved by grace.’”⁸³ Thus, in his understanding of the dialectic between grace and works, Søren emphasized a “both/and” instead of an “either/or.”

VI. THEY HAVE “A FORM OF GODLINESS, BUT THEY DENY THE POWER THEREOF”

Joseph

Throughout the course of Joseph’s restoration efforts, his views often conflicted with the traditions and forms of Christendom, which had become deeply woven into the society and culture around him. Joseph felt that he was faced with the difficult task of fostering the Saints away from the “form of godliness” with which they were familiar toward newly restored teachings and blessings. He lamented, “It is very difficult for us to communicate to the churches all that God has revealed to us, in consequence of tradition.”⁸⁴ Joseph further felt deep frustration as he tried “to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God,” only to see them “fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions.”⁸⁵ In speaking against the form of Christianity in his day, Joseph’s words, like Søren’s, became at times very sharp.

Joseph taught that however godly the form of the churches of his day, they lacked those key ingredients that made a church a true and living religion. As he surveyed “Christendom at the present day,” he asked,

Where are they, with all their boasted religion, piety and sacredness while at the same time they are crying out against prophets, apostles, angels, revelations, prophesying and visions, &c. Why, they are just ripening for the damnation of hell. They will be damned, for they reject the most glorious principle of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and treat with disdain and trample under foot the key that unlocks the heavens and puts in our possession the glories of the celestial world. Yes, I say, such will be damned, with all their professed godliness.⁸⁶

Joseph understood the condition of nineteenth-century Christendom to be the consequence of a centuries-long apostasy. This apostasy had left Christendom with only a shell of its original self—and to this shell Christendom clung, embellishing and beautifying it, but nevertheless missing the essential core of Christianity. “Faith has been wanting,” said Joseph, “not only among the heathen, but in professed Christendom also, so that tongues, healings, prophecy, and prophets and apostles, and all the gifts and blessings have been wanting.”⁸⁷

The Book of Mormon adds a voice in describing modern Christendom as lacking the power of God. Two prophets in particular, Nephi and Moroni, described visions in which they saw our day and wrote concerning its calamities. Chief among these is the decrepit state of organized religion that claims a godly form yet rejects God’s involvement in the lives of men. Wrote Nephi:

For it shall come to pass in that day that the churches which are built up, and not unto the Lord, when the one shall say unto the other: Behold, I, I am the Lord’s; and the others shall say: I, I am the Lord’s; and thus shall every one say that hath built up churches, and not unto the Lord—

And they shall contend one with another; and their priests shall contend one with another, and they shall teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance.

And they deny the power of God, the Holy One of Israel; and they say unto the people: Harken unto us, and hear ye our precept; for behold there is no God today, for the Lord and the Redeemer hath done his work, and he hath given his power unto men. (2 Ne. 28:3–5)

Moroni wrote to us directly, saying, “Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing” (Morm. 8:35). He, like Nephi, described the corruptions and follies of modern-day Christendom, condemning specifically those who would sell forgiveness for sin, build up churches to get gain, wear fine apparel, and love their money and their apparel and the adorning of their churches more than they would love the poor and the needy or the sick and the afflicted (see Morm. 8:28, 32–33, 36–37).

Indeed, given such stern critiques, it is hardly surprising that Joseph saw his movement as decidedly different and separate from any then extant in Christendom. He wanted it understood that in his role as prophet he was not following after the manner of the world in any of the things he had established or taught. In a written exchange with James Arlington Bennet, Joseph made this abundantly clear.⁸⁸ In the first letter, Bennet gave Joseph mixed praise, calling him “a philosophical divine” whose influence is best left “to the mass.” Bennet, whose mind was of a “mathematical and

philosophical . . . cast,” felt he could be a friend to Joseph but “without being governed by the smallest religious influence.” Bennet was quick to recognize the Prophet’s accumulating accomplishments as the leader of a rapidly growing society, noting to Joseph that the “boldness of your plans and measures, together with their unparalleled success so far, are calculated to throw a charm over your whole being, and to point you out as the most extraordinary man of the present age.”⁸⁹

In his response, Joseph clearly stated that any success he may have had was to be attributed to the influence of God’s guiding hand. He welcomed Bennet’s praise only if he offered it with a proper understanding of the source of Joseph’s accomplishments. On the other hand, Bennet’s praise was meaningless and misguided if he were suggesting that Joseph’s success merely followed a worldly pattern.

The meaning of “philosophical divine” may be taken in various ways. If, as the learned world apply the term, you infer that I have achieved a victory, and been strengthened by a scientific religion, as practiced by the popular sects of the age, through the aid of colleges, seminaries, Bible societies, missionary boards, financial organizations, and gospel money schemes, then you are wrong. Such a combination of men and means shows a form of godliness without the power. . . . But if the inference is that by more love, more light, more virtue, and more truth from the Lord, I have succeeded as a man of God, then you reason truly.⁹⁰

Joseph wanted it understood that the authority of God was the driving force that fueled his actions—from translating the Book of Mormon to gathering the Saints. He did not want to be seen as a great political leader or as a worldly-wise religious thinker or even as an influential reformer. As he continued his response, Joseph boldly qualified the terms of praise that Bennet had written:

The boldness of my plans and measures can readily be tested by the touchstone of all schemes, systems, projects, and adventures—*truth*; for truth is a matter of fact; and the fact is, that by the power of God I translated the Book of Mormon from hieroglyphics, the knowledge of which was lost to the world, in which wonderful event I stood alone. an unlearned youth, to combat the worldly wisdom and multiplied ignorance of eighteen centuries, with a new revelation.⁹¹

Søren

One of the things Søren considered most dangerous about the State Church of Denmark was that its outward “form of godliness” gave common people every reason to be at ease concerning their eternal welfare. Most dangerously, nineteenth-century Denmark had, in his opinion, become naïvely comfortable in its role as a supposed Christian nation.

For Kierkegaard, blanket-labeling any group (let alone one as large as an entire nation) as secure in its Christianity removed the pursuit of discipleship away from the impassioned core of the individual. In fact, in the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, he stated that “the only unforgivable high treason against Christianity is the single individual’s taking his relation to it for granted.”⁹² He declared that a most damaging “presupposition” had been cemented into nineteenth-century Denmark: “Christianity as given.”⁹³

Søren presented a humorous, hypothetical conversation between a husband who openly wondered whether he was really a Christian and his surprised wife. Looking astonished, the wife exclaimed:

Hubby, darling, where did you ever pick up such a notion? How can you not be a Christian? You are Danish, aren’t you? Doesn’t the geography book say that the predominant religion in Denmark is Lutheran-Christian? . . . Don’t you tend to your work in the office as a good civil servant; aren’t you a good subject in a Christian nation, in a Lutheran-Christian state? So of course you are a Christian.⁹⁴

For too many Danes, lamented Søren, the undeniable fact of the *existence* of the State Church was evidence enough of Denmark’s claim to true Christianity—and by default, of the Christianity of all of its citizens. But this position assumed too much. As he explained, “After it has been said about the Church that it exists and that one can learn from it what the essentially Christian is, it is in turn asserted that this Church, the present Church, is the apostolic Church, that it is the same Church that has persisted for eighteen centuries.”⁹⁵ The fallacy here, Kierkegaard noted, lay in assuming that the Church’s present existence proved not only that it had always existed, but that it had existed in precisely the same form and manner throughout its entire eighteen-hundred-year existence. To the contrary, “here a demonstration [that is, proof] is needed” since “every qualification of pastness requires demonstration.”⁹⁶

But what were the common people supposed to believe? The church certainly possessed the impressive Christian trappings and inspiring sacred edifices that seemed to offer every indication of its legitimacy. But this, said Søren, only made the church that much more dangerous.

We have what one might call a complete inventory of churches, bells, organs, benches, alms-boxes, foot-warmers, tables, hearses, etc. But when Christianity does not exist, the existence of this inventory, so far from being, Christianly considered, an advantage, is far rather a peril, because it is so infinitely likely to give rise to a false impression and the false inference that when we have such a complete Christian inventory we must of course have Christianity, too.⁹⁷

And certainly, the “complete inventory” of Danish Christianity wasn’t limited to the Church’s material possessions:

We have, if you will, a complete crew of bishops, deans, and priests; learned men, eminently learned, talented, gifted, humanly well-meaning; they all declaim—doing it well, very well, eminently well, or tolerably well, or badly—but not one of them is in the character of the Christianity of the New Testament.⁹⁸

So deeply engrained in tradition and society was this “form of godliness” that Søren could not blame the common people for failing to see the true situation.⁹⁹ After all, what motivation did they have for questioning the State Church? Its brand of Christianity, however inconsistent with that depicted in the New Testament, promised heavenly security and comfort while never becoming too intrusive in one’s everyday life:

When one sees what it is to be a Christian in Denmark, how could it occur to anyone that this is what Jesus Christ talks about: cross and agony and suffering, crucifying the flesh, suffering for the doctrine, being salt, being sacrificed, etc.? No, in Protestantism, especially in Denmark, Christianity marches to a different melody, to the tune of “Merrily we roll along, roll along, roll along”—Christianity is enjoyment of life, tranquillized, as neither the Jew nor the pagan was, by the assurance that the thing about eternity is settled, settled precisely in order that we might find pleasure in enjoying this life, as well as any pagan or Jew.¹⁰⁰

Yet, tragically, the common man was being robbed blind, said Søren, for the State Church had become expert in selling at an exceedingly low price a product it did not even possess—a scam of eternal proportions.¹⁰¹

Indeed, according to Kierkegaard, the church and priests of his day, however appealing their “form of godliness,” “denied the power thereof” in confusing state-sponsored royal appointments with the authority only God himself can provide. So, Søren openly questioned, “Can one be a teacher of Christianity by royal authorization? Can Christianity (the Christianity of the New Testament) be preached by teachers royally authorized? Can the sacraments be administered by them? or does not this imply a self-contradiction?”¹⁰²

In the next and concluding section, therefore, I take a closer look at divine authority, first examining Søren’s views on the issue. I divide this examination into three subsections: Søren on Adler, Søren on Protestantism, and Søren on Himself, Genius, and Apostleship. After setting out Søren’s views, I compare them with Joseph’s claim to having received revelation directly from God and authority from heavenly messengers sent by God.

DIVINE AUTHORITY

Søren on Adler

During the later years of his life, Søren gave much thought to the issue of divine authority. As part of his growing attack upon Danish Christendom, he added the lack of any Church officials who possessed *divine* authority (as opposed to merely *royal* authority, which the State could provide) to convey the true message of New Testament Christianity. Surprisingly, Adolph Peter Adler (1812–1869), a member of the Danish clergy, provided Søren the stimulus to formulate and articulate his ideas on this topic.

Adler was born in Copenhagen in 1812 (a year earlier than Kierkegaard), and he, like Søren, received the degree of Magister Artium. A learned theologian and pastor of two rural parishes, he caught Kierkegaard's attention when he claimed to have seen a "vision of light" wherein Jesus Christ appeared to him and told him to burn his previous writings and instead write the words that Christ would inspire. In 1843, he published this account, and the words that Christ dictated, in a book entitled *Several Sermons*.¹⁰³ Søren's initial reaction upon hearing of this event is very significant:

Therefore when I, without as yet having seen his sermons and the preface to them, heard that Magister Adler had come forward and had appealed to a revelation, I cannot deny that I was astounded; I thought: either this is the man we need, the chosen one, who in divine originality has the new spring to refresh the lifeless soil of Christendom, or it is an offended person, but a crafty knave, who, in order to demolish everything, also an apostle's dignity, in order to collapse everything, brings a Christendom like the present one to the strenuous decision of having to go through its dogmatics in the situation of contemporaneity.¹⁰⁴

Soon thereafter, Adler came to visit Kierkegaard and told him that he regarded Søren "as a sort of John the Baptist" to himself (Adler) who, by virtue of his revelation, was something like a messiah. Adler read Søren a large portion of his work, half in a normal voice and half in a strange whistling voice. When Søren said that "he could discover no new revelation in Adler's work," Adler responded, "When I shall come to you again and read the whole work in this voice (the whistling voice) you will see that it will open to you."¹⁰⁵ Kierkegaard became disillusioned with Adler's claims and decisively passed him off as at worst a fraud and at least as a very confused soul. Adler was ultimately removed from his position as pastor and admitted that "revelation was perhaps too strong an expression."¹⁰⁶

The Danish Church was very careful in its handling of the Adler affair, for here was one of its clergy who professed heavenly manifestations and modern-day revelation. Officially, Adler was not removed from office because of heretically claiming revelation, but rather because those revelations were deemed inconsistent and his writings equally incoherent.¹⁰⁷ As Søren saw it, the actions of the Danish Church were calculated to skirt the real issue.

No Christian, and thus no Christian ecclesiastical superior either, can be willing to allow the syllogism: a man has claimed to have had a revelation in which the Savior has communicated this and that to him—ergo, the man is mentally deranged. If the state Church ever allows this conclusion, it has destroyed itself.¹⁰⁸

It is important to emphasize that, unlike most of his contemporaries, Kierkegaard was not immediately repulsed by Adler's claim to heavenly revelations. The intriguing possibilities raised by his story weighed heavily on Kierkegaard's mind. Adler served as a sort of muse, launching Kierkegaard into writing a series of articles addressing the issue of direct revelation from God, and the related issues of authority and apostleship.

Using Adler as his foil, Søren carefully examined the characteristics and qualifications of a true apostle—a divinely authorized minister of the Christian message. Unlike a poet, whom we approach purely on aesthetic grounds, an apostle must be approached within what Kierkegaard called the “sphere of the paradoxical-religious.” Thus, the apostle cannot be judged on the beauty or harmony of his writings (as the poet) but only by the stamp of his divine authority. “When the sphere of the paradoxical-religious is now abolished,” wrote Søren, “or is explained back into the esthetic, an apostle becomes neither more nor less than a genius, and then good night to Christianity.”¹⁰⁹

In *The Book on Adler*, Kierkegaard ascribed five key characteristics to an apostle, or to one who wears a true mantle of divine authority.

- The apostle has something paradoxically new to bring, the newness of which, just because it is essentially paradoxical and not an anticipation pertaining to the development of the human race, continually remains, just as an apostle remains for all eternity an apostle, and no immanence of eternity places him essentially on the same line with all human beings, since essentially he is paradoxically different.¹¹⁰
- An apostle is not born; an apostle is a man who is called and appointed by God and sent by him on a mission.¹¹¹
- It is not by evaluating the content of the doctrine aesthetically

or philosophically that I will or can arrive at the conclusion: ergo the one who has delivered this doctrine is called by a revelation, ergo he is an apostle. The relationship is just the reverse: the one called by a revelation, to whom a doctrine is entrusted, argues on the basis that it is a revelation, on the basis that he has authority.¹¹²

- I am fully convinced that the apostle Paul . . . would by no means have resented it if someone in an earnest discussion had asked him whether he actually had had a revelation; and I know that with the brevity of earnestness Paul would have cut it short and answered: Yes. But if Paul . . . had launched into a long prolix speech somewhat like this [as Adler had done]: “Yes, well now, I myself have indeed said it, but revelation is perhaps too strong an expression, but it was something, there was something of genius. . . .”—well, then it would have been a different matter.¹¹³
- An apostle has no other evidence than his own statement, and at most his willingness to suffer everything joyfully for the sake of that statement. His speech in this regard will be brief: “I am called by God; do with me now what you will; flog me, persecute me, but my last words will be my first: I am called by God, and I make you eternally responsible for what you do to me.”¹¹⁴

Kierkegaard illustrates his understanding of divine authority nicely in the following scenario wherein he compares and contrasts Christ’s teaching with a common theologian’s:

When Christ says, “There is an eternal life,” and when theological graduate Petersen says, “There is an eternal life,” both are saying the same thing; there is in the first statement no more deduction, development, profundity, richness of thought than in the second; evaluated esthetically, both statements are equally good. And yet there certainly is an eternal qualitative difference! As God-man, Christ possesses the specific quality of authority; no eternity can mediate this or place Christ on the same level with the essentially human likeness. Christ, therefore, taught with authority.¹¹⁵

Søren on Protestantism

A strong and surprising piece of evidence that Søren was unsatisfied with the traditional Protestant accounts of authority is the increasing admiration he showed toward the Catholic Church in his journal

entries toward the end of his life. In his last two years, Kierkegaard favorably contrasted Catholicism to contemporary Protestantism at least five times.¹¹⁶ Lowrie gives several explanations as to why Catholicism was so particularly attractive to Søren. First, by rejecting the saints, Protestants had “leveled [men] down,” which is to say that in Kierkegaard’s view, “Protestantism has become nothing but mediocrity from end to end.” Second, Catholicism placed a great deal of emphasis on Christian living, or works.¹¹⁷ Finally, Søren believed that “there can be no popular authority in the Church of God, but only God’s authority—therefore no democratic rule, no constitutional government in the sense of political liberalism. This is primitive *and* Catholic doctrine.”¹¹⁸ In other words, what attracted Kierkegaard to Catholicism was its more developed sense of authority.

However, for Søren, authority was given by God only to divinely chosen individuals through whom he would work in bringing new revelations to man. These individuals would follow the pattern of New Testament witnesses to the truth, typified by Paul. Sadly, Søren found no such contemporary witnesses (as the Adler affair made painfully apparent), nor did he consider himself such an authorized witness, yet he fully entertained the possibility that such an individual could come forth in his day and age. His attack against the Danish Church was harsh indeed, but only because its failings, when placed next to its possibilities and ideal role, were so readily and agonizingly apparent to Kierkegaard, who decried the apathy of the general populace and ecclesiastical leaders of his day. In this role, he most associated himself with Socrates. In the words of Jørgen Bukdahl:

Kierkegaard recalled Socrates’ situation and his battle against the Sophists as well as his own situation, in which he did battle against the Sophists of his era, the pastors. Socrates did not claim that he was knowledgeable, but insisted that he was ignorant, just as Kierkegaard did not call himself a Christian. But this was exactly why people could not dismiss them, because they knew that, in Socrates’ case, everyone else was just as ignorant as Socrates, and in Kierkegaard’s case, everyone else was just as little a Christian as Kierkegaard.¹¹⁹

Søren on Himself, Genius, and Apostolic Authority

Just as Søren believed that Adler failed to measure up to the requirements of apostleship, so did he describe his own position as one “without authority.” In his biography of Kierkegaard, Lowrie makes the following observation: “[Kierkegaard] felt that a prophetic figure was needed, a man who ‘could appeal to a direct relationship to God.’ This he never claimed to have, and therefore to the very end he described himself as ‘without authority.’”¹²⁰

That Kierkegaard never claimed authority cannot be overlooked, especially when comparing his position to that of Joseph Smith; Søren viewed himself as a thoughtful, insightful, “poetic-dialectical genius”—a penitent and brilliant bystander calling out the Danish Church’s fallacious claims to divine authority.¹²¹ In his essay “Of the Difference between a Genius and an Apostle,” Søren belabored the distinction between the two on three points: relation to time, origin of power, and teleology.

Søren explained that part of the genius-apostle distinction is the ability of each to be assimilated into history; in other words, their contributions are seen as commonplace when viewed from the perspective of centuries. He claimed that although a genius may, for a time, bear the burden of novelty, it is the burden of immanence, not of transcendence, and will therefore be assimilated and outdated by the progress of mankind.¹²² The apostle, on the other hand, cannot be assimilated; the paradoxical nature of his doctrine will forever remain novel and pertinent because of its transcendent, revelatory birth.¹²³

The genesis of power is different between the two as well. Genius gains notoriety on a purely aesthetic level, “according [t]o the measure of its content, and its specific weight.”¹²⁴ An apostle is acknowledged purely because of his divine call. Said Søren, “I have not got to listen to St. Paul because he is clever, or even brilliantly clever; I am to bow before St. Paul because he has divine authority.”¹²⁵

Therefore, the apostle’s power does not stem from the intellect, which must be personally developed and weighed by peers, but instead from divine sources. This leads to Søren’s claim that because intellect is dependent on one’s capacity for thinking, “genius *is born*. . . . An Apostle is not born; an Apostle is a man called and appointed by God, receiving a mission from him. . . . [His authority is] something which one cannot acquire even by understanding the doctrine perfectly.”¹²⁶ John S. Tanner explains that due to this genetic difference of power, Kierkegaard argues our perception of each must be different: “A royal command exercises a claim upon us that is categorically distinct from its poetic eloquence or philosophical profundity,” thus creating a distinction in how we are to respond to both.¹²⁷ Underlining this chasm, Kierkegaard stated:

To ask whether a king is a genius—with the intention, if such were the case, of obeying him, is in reality *lèse-majesté*; for the question conceals a doubt as to whether one intends to submit to authority. To be prepared to obey a government department if it can be clever is really to make a fool of it. To honour one’s father because he is intelligent is impiety.¹²⁸

In his final distinction between a genius and an apostle, Søren emphasized a difference in teleology. The teleology of genius is self-reflexive, focused on self-development and self-achievement. “Genius lives in itself; and, humorously, might live withdrawn and self-satisfied, without for that reason taking its gifts in vain, so long as it develops itself earnestly and industriously, following its own genius, regardless of whether others profit by it or not.”¹²⁹ An apostle, on the other hand, cannot exist in solitude, for by definition the existence of an apostle requires the presence of congregations to whom the apostle may preach and minister. Søren called this position a type of absolute teleology, wherein

the doctrine communicated to [an apostle] is not a task which he is given to ponder over, it is not given him for his own sake, he is, on the contrary, on a mission and has to proclaim the doctrine and use authority. Just as a man, sent into the town with a letter, has nothing to do with its contents, but has only to deliver it . . . : so, too, an Apostle has really only to be faithful in his service, and to carry out his task.¹³⁰

Kierkegaard viewed himself as one who had, through experience and study, developed an awareness of the theological ails of Denmark. His work was one of an immanent intellect conveying an immanent message; it was one of genius. Søren never viewed himself as an apostle because he knew he was never called by God to be one.

Joseph on Himself and Authority

Unlike Søren Kierkegaard, Joseph Smith presented himself from the beginning as one having authority. Notwithstanding this important difference in self-perception, Søren’s and Joseph’s views on authority are surprisingly similar. In fact, if the above constitute Søren’s requirements for apostleship, then Joseph would have been the first in his time to fulfill each.

As if responding directly to Søren’s requirements from *Book on Adler*, Joseph readily announced he was called of God, through revelation, to restore to the world things lost since New Testament times and he invited all to discover for themselves the veracity of his work (see D&C 1:17–30). From the outset, Joseph understood that the newness (at least by nineteenth-century standards) of the doctrine as well as the unique and paradoxical nature of his claims to revelation made it difficult for other sects to truly understand either him or his experiences. Explaining this nature to early members of the Church, Joseph said, “It is very difficult for us to communicate . . . all that God has revealed to us, in consequence of tradition.”¹³¹ When, following his First Vision in 1820, Joseph encountered opposition from the priests of his day, he did not back down but simply reaffirmed his

personal knowledge that the events he reported actually occurred. This caused him to be subject to “the most bitter persecution and reviling,” which eventually led to his martyrdom (JS–H 1:23).

Joseph’s unwavering claim of divine investiture of authority remained consistent throughout his life and set him apart from all the other religious figures of his day, something Søren would certainly acknowledge. Joseph recounted that when praying on the nature of baptism in May 1829, he and Oliver Cowdery were visited by the resurrected John the Baptist. Laying his hands upon their heads, the Baptist said, “Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of the Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins” (D&C 13:1). After receiving the authority from God to baptize, Joseph and Oliver were commanded to baptize one another.¹³² Joseph also recounted that Peter, James, and John later appeared and conferred upon them the Melchizedek Priesthood. This higher priesthood contains the keys to administer the gospel and to execute its higher ordinances, such as bestowing the gift of the Holy Ghost (see D&C 84:18–19).

Having received the Aaronic and the Melchizedek priesthoods from those having the authority to confer it, Joseph and Oliver were now able to build Christ’s church according to “the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church” (Articles of Faith 1:6). Regarding the importance of this priesthood, Joseph later declared, “All the ordinances, systems, and administrations on the earth are of no use to the children of men, unless they are ordained and authorized of God; for nothing will save a man but a legal administrator; for none others will be acknowledged either by God or angels.”¹³³

As for Søren’s distinction between a genius and an apostle, Joseph made it clear he was neither philosopher nor genius. Referring to the time when he received his first revelation, he described himself as “an obscure boy, of a little over fourteen years of age, and one, too, who was doomed to the necessity of obtaining a scanty maintenance by his daily labor” (JS–H 1:23). Even though Joseph admitted to being “unacquainted with men and things” (JS–H 1:8), he boldly claimed, “I have actually seen a vision; and who am I that I can withstand God . . . ? For I had seen a vision; I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could not deny it, neither dared I do it” (JS–H 1:25). Furthermore, Joseph admitted, “I never told you I was perfect; but there is no error in the revelations which I have taught.”¹³⁴ This statement gives the sense that he viewed himself much like the messenger Søren referred to when he explained the absolute teleology of an apostle.

His position that a worldwide, centuries-long apostasy from New Testament Christianity had occurred obviously put Joseph at odds with the Christendom of his day. Indeed, he knew that his claim was radical enough to demand a complete break from any other form of established Christianity, Protestant or otherwise. Joseph explained his position in this way: “Here is a principle of logic that most men have no more sense than to adopt. I will illustrate it by an old apple tree. Here jumps off a branch and says, I am the true tree, and you are corrupt. If the whole tree is corrupt, are not its branches corrupt?”¹³⁵

Joseph never shied away from his revelations—the crux of one of Søren’s requirements for apostleship; instead, he repeatedly emphasized their importance in the work God had called him to do. “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” said Joseph, “was founded upon direct revelation, as the true Church of God has ever been, according to the Scriptures (Amos iii:7, and Acts i:2); and through the will and blessings of God, I have been an instrument in His hands, thus far, to move forward the cause of Zion.”¹³⁶

CONCLUSION

While it is likely that Søren knew something of the Mormons,¹³⁷ he apparently knew very little and gave them little attention. Joseph, like most people living outside of Denmark during the first half of the nineteenth century, apparently knew nothing of Søren Kierkegaard. Yet the two reached strikingly similar conclusions concerning the apostate condition of Christianity in their day. Both stressed first the demands of discipleship culminating in the imitation of Christ; and, given our failures to meet those demands, both emphasized our need for grace. Søren was open to the possibility of a modern-day apostle, but he strongly insisted that only one invested with authority originating in direct revelation from God could properly claim such an office. He acknowledged that he lacked such authority. Joseph claimed direct revelation from God and divine authority received directly from angelic messengers sent by God. Despite these differences, their harmonious visions of what it means to be a Christian unite to induce self-assessment of where we, individually, stand in relation to the standard.

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assistants Daniel Barron, Brooke Bentley, Benjamin Brinton, Wilbur Dattilo, Robb Duffin, Matthew Fisher, Jeff Johnson, Marc-Charles Ingerson, Spencer Noorlander, Steven Snell, J. Andrew West, Kenneth West, and Rachel Wilcox have each made significant contributions to the research, writing, or editing for this paper. In addition, Laura Rawlinson of BYU Faculty Editing Services and the staff of *BYU Studies* have also significantly improved the form of this paper. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Mormon History Association held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in June 2000, in conjunction with the celebration of the sesquicentennial of the arrival of the first Mormon missionaries in Scandinavia.

1. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark (the Church of Denmark or the People's Church of Denmark; Danish: Den Danske Folkekirke) is a state church and the largest Christian church in Denmark. It is officially supported by the government. In this paper, I often refer to it as the "State Church" or the "Danish Church."

2. Søren used "Christendom" as a derogatory title for the apostate condition of Christianity. He explained that, as he used the term, "'Christendom' is . . . the betrayal of Christianity; a 'Christian world' is . . . apostasy from Christianity." Søren Kierkegaard, *Kierkegaard's Attack upon "Christendom,"* 1854–55, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 33. Christianity and Christendom were to Søren diametrical opposites; he claimed that "to be a Christian in Christendom in plain and simple conformity is just as impossible as doing gymnastics in a straitjacket." Søren Kierkegaard, *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, 4 vols. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1967), 1:166 (#409).

3. Walter Lowrie, "Introduction by the Translator," in Kierkegaard, *Attack upon "Christendom,"* xv.

4. Bruce Kirmmse argues that Kierkegaard initially sought only an honest acknowledgement from the Church because any more specific demands would have been inconsistent with Kierkegaard's self-acknowledged lack of authority. See Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1990), 459–60. Inconsistent or not, Kierkegaard eventually did call for the disestablishment of the State Church of Denmark. See Kierkegaard, *Attack upon "Christendom,"* 97. Because the Church would not concede the degradation of its purported Christianity, Søren felt that he must awaken individuals to the illusion of the Church and ultimately prompt the state to disestablish the Church. See Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, 467.

5. Joseph eventually claimed not only a restoration of New Testament Christianity but a restitution and a "welding together" of all previous dispensations (D&C 128:18).

6. Howard V. Hong, Kierkegaard lectures, Brigham Young University, n.d., notes in author's possession.

7. Søren Kierkegaard, *Søren Kierkegaard's Skrifter* (Copenhagen: Gad, 2007) 24:139, translation by Bruce H. Kirmmse, in an email message to the author, October 30, 2008.

8. Hong, Kierkegaard lectures.

9. So Søren informed his readers in his posthumously published book, *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*, in Søren Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*,

trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 21–124.

10. Hong, Kierkegaard lectures.

11. See Howard A. Johnson, “Kierkegaard and the Church,” in Kierkegaard, *Attack upon “Christendom,”* xxvi, where he writes: “Kierkegaard did not abandon the pen for the sword, but we might say that, towards the last, he laid aside the rapier in favor of a less subtle instrument, the sledgehammer.”

12. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon “Christendom,”* 41.

13. Walter Lowrie, *Kierkegaard*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper, 1962), 2:583.

14. Lowrie, *Kierkegaard*, 2:586.

15. Joakim Garff, *Søren Kierkegaard: A Biography*, trans. Bruce H. Kirmmse (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 788–89.

16. However, as B. H. Roberts pointed out, for one who believes Joseph’s account, the indictments could properly be understood as constituting the Lord’s critique: “There is peculiar force in the circumstance that the announcement which Joseph Smith makes with reference to this subject is not formulated by him nor by any other man, but is given to him of God. God has been the judge of the status of modern Christendom, Joseph Smith but his messenger, to herald that judgment to the world.” B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Century One*, 6 vols. (Provo, Utah: Corporation of the President, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1965), 1:62.

17. Joseph Smith, “History [1832],” in Dean Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92), 1:5.

18. Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 14:141, March 19, 1871. The discourse was reported by Julia Young.

19. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon “Christendom,”* 28.

20. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon “Christendom,”* 29.

21. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon “Christendom,”* 32. It appears that statements such as these at the end of Søren’s life supersede earlier statements that the Church and its doctrine were acceptable and that all that was needed was the reformation of us all.

22. Lowrie, *Kierkegaard*, 2:569. Howard Johnson reports, “One Danish biographer gives us the picture (how well authenticated I know not) of Kierkegaard on a Sunday morning, at the hour of High Mass . . . deliberately taking up a position at a sidewalk café opposite a church, and there conspicuously reading a newspaper so that all the pious en route to service might see.” Johnson, “Kierkegaard and the Church,” xix–xx.

23. 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), 6:57 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

24. “There is much said about God and the Godhead. . . . The teachers of the day say that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and they are all in one body and one God.” Joseph F. Smith, comp., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 311. “As the Father hath power in Himself, so hath the Son power in Himself, to lay down His life and take it again, so He has a body of His own. . . . [E]ach one will be in His own body; and yet the sectarian world believe the body of the Son is identical with the Father’s.” Smith, *Teachings*, 312. “That which is without body, parts and passions is nothing.

There is no other God in heaven but that God who has flesh and bones.” Smith, *Teachings*, 181. “Many men say there is one God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are only one God! I say that is a strange God anyhow—three in one, and one in three! It is a curious organization. ‘Father, I pray not for the world, but I pray for them which thou hast given me.’ ‘Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are.’ All are to be crammed into one God, according to sectarianism. It would make the biggest God in all the world. He would be a wonderfully big God—he would be a giant or a monster.” *History of the Church*, 6:476.

25. “As it is well known that various opinions govern a large portion of the sectarian world as to this important ordinance of [baptism in] the gospel, it may not be amiss to introduce the commissions and commands of Jesus Himself on the subject.” Smith, *Teachings*, 262.

26. Smith, *Teachings*, 188.

27. “Many of the sects cry out, ‘Oh, I have the testimony of Jesus; I have the spirit of God; but away with Joe Smith; he says he is a prophet; but there are to be no prophets or revelators in the last days.’” Joseph replies, “Stop, sir! The Revelator says that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy; so by your own mouth you are condemned.” Smith, *Teachings*, 312.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, written in 1646 and one of the classic texts on the closedness of the canon, states the following: “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.” Orthodox Presbyterian Church, “Westminster Confession of Faith,” <http://www.opc.org/confessions.html>.

Also, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* explains: “While the Church recognizes that God has spoken to His servants in every age, and still continues thus to favour chosen souls, she is careful to distinguish these revelations from the Revelation which has been committed to her charge. . . . *That Revelation was given in its entirety to Our Lord and His Apostles.* After the death of the last of the twelve it could receive no increment. It was, as the Church calls it, a deposit—‘the faith once delivered to the saints’ (Jude, 2)—*for which the Church was to ‘contend’ but to which she could add nothing.* Thus, whenever there has been question of defining a doctrine, whether at Nicaea, at Trent, or at the Vatican, the sole point of debate has been as to whether the doctrine is found in Scripture or in Apostolic tradition. The gift of Divine assistance (see I), sometimes confounded with Revelation by the less instructed of anti-Catholic writers, merely preserves the supreme pontiff from error in defining the faith; it does not enable him to add jot or tittle to it.” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Revelation” (by George Joyce), <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13001a.htm>.

28. *History of the Church*, 6:57.

29. *History of the Church*, 5:215.

30. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, Religious Studies Monograph Series, no. 6 (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 183–84.

31. *History of the Church*, 6:74–75.
32. Smith, *Teachings*, 203–4.
33. Smith, *Teachings*, 311.
34. *History of the Church*, 6:223.
35. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 205.
36. *History of the Church*, 6:50.
37. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Journals of Søren Kierkegaard*, trans. and ed. Alexander Dru (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), 21, 1835 (#31).
38. Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* to Philosophical Fragments, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 220. In this work, Kierkegaard used a pseudonym, Johannes Climacus. For clarity, however, in referencing this work we will use the author's real name and not the pseudonym.
39. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 213.
40. "He Was Believed On in the World," in Søren Kierkegaard, *Christian Discourses and The Lilies of the Field and the Birds of the Air and Three Discourses at the Communion on Fridays*, trans. Walter Lowrie (London: Oxford University Press, 1982), 248; emphasis in original.
41. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 379–80.
42. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 380 n.
43. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 379 n.
44. See also Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 2:335–36 (#1880–81).
45. Smith, *Teachings*, 311.
46. Joseph Smith, "History [1832]," in Jesse, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:5. Joseph's strikethroughs and insertions in his journal render this sentence somewhat garbled: ". . . for I discovered that <they did not adorn> instead of adorning their profession by a holy walk . . ." To clarify the meaning, "of" has been deleted from the quotation, which is likely what Joseph intended.
47. Under the title "That from the Christian Point of View the Life of 'the Pastor' Is an Irregularity," Søren wrote:

"I suggest this not merely because his whole life cannot be said to resemble the imitation . . . of Christ.

"No, I allude especially to the fact that he is a government official. What nonsense, then, to proclaim a kingdom not of this world which wants to be of this world at any price.

"And the fact that he is a governmental official is so fundamentally confusing, interferes so profoundly.

"The common man, the people, always consider anything that is governmental (stamped by the state) as being better; it is better to be a royal hat maker than to be a pure and simple hat maker, etc., etc.: at every point social life is stamped by the state.

"And now comes 'the pastor.' The fact that he is authorized by the crown gives him status in the eyes of the people; they believe that to be the maximum—the higher the rank, the more status, the more badges—how utterly nonsensical this kind of Christian proclamation is. The pastor stands and walks and lives and enjoys status by virtue of the very thing Christianity is diametrically opposed to."
- Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 3:461 (#3186).

48. In an undisguised affront called “That the Priests Are Cannibals, and in the Most Disgusting Fashion,” Søren judged the priests worse than cannibals because he said the priests actually feed on their friends in a calculative and persistent manner. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, 476.

49. Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 3:450 (#3165).

50. Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 3:435 (#3139).

51. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon “Christendom,”* 35.

52. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon “Christendom,”* 36.

53. Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 1:159 (#386).

54. Quoted in Lowrie, *Kierkegaard*, 2:539; emphasis added.

55. Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 3:638 (#3568).

56. See Craig Hinkson, “Luther and Kierkegaard: Theologians of the Cross,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 3, no. 1 (2001): 27–45.

57. *History of the Church*, 3:295.

58. *History of the Church*, 3:295; emphasis added.

59. See *History of the Church*, 6:303.

60. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 204.

61. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 206.

62. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 131.

63. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 201.

64. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 465.

65. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 465.

66. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 465.

67. *History of the Church*, 1:408. Similarly, the Book of Moses tells of a time when men disregarded the counsel of God and “the wickedness of men had become great” for “every man was lifted up in the imagination of the thoughts of his heart” (Moses 8:22).

68. *History of the Church*, 5:20.

69. *History of the Church*, 1:10 n.

70. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 204.

71. Søren Kierkegaard, *For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourselves! and Three Discourses*, 1851, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 207.

72. Michael Plekon observes that much different from Luther’s time, when “good works” were exploited at the cost of grace, the Christianity of Kierkegaard’s day had traded works almost entirely for grace. Plekon calls this movement “an avalanche.” Michael Plekon, “Before the Storm: Kierkegaard’s Theological Preparation for the Attack on the Church,” *Faith and Philosophy* 21, no. 1 (2004): 48, 53–54.

73. Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 2:74–75 (#1272).

74. The symbolical books to which Søren referred would be *The Book of Concord*; or the *Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, an authoritative collection of governing creeds and confessions by early Lutherans, including Martin Luther. This particular allusion is probably to “The Apology of the Augsburg Confession,” which says, “We also confess what we have often testified, that, although justification and eternal life pertain to faith, nevertheless good works merit other bodily and spiritual rewards, . . . and degrees of rewards, according to 1 Cor. 3:8: Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. [For the blessed will have reward, one higher than the other. This difference merit

makes, according as it pleases God; and it is merit, because they do these good works whom God has adopted as children and heirs. For thus they have merit which is their own and peculiar as one child with respect to another.]” Philip Melancthon, *The Apology of the Augsburg Confession* (Whitefish, Mont.: Kessinger, 2004), 83–84.

75. Lowrie, *Kierkegaard*, 2:534.

76. Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 1:353–54 (#763). He also remarked:

“Now there will again be an uproar claiming that I proclaim only the law, urge imitation too strongly, and the like (although in the preface to the new book, *Training in Christianity*, I presented grace). And they will say: We cannot stop with this; we must go further—to grace, where there is peace and tranquility.

“You babble nonsense. For the average man Christianity has shriveled to sheer meaninglessness, a burlesque edition of the doctrine of grace, that if one is a Christian he lets things go their way and counts on God’s grace.

“But because everything which is essentially Christian has shrivelled to meaninglessness this way, they are unable to recognize it again when its pathos-filled aspects are delineated. They have the whole thing in an infinitely empty abstract summary—and thus think they have gone further, beyond the successive unfolding of the pathos-filled aspects.

“Nothing can be taken in vain as easily as grace; and as soon as imitation is completely omitted, grace is taken in vain. But that is the kind of preaching men like.” *Journals and Papers*, 2:334–35 (#1878).

77. Søren Kierkegaard, *For Self-Examination; Judge for Yourself!* trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 16 (p. 41 in the Lowrie translation). We should not let Kierkegaard’s comments here lead us to believe he universally rejected Luther’s thought. Indeed, some aspects of Luther’s thought—the inability of reason to understand God, the necessity of personal suffering, the perpetual becoming involved in Christianity, and God’s essentially hidden nature, for example—share much with Kierkegaard’s position. For more on the relationship between these two, see Hinkson, “Luther and Kierkegaard,” 27–45. With these thoughts in mind, perhaps we should read Kierkegaard here as attacking not Luther himself but a certain possible (but not preferable) reading of Luther’s works.

78. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon “Christendom,”* 262.

79. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon “Christendom,”* 201.

80. Lowrie, *Kierkegaard*, 2:576.

81. Søren Kierkegaard, *Papirer*, X2 A 170 (1849), quoted in Louis Dupre, *Kierkegaard as Theologian* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), 179; quoted in Ver-nard Eller, *Kierkegaard and Radical Discipleship: A New Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 389.

82. Lowrie, *Kierkegaard*, 2:576. For additional references on Kierkegaard’s conception of grace, see Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 2:166–67 (#1475), 2:169 (#1477), 2:169–70 (#1480), 2:172–73 (#1483), 2:174–75 (#1487), 2:180–81 (#1496), 2:317 (#1842), 2:327–28 (#1867).

83. Kierkegaard, *For Self-Examination and Judge for Yourself! and Three Discourses*, 42; quoted in Eller, 168.

84. *History of the Church*, 2:52.

85. *History of the Church*, 6:185.

86. *History of the Church*, 5:389.
87. *History of the Church*, 5:218.
88. For the text of both letters, see *History of the Church*, 6:71–78.
89. *History of the Church*, 6:72.
90. *History of the Church*, 6:73–74.
91. *History of the Church*, 6:74–75.
92. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 16.
93. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 50.
94. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 50.
95. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 39.
96. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, 39–40.
97. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon "Christendom,"* 30.
98. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon "Christendom,"* 29.
99. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon "Christendom,"* 59–60.
100. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon "Christendom,"* 34–35.
101. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon "Christendom,"* 51.
102. Kierkegaard, *Attack upon "Christendom,"* 46.
103. Walter Lowrie, "Preface," in Søren Kierkegaard, *On Authority and Revelation (The Book on Adler, or A Cycle of Ethico-Religious Essays)*, trans. Walter Lowrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), ix.
104. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, trans. and ed. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 45.
105. Lowrie, "Preface," in Kierkegaard, *On Authority and Revelation*, x–xi.
106. Lowrie, "Preface," in Kierkegaard, *On Authority and Revelation*, ix.
107. See Kierkegaard, *On Authority and Revelation*, 69–92.
108. Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, 78.
109. Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, 173.
110. Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, 175.
111. Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, 176.
112. Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, 177.
113. Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, 26.
114. Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, 186.
115. Kierkegaard, *The Book on Adler*, 182–83.
116. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Last Years: Journals 1853–1855*, trans. and ed. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 56, 135, 169, 249, 264.
117. Lowrie, "Introduction by Translator," in Kierkegaard, *Attack upon "Christendom,"* xvi–xvii.
118. Lowrie, *Kierkegaard*, 2:524.
119. Jørgen Bukdahl, *Søren Kierkegaard and the Common Man*, trans. Bruce H. Kirmmse (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 126.
120. Lowrie, *Kierkegaard*, 2:473.
121. Micheal Plekon argues quite blindly that Kierkegaard invoked the authority of "the One who is Infinite Love . . . [through] the cross and the resurrection." Michael Plekon, "Søren Kierkegaard at the End: Authority in the Attack on the Church," in *Anthropology and Authority*, ed. Paul Houe, Gordon D. Marino, and Sven Hakon Rossel (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), 106. It should be clear that Søren stated, "I have emphasized as decisively as possible . . . that I am without

authority.” Alastair McKinnon, “Authority in Søren Kierkegaard’s Journals: The Main Changes,” in *Anthropology and Authority*, 157.

122. See Søren Kierkegaard, *The Present Age and Of the Difference between a Genius and an Apostle*, ed. Alexander Dru (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 92.

123. See Kierkegaard, *Present Age*, 92–93.

124. Kierkegaard, *Present Age*, 93.

125. Kierkegaard, *Present Age*, 93.

126. Kierkegaard, *Present Age*, 91–92, 96.

127. John S. Tanner, “Of Men and Mantles: Kierkegaard on the Difference between a Genius and an Apostle,” *BYU Studies* 40, no. 2 (2001): 155.

128. Kierkegaard, *Present Age*, 100.

129. Kierkegaard, *Present Age*, 107.

130. Kierkegaard, *Present Age*, 105–6.

131. Larry E. Dahl and Donald Q. Cannon, eds., *Encyclopedia of Joseph Smith’s Teachings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997), 568.

132. See Joseph Smith—History 1:70–73; *Our Heritage: A Brief History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1996), 13; *Teaching of the Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007), 85, 89.

133. Smith, *Teachings*, 274.

134. *History of the Church*, 6:366.

135. *History of the Church*, 6:478.

136. *History of the Church*, 6:9.

137. Apparently, the only reference Kierkegaard ever made to Mormons is found in a short journal entry about what he understood to be the Mormon notion of God’s omnipresence:

“In a piece by Prof. Jacobi (about the Irvingites, 1854) I see that the Mormons assume that God is not everywhere present but moves with great speed from one star to another. Splendid! Generally progress means, compared with a more childlike age, that more spiritual conceptions are achieved, as if a more childlike age had fancied that God moves with great speed from one place to another—and now the modern age understands that God is everywhere present. But here the movement is in reverse! It is very characteristic, and presumably I am not wrong in assuming this to be the influence of trains and the invention of the telegraph. In all probability there is in store for theology a completely new development, in which all these modern inventions will be employed to decide the conception of God.” Kierkegaard, *Journals and Papers*, 2:145–46 (#1443). In 1855, Søren’s brother, Peter Kierkegaard, published a tract about Mormons entitled “Om og mod Mormonismen” (About and Against Mormonism). Although this was published the year of Søren’s death, Søren may have learned more about Mormons from his brother. See “The Reverend Dr. Peter Christian Kierkegaard’s ‘About and Against Mormonism,’” *BYU Studies* 46, no. 3 (2007) 100–156.

Pomegranate Promises

Bells around the hem
of Aaron's robe
ring moments
of his ministry.
Between golden,
sacred sounds
broidered pomegranates,
flower-crowned, garnish
the garment's edge.

Sun sinks into
a moonless night,
as he lays aside the
breastplate weight.

Tented between
glittering galaxies
and star-lit sands,
Aaron dreams he holds
the seed-filled fruit
in the palm of his hand.
He cuts and peels away
leathered skin,
partaking of goodness,
garnet-red and ripe
as God's promises
to Abraham.

—Sharon Price Anderson

Abraham's Tent

Heather Farrell

A rabbi asked a man how he could tell when the night was over and a new day had begun. The man replied, "When you look into the east and can distinguish a sheep from a goat, then you know the night is over and the day has begun." The man then asked the rabbi how he could tell that the night was over and the day had begun. The rabbi thought and said, "When you look into the east and see the face of a woman and can say 'she is my sister,' and when you can look into the east and see the face of man and say, 'he is my brother,' then you know that the light of a new day has come."¹

The light of a new day is dawning. I know because I can see it. The light isn't strong yet, but I am beginning to feel its warmth, and as I look toward the east I can see the face of my sister. Her name is Noor.

It may seem strange to claim Noor as my sister; we certainly don't share any of the qualities that normal sisters share. She is Arab; I am American. She is Muslim; I am Mormon. She speaks Arabic; I speak English. She wears the hijab; I wear the garments of my faith. She's never eaten waffles; I'd never tasted falafel. Yet none of those differences matter because we can see that we are children of the same family. We can see that we share the same father, Adam, and the same mother, Eve; that we share a belief in one God who created man from a single soul and scattered him across the world. We can see that we share the traditions of the prophets and that we both share respect for God's word. Most of all, we can see that our roots are the same; we share a common heritage. We both claim an inheritance from the tent of Abraham.

Yet when Noor and I look at the world we have inherited, all we can see is fear, hatred, and violence. What has happened to us? If we were one

in the beginning, why can't we be so now? Shall the children of Abraham always hate each other? Or will we find the story of reconciliation, the story of peace?



During my undergraduate years at BYU, I worked for a professor doing research on the effectiveness of peace education. My assignment was to find all the peace education programs in the world and to see which programs were creating long-term peaceful worldviews. Over the course of a year, I read nearly three hundred scholarly articles, analyzed over a thousand websites, and read more than forty books on international peace and education. What I found was discouraging. Not one of the peace education programs could provide significant evidence that their method was creating long-term peace. In fact, most of the programs focused only on creating participants who could coexist and tolerate one another. And none of them mentioned God. I had been researching to find answers, hoping to find an example to follow, to find a story of reconciliation and hope for the future. But I didn't find one.

So, I went searching for an answer. I signed up for a BYU volunteer program to Amman, Jordan. My plan was both to work with an organization providing breastfeeding resources for Iraqi refugee women in Amman and to learn more about Islam. But that summer Amman was in chaos. Three weeks after I arrived in Jordan, an Israeli soldier was abducted by Hezbollah. Before anyone knew what had happened, Lebanon was in ruins. Within days, Amman's already full streets were flooded with refugees, and Amman was a city alive with fear and anger. Almost every day there were anti-Israeli and anti-American demonstrations on the college campuses and in the streets. God's name was shouted as a justification for revenge and retaliation. Yet there were some who were quietly pleading to God, trying to understand the violence and the hatred. I could see that they were just as confused about the nature and justice of God as I was.



I saw the fear in Noor's eyes when she turned to me and asked, "Do you like Condoleezza Rice?"

I was surprised by the question and gave her a blank stare.

"You know, Condoleezza Rice, your secretary of state. Do you like her?" she persisted.

I paused for a moment, pulled back my hair, and said, "Honestly, Noor, I can't say that I've ever given her much thought. But I guess I like her. Why?"

"Because I think Condoleezza Rice is the devil and that she deserves to burn in hell!"

In all the time I had known her, I hadn't heard her so much as raise her voice. To hear pure, unadulterated hatred and anger in her voice scared me.

"Every time she comes on TV, she is talking about things she does not understand," she continued. "She says we need a 'new Middle East,' but we don't want a 'new Middle East.' We just want to be respected and understood. Arabs and Muslims, we are not bad people. But America, she doesn't listen, she doesn't understand, she doesn't know who we are."

I just stared at her pain-filled eyes and didn't say anything. I realized that what she had said was true; America and Islam don't understand each other. I'd been in the Middle East for only six weeks, but already I could see that the root of the violence and fear went deep. The problem didn't go back just to Lebanon, the Iraq War, the Seven Days' War, or even 1948 when Israel was recognized as a nation despite the silent screams of the Palestinians. The root of the fear and hate went back to the ancient story, back to Hagar and Sarah and Ishmael and Isaac. We were still stuck reenacting an ancient story of violence and hate, a story where one brother always triumphs while the other wanders homeless in the wilderness. I saw that these problems would take a lot more than a little democracy and a Band-Aid to fix.



The sky was growing dark as the last strains of the evening call to prayer echoed through the open window. I sat uncomfortably at my desk, but my eyes kept straying to where Mervat was praying. Her veiled head was pressed to the floor, and holy words flowed from her lips. Only a few minutes earlier, she had washed herself, hung her head out the window to orient herself to Mecca, and laid her small mat on the floor. As she began the prayers that she had said five times a day every day of her life, my thoughts turned to my own prayers offered to God in faith each morning and night. I wore no veil. I knew no holy words from the Qur'an. We both believed that there was just one God. And if we both prayed to the same God, whose words did he hear and whose prayers did he answer?

Mervat was different from any believer I had met. She had a devotion to God that I respected, admired, and even envied. I am a faithful Mormon. I have been taught to keep high moral standards. I don't smoke. I don't drink. I don't swear. I dress modestly. I believe that sex should be saved for marriage. I pray every morning and evening. Throughout my youth these behaviors set me apart from my American peers, and I had

anticipated that my religious beliefs would set me apart in Jordan as well. During my first days in the Middle East, however, I felt like a prostitute among nuns. By my standards I was dressing modestly, and by American standards I was even stuffy and conservative. Yet compared to Muslim women, who covered their arms and their legs, veiled their hair, and wore little or no makeup, I was revealing, provocative and ostentatious. I felt confused and a little betrayed. I wondered, should it have been Sarah who was cast out rather than Hagar? Certainly Hagar's posterity, among whom I was living, led good lives. I began to question a God who would choose me over them.



In search of answers, I turned to the Hebrew Bible and the Qur'an. In the Hebrew Bible, I found that although Ishmael, Hagar's son, was Abraham's firstborn, he was not the child of promise. Instead, it was Sarah's son who became the heir to Abraham's covenant, while Ishmael wandered in the desert (Gen. 17–18). Yet the story in the Qur'an claims that it was Ishmael, not Isaac, who was the child of promise (Sura 19:54). Therefore, God's promises were meant for Ishmael's descendants, not Isaac's.

So, which story is true? Or, more importantly, why does God appear to play favorites? Certainly such favoritism, as interpreted by Muslims and Christians, has resulted in bloodshed rather than kinship. Why would a Father God be a respecter of persons, creating an endless cycle of vengeance by choosing one daughter and her son over another?

If God has a chosen people, if he differentiates between the prayers of a Muslim and the prayers of a Christian, then wouldn't it mean that he is a "respecter of persons," that he is an unjust and changeable God, one who finds a sadistic pleasure in blessing one people and cursing another? Wouldn't it mean that there must only be one religion, one people who have the whole of God's words, and one people with his truth? Yet my whole soul cries out against such an idea. How is faith possible in a God who is a respecter of persons? In the Lectures on Faith, we read:

In order that any rational and intelligent being may exercise faith in God unto life and salvation . . . men should have an idea that he is no respecter of persons, . . . because if he were a respecter of persons, they could not tell what their privileges were, nor how far they were authorized to exercise faith in him, or whether they were authorized to do it at all, but all must be confusion; . . . God is no respecter of persons, and . . . every man in every nation has an equal privilege.²

I cannot believe in a God who is a respecter of persons. Nor can I believe that he has chosen one people, that he gives truth and guidance

to only one people, that he hears the prayers of only one people. I believe that while he requires people to qualify for his blessings by obedience and faith, he does not make them compete for them. If that were the case, there would be no hope for peace. There would be room only for fear, the fear that someone else's faith would cancel out yours, the fear that if someone else was right, then you must be wrong, and the fear that if someone else appeared to be blessed, then God must be cursing you.

The great irony is that neither Christianity nor Islam professes belief in a God who is a respecter of persons or who is changeable and unjust. The Qur'an says: "Those who believe (the Muslim) and those who are Jews, Christians and Sabeans—all who believe in God and the Last Day and do righteous deeds shall have their reward with their Sustainer; and no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve" (Sura 2:62).

In the New Testament, Peter expresses a similar belief when he says: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34–35).

Yet despite these statements of God's love for all his creations, the children of Abraham still cling to prejudice and ancient stories that cause violence and competition. Abraham's children fear that they are competing for God's blessing. This competition provides no room for cooperation, no way to find common ground, and no hope for peace. It just creates fear.



Nidal looked at me with intense eyes and handed me a Qur'an. "I am giving this to you so that you will know that we, Muslims and Christians, do not have to hate each other. We are very similar, and I want you to read that," he said, pointing to the Qur'an, "so you can find truth—that we are the same."

For the last hour, Nidal and I had been talking about religion, about his beliefs as a Muslim, about Muhammad and about Jesus Christ. At first I had been scared of Nidal, intimidated by his passion and zeal for Islam, but as we talked, the fear melted away and I found that we shared many of the same beliefs. By being a good Muslim, Nidal taught me how to be a better Christian.

"Remember," Nidal had instructed me, "you must go home to America and tell your family what you have learned. Christians must respect Muslims and Muslims must respect Christians if we are to achieve harmony in our world."



It is an exciting time to be alive, an exciting time to be young. The possibilities for peace, understanding, and international cooperation presented by globalization are phenomenal, yet so are the possibilities for war, fundamentalism, and hatred. Globalization is a pendulum that swings both ways, with the possibility to drive us apart and widen ancient divides or to bring us together and heal ancient wounds. We must be prepared to find common ground in spiritual stories in order to create lasting peace, based on respect and understanding and not just tolerance and coexistence.

Young people like Noor, Mervat, Nidal, and I are the architects of the future generation. It will be our challenge to move the world beyond religious tolerance, beyond fundamentalism. We must remember and celebrate our common roots—that we are children of the same God. We must seek for a modern-day tent of Abraham, a tent with four sides opened toward all the corners of the earth, where there is no feud between Hagar and Sarah and no “chosen” between Ishmael and Isaac, a world in which there is space for interreligious conversations, room for the religions of the world to freely and openly talk about their shared beliefs, values, histories, fears, and goals. We must be willing to listen to people’s stories, to let go of our bipolar constructions of the world and to find the truth in the beliefs of others. We cannot be so afraid that someone else’s God will make our God irrelevant that we leave him out of our social and political conversations.

The Book of Mormon prophet Nephi testified of such a world when he said, “Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, . . . and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth? . . . Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another” (2 Ne. 29:7–8).

To gain peace we must realize that no one has a monopoly on truth. Truth is like a great puzzle whose pieces have been scattered across the world to all nations, cultures, and religions. Together we have more parts than we have alone. When we try to understand our piece of the puzzle as a piece that fits into a great whole, we begin to get a vision of what the completed puzzle must look like. This knowledge should excite us and fill us with love for all the other millions of other people who hold the other pieces. Gathered together we will gain more pieces of God’s truth and better come to understand our place and purpose in the world.



On my last night in Jordan, Noor and I sat eating dessert on the balcony of a café overlooking the city of Amman. I looked out across the city and saw Jordan's flag flying across the sky, and I realized that this land, this people, this way of life felt like home. It felt like family.

There were tears in our eyes when we said goodbye that night. Something beautiful and sacred had happened between us the last few weeks, and neither of us knew how to name it. My eyes filled with tears, and they spilled freely down my cheeks. Noor saw the unspoken words in my eyes, and she put her arm around my shoulders, pressed her white veiled head next to mine, and whispered in my ear, "Do not be afraid. This is not goodbye. It is not the end. You are my sister in America, and when you come back to Jordan, you must stay at my house."

As the taxi drove away, I realized that Noor was right. Tonight was not the end; it was the beginning. It was the beginning of a gathering, the gathering of the family of Abraham. Our friendship is evidence of the children of Abraham returning home to his tent. Yet they will not come as Christians, Jews, or Muslims, but rather as brothers and sisters. For Noor and me, such a gathering has already occurred. We are sisters, the daughters of Ishmael and Isaac. We know each other, each other's stories, fears, and hopes. We have dried each other's tears. We have laughed together and worked beside one another. The ancient feud is over; Sarah and Hagar may once again live in peace. I have seen the face of my sister. I have learned her name, and now I see that the night is past and the light of a new day is beginning to dawn.

This essay by Heather Farrell (heatherlady@gmail.com) won second place in the *BYU Studies* 2008 personal essay contest.

1. See Gordon B. Hinckley, "Experiences Worth Remembering," devotional address, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, October 31, 2006, available online at <http://speeches.byu.edu/reader/reader.php?id=11434&x=52&y=9>.

2. *Lectures on Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 38, 43.

Psalm for My Father

Let the russet chair
with its upholstered curves
remain for a while as he shaped it,
removed to a spot by windows
laced over and tall.

Let the coming winter stay longer
on mountaintops: October,
the month of his birth, crisp slowly
into frost, stubble fields holding onto gold
before the turn to fallow.

Allow us time to watch a lowering sun
shoot back prisms,
faint ice etching long needles
across the water trough, mountain spring water
still trickling in as it has all my years,
though irrigation ditches he cut in pasture
no longer flow.

In the necessary wait for morning
and motion, let us open
to what darkness can give . . .
the moving metaphors of earth,
its core of heat, the underground rivers
that stream beneath us.

—Dixie L. Partridge

Andrew Jenson's Illustrated Journey to Iceland, the Land of Fire and Ice, August 1911

Fred E. Woods

In 1911, Andrew Jenson was serving one of his ten missions,¹ this time as mission president of the Danish-Norwegian Mission.² Headquarters were in Copenhagen, where he had been presiding since February 1909.³ Jenson was familiar with Scandinavia, having been born and raised in Denmark until age sixteen (1866), when he immigrated to Utah.

By the time of his appointment as president of the Danish-Norwegian Mission, Jenson was nearly sixty years old and had a wealth of experience under his belt. "In 1876 he began a career that would span forty-two years as a translator, compiler, editor, and historian," and by 1897 he had been appointed as a full-time assistant Church historian. During his lifetime (1850–1941), he authored "27 books, edited four historical periodicals, compiled 650 manuscript histories . . . , wrote more than 5,000 published biographical sketches, more than 2,000 newspaper articles, and gave an estimated 6,000 addresses and speeches on Mormon history throughout the world."⁴ Scandinavia was merely one chapter in his life, though it was a very prominent chapter.

In the first half of 1911, President Jenson had made an extensive tour of the mission, during which he presented over fifty illustrated lectures in a number of principal cities in both Norway and Denmark.⁵ As the summer of 1911 dawned, the heat of the season was accompanied by fiery lectures made by "several anti-Mormon agitators [who] delivered lectures in different parts of Denmark." Striving to generate light instead of heat, President Jenson, a competent and seasoned missionary, aided by his companion Oluf J. Andersen, successfully responded to critics in Copenhagen in late June.⁶ For the first time in the history of the Scandinavian Mission (established in 1850), the Danish newspapers defended the Mormon position.⁷



FIG. 1. The steamship *Sterling* (note the name in white on the side of the vessel). Andrew Jenson and Alma L. Petersen sailed on this ship in their 1911 voyage to Iceland. Photo © The National Museum of Iceland, Vigfús Sigurðsson Collection.

The *Sterling* weighed 1,040 tons and was built in Scotland in 1890. It was wrecked in 1922, but the passengers and crew were saved. Jón Björnsson, “*Sterling*,” in *Íslensk Skip*, vol. 3 (Reykjavík: ÍÐUNN, 1990), 122.

Following this victory, Jenson decided to take his illustrated lectures to Iceland—the Land of Fire and Ice.⁸ This visit was the first by a president of the Scandinavian Mission.⁹ On August 6, 1911, Jenson, accompanied by Elder Alma L. Petersen, embarked from Copenhagen on the steamship *Sterling* bound for Iceland (fig. 1).¹⁰ During the voyage, the vessel made stops in both Scotland and the Faroe Islands. The missionaries made good use of their time, delivering sermons and illustrated lectures as they journeyed across the North Atlantic before arriving at the Westmann Islands (*Vestmannaeyjar*), just off the southern coast of Iceland, on August 13, 1911.¹¹

The document that follows is an extract from the autobiography and journals of Andrew Jenson covering the ten days he spent in Iceland, August 13–22, 1911.¹² This account gives us a rare glimpse of Iceland through the lens of an early-twentieth-century Latter-day Saint. Furthermore, it provides a portrait of how Mormonism was viewed in Iceland, just three years before missionary work in Iceland was shut down (1914) largely because of the onslaught of World War I.¹³ What makes the account

extraordinary is that Andrew Jenson and his traveling companions took a number of photographs while on their journey, thus providing illustrations to match Jenson's journal entries and provide us with an intriguing picture to complement the journal.¹⁴ Each photograph is approximately four inches by five inches, including the frame.

Andrew Jenson and his companion Alma L. Petersen landed safely back in Copenhagen on August 29, 1911. On this journey of twenty-four days they had "traveled about 4380 miles, of which 4020 miles were by steamer, 120 miles by rail, 2 miles by automobile, 165 miles on horseback and 5 miles on small boats."¹⁵ After his return, Andrew continued his labors as mission president about six more months before being released by the First Presidency with the compliment that he had performed a "good and faithful mission."¹⁶ Though he never returned to Iceland, he did not forget the Land of Fire and Ice. In fact, fifteen years later he completed his compilation "Manuscript History of the Iceland Mission," the last of 650 mission histories he compiled.¹⁷

When eighty-seven years old, Andrew Jenson was invited to Spanish Fork, Utah, to dedicate a monument in remembrance of the first Icelandic Latter-day Saint converts to gather to Zion, most of whom had made their home in Spanish Fork. On August 1, 1938, three years before his death, Jenson recorded this journal entry: "Left the City [Salt Lake City] by auto at 5 p.m. with Eva and others and traveled to Spanish Fork where we attended the celebration honoring the arrival of the first Icelanders to Spanish Fork. I dedicated the beautiful monument created by the local Saints and also made a speech . . . and there was quite a lengthy program."¹⁸

The fact that he was asked to dedicate the monument seems most appropriate, inasmuch as this gifted, dedicated Scandinavian historian had presided for several years over the Icelandic Mission, visited this unique country, and compiled the early history of the Latter-day Saints in the Land of Fire and Ice.

Andrew Jenson's Journal, August 13–22, 1911

Aug. 1911 Arrival at Reykjavik Iceland.¹⁹

Sun. 13. [August 1911] When we arose this morning the mountains of Iceland were visible on our right and the Westman Islands soon “hove in sight” ahead.²⁰ As we approached them they appeared very picturesque and beautiful. At 2 o'clock p.m. the ship cast anchor off the little town in a little bay sheltered by lofty, almost perpendicular mountains. Boats soon came out from land and we landed [Fig. 2] and walked about 4 miles to the top of an extinct crater, [editorial note: Here Jenson drew in his journal a sketch and the caption “The Westman Islands as they appeared as a distance,” followed by another drawing and caption “The main island of the Westmann group nearer.”] known locally as the Helga Fjeld, 800 feet high and then walked through the little town containing nearly 1500 inhabitants. Finally, we hired a motor boat to take us to a curious cave facing the bay [Fig. 3]. As we approached it numerous birds which dwelt in the overhanging rocks “swarmed out” and the scenery was indeed grand. We boarded the ship again at 6 o'clock p.m. and now first observed how grand and beautiful the

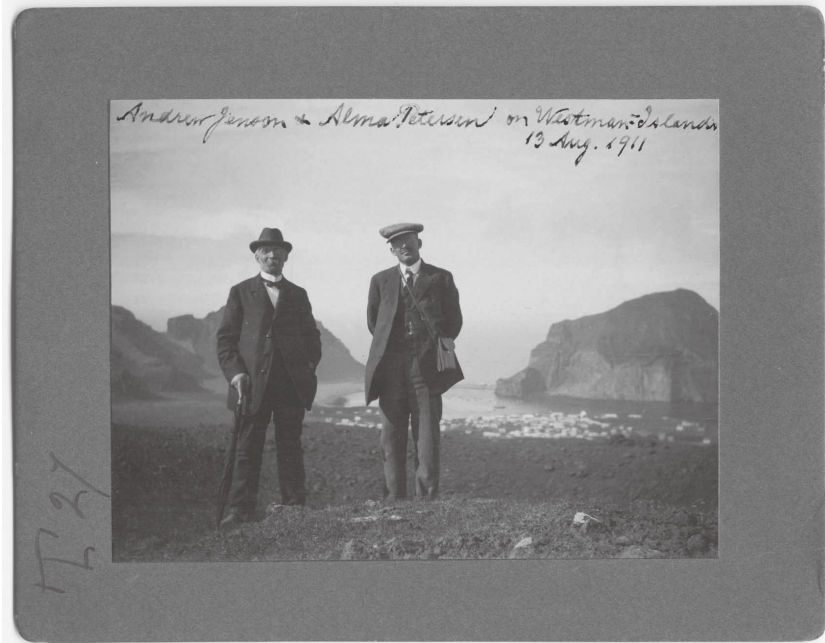


FIG. 2. “Andrew Jenson [left] & Alma Petersen on Westman Islands, 13 Aug. 1911.” Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve Inc.

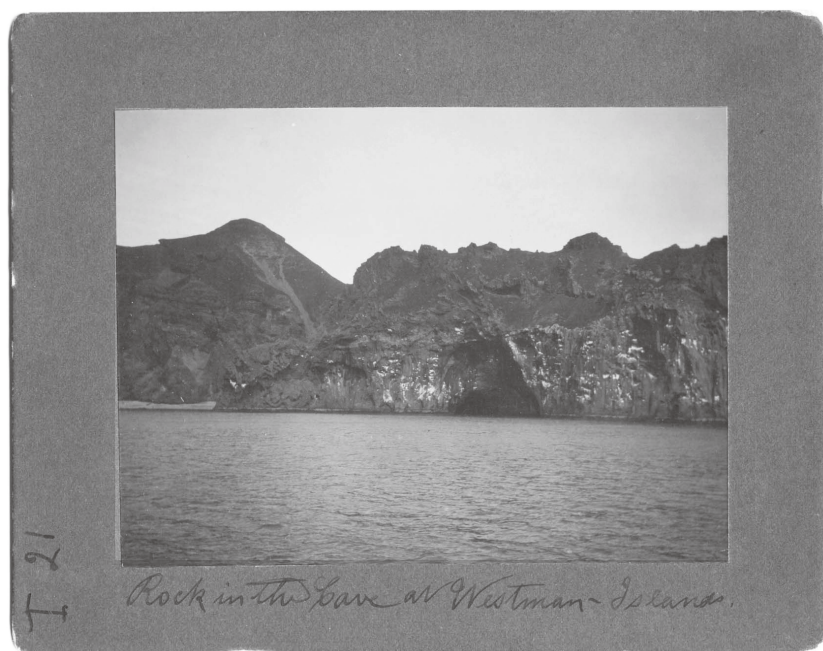


FIG. 3. The Westmann Islands, just off the southern coast of Iceland. Jensen wrote "Rock in the Cave at Westman-Islands" on the frame. Photo taken in 1911 by Andrew Jensen or his companions. Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve Inc.

perpendicular rock walls bordering the bay looked. The highest point on the island is 900 feet high. The main land was also in plain sight, the nearest [p. 673] shore being distant about 12 miles. Heavy clouds rested upon the main land; hence, we only had imperfect glimpses of the "jökels" or glaciers or ice-covered mountains which abound in this peculiar icy island of the far north. At 9 o'clock p.m. the ship lifted anchor and we swung out of the little bay, sailing thence to the right of the main island of the Westman group, and set out for Reykjavik. The evening was quite cold.

Mon. 14. [August 1911] Having sailed along the coast of the mainland all night we were steering direct for Reykjavik when we got up in the morning and at 8 o'clock a.m. the ship cast anchor off Reykjavik some boats swarmed around the steamer and Elder Jacob B. Johnson,²¹ one of the two missionaries from Zion laboring on Iceland, came on board and recognized us. We landed about 9 o'clock and on the wharf I met Elder Halldor Johnson, the other Elders missionary laboring on Iceland.²² Hiring a man to take our baggage, we walked up in town to a private boarding house kept by an old maid (Ingebjorg Jonsdathi Vonastranti) where we

soon felt quite at home and we were placed in a nice comfortable room. We had conversation with the two Elders who had not labored in harmony together since their arrival here about a year ago. I took a long walk out with Elder Jacob B. Johnson who had been appointed president of the Icelandic Mission when [they] passed through Liverpool on their way hither. We called on a number of officials and got permission to give illustrated lectures on Saturday and Sunday evening next and to charge a nominal entrance fee to pay the hall rent. Reykjavik [p. 674] is a town with about 18000 inhabitants containing regular streets and many fine buildings, but it has no harbor on account of which it is difficult to land in stormy weather.²³ [Figs. 4 and 5.] During the afternoon Bro. Petersen and I decided to make a trip inland on horseback to be accompanied by Elder Haldur Johnson; we hired two horses at the rate of Kr. 3⁰⁰ per day for the journey. Bro. Johnson went out in the country to secure a horse for himself on better terms. Elder Petersen and I enjoyed a good night's rest, though we slept in the same bed which was rather small for two.

Tues. 15. [August 1911] Accompanied by Elders Alma Petersen and Halldor Johnson I left Reykjavik at 8 o'clock a.m. on horseback. I rode a gentle mouse-colored animal while my companions rode two sorrels. All three were small Icelandic ponies. The first part of our journey was over good roads. We crossed several creeks, passed several lakes and finally a rocky divide into the socalled Thing Valley basin where there is a large lake. [Fig. 6.] After traveling nearly 50 kil. or 32 miles we descended from a higher to a lower plateau through a most romantic gorge along which the black volcanic rocks rose to dizzy hights on either side. It was in this region that the leading *man* <men> of Iceland in ancient days met as genuine democrats and passed laws for the benefit of the island. We arrived at this historical place at 6 o'clock p.m. (having halted several times on the road to bait²⁴ our animals) and put up for the night at the only hotel called Valhöll (Valhalla or heaven); but we found it, as one traveler remarked "a hell of a heaven," as the accommodations were very poor and the prices [p. 675] very high. Before retiring we visited a beautiful waterfall nearby. A number of travelers or turists who were fellow-passengers with us on the "Sterling" stopped at the same hotel. They were also going to points of interest inland. They generally had two horses each to ride while we only had one; but we got there as easy as they did and nearly as quick. I stood the ride remarkably well though I <had> scarcely been on the back of an animal since I traveled in New Zealand and Palestine in 1895 and 1896.²⁵

Wed. 16. [August 1911] We prepared for an early start; but the Icelandic boy was two hours late in bringing our horses; hence we did not get started till 9 o'clock a.m. This delay gave us a fine opportunity to visit the



FIG. 4. The bay at Reykjavík, Iceland, about 1900. Photo © The National Museum of Iceland.



FIG. 5. The town of Reykjavík about 1900. Photo © The National Museum of Iceland, Sigfús Eymundsson Collection. In the center of this photograph is a building with dark walls and a light-colored roof. This is Bárubúð Hall, where Andrew Jenson gave two illustrated lectures as a missionary tool.



FIG. 6. "On the road to Thingvellir, Iceland, 15 Aug. 1911." Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve Inc.

chasms, gulches filled with water and rents and splits in the black rocks which abounded everywhere in this region. We had prayer in a lovely secluded spot among the hills. Our journey this day was ~~over~~ through a rough, rocky, hilly country and over a road that was merely a trail, but with great care two-wheeled vehicles could be taken over it. This whole section of country abounded with lava beds and the whole island is of volcanic origin. After crossing a number of ridges we at length descended into a beautiful grassy valley called Langarvatnsvellir, then crossed another ridge to Lanrgarvatn when, on the edge of this lake, there are three or more boiling springs. When we nooned together with an Austrian traveler (Otto Volkert, a young merchant from Vienna) and his Icelandic guide, and we sent to a neighboring farm house for eggs which we boiled in one of the hot springs. [Figs. 7 and 8.] We also bought milk and [p. 676] thus enjoyed our dinner. Continuing our journey we forded a number of streams, only crossing the largest river (the Brūarā) on a bridge. Crossed over a number of rocky ridges and finally reached the geyser tavern at 8 o'clock p.m. very tired after riding about 33 miles during the day. While we were eating a most scanty meal at the dirty, one-eyed hotel, a the voice of an Englishman was heard saying loudly, "Come and see," and we all ran at the top of our



FIG. 7. "Nooning at Langarvatnsvellir en route for Geyser, Iceland, 16 Aug. 1911. Andrew Jenson, Haldor Johnson, Alma Petersen." Note the child on the far right. Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve Inc.



FIG. 8. "Resting in Langarvatnsvellir en route to Geyser. Haldor Johnson, Guide, Andrew Jenson, Mr. Volkert." Church History Library, © Intellectual Reserve Inc.

speed to the great geyser who was sending a mighty column of hot water high up in the air. This we called exceedingly good luck as many people make the long journey to the geyser without seeing it in action. It was a glorious sight never to be forgotten. A number of English and Canadian tourists who like us came to Iceland on the “Sterling” were putting up in the hotel under the care of Thos. Cook & Sons. The accommodations at this place were poor indeed and the charges extortionant—Kr. 2 to lie down on a sofa <ragged> sofa; but we were tired and slept well. I forgot to state that while we camped for noon today at Langarvatn we had a most beautiful and plain view of Hekla and Tindfjallajökell <Tungnafellsjökell> in the distance eastward. We saw at different points other jokuls or ice-covered mountains in the distance, and the whole landscape was truly interesting

Thurs. 17. [August 1911]. At 9 o'clock a.m. we commenced our return journey from Geyser, but not until we had witnessed a second action on the part of the great geyser and a “fine performance” on the part of the so called little geyser. There are a number of other [p. 677] hot springs, mud springs and fissures through which sulphur vapor[s] rise and the water is boiling continuously. The whole region of country which lies adjacent to the world-renowned Hekla is warm underneath and abounds with hot springs. On our return journey we called at a couple of farm houses and got cow milk mixed with cream from sheep's milk to drink. At one place we got so-called clabbard or sour milk to eat, which made Bro Petersen (whose digestive organs were weak), sick and he vomited the whole thing up in the evening. I rather enjoyed the strange diet. About 6 o'clock p.m. we put up for the night at a farm house situated at the top of a hill overlooking the Thing Valley lake. Here was good grazing for our animals and mutton and course bread for us. I slept in the same room as the family while Elders Petersen and Johnson slept in the hay in the barn.

Fri. 18. [August 1911] We continued our journey at 7 o'clock a.m. and continued our ride by way of Tingvellir the same road that we came out on—baiting many places on the road and eating lunch at the “gate house.” I had stood the trip very well until the middle of the day when the small of my back became effected through the constant pacing and trotting of my little horse and the continuous shaking of my body, and I suffered considerable pain during the remainder of the journey. Elder Johnson left us before we reached Reykjavik to take his horse to his country home, and Bro. Petersen and I (after visiting the public washing place by hot springs, where the women of Rey-[p. 678] kjavik do most of their washing) arrived in Reykjavik about 6 p.m., tired, fatigued and hungry. On our inland journey we had traveled upward of 130 miles on horseback and for us who for years had not been used to horseback riding that was quite a distance. We

were truly thankful when we had delivered our horses to the owner and could lie down to rest in our temporary home in Reykjavik. We retired early and enjoyed a splendid night's rest.

Sat. 19. [August 1911] We spent most of the day writing postal cards to friends and in preparing for our lectures. We advertised in three papers and printed 1000 hand bills which the two Elders Johnson distributed in the town.²⁶ We gave our lecture in the evening to about 35 people, though the hall we had hired would hold about 400. This was a great disappointment to us as we had advertised well and had reason to expect full house.²⁷ Even some of those who came and paid their 25- Öu admittance left before the lecture was through, thus showing their incapability of enjoying solid truths. It is, however, possible that some of them could not understand Danish

Sun. 20. [August, 1911] We held a special meeting with the two Elders Johnson who had not labored in harmony together for some time, and after listening to their explanations it was plain that while their troubles were based upon mere trifles and false rumors as well as some untimely utterances the two Elders were improperly yoked together in the ministry and it would be unwise to ask them to travel much together. Bro. Jacob B. Johnson was about 69 and Bro. [p. 679] Haldor Johnson about 53 years old, and both set in their ways; both being also very different in their disposition and actions. I gave them such advice as the spirit dictated to me, and the two Elders shook hands and forgave each other and promised to defend each other and work in unison so far as it became necessary for them to associate together. I gave them liberty to travel separate and report to me separately. The meeting ended with the best of feelings. From 4 to 6 p.m. we held a Sacrament meeting together, we four elders and two sisters who came in response to our invitation, namely Kirstin Jónsdóttir and Thorlief Amalia Josephsdóttir, the first named an old maid and the other one a young girl. A few other members of the Church in Reykjavik did not respond to our invitation. The records show that there are 26 members of the church on Iceland, but they live very much scattered and some of them have probably lost the faith. In the evening we gave our second lecture in the Bárubúð Hall. About 75 people were present and they seemed to appreciate my efforts better than those who attended the previous evening.²⁸ We paid 25 kroner for the use of the hall for the two nights and we paid 10.50 for advertising in the papers and the printing of 1000 hand bills. Charging 25 cts for entrance we received Kr. 6⁰⁰ the first night and Kr. 16⁰⁰ the second night. We felt that we had done our duty and hoped that those who were present at the lectures will be led to a further investigation of the principles of the gospel. [p. 680]

Mon. 21. [August 1911] I spent most of the day conversing with the two Elders Johnson and perusing the little contained in the mission record which commences with 1873. I obtained some information from the two Elders in addition thereto and gave them instructions in regard to keeping records in the future. Bro. Haldor Johnson then walked out with me to see the hauling of a ship upon the land for repair. Returning to our temporary home once more we four Elders engaged in solemn prayer and the spirit of God rested upon us so that our hearts were softened and our eyes brimmed with tears. And thus we finished a short, but I trust, profitable association together with our brethren. We then proceeded to the beach, hired a boat to take us to the same steamer that had brought us to Iceland a week before. And at 6 o'clock we gave the parting hand to the two brothers Johnson (who accompanied us to the ship) and at 6:15 p.m. the steamer "Sterling" lifted anchor and stood off to sea. The weather was fine, though a trifle cold and we enjoyed the voyage skirting the shore and looking at the numerous mountain heights as we passed along. About dark we doubled the cape known as Reykjanes, and then changed course in the direction of the Westmann Islands. The steamer was crowded with passengers. After taking my usual evening bath (on board) I retired and slept well.

Tues. 22. [August 1911] About 6 p.m. the "Sterling" anchored off Westman – Islands and stopped there two hours, but none of the passengers landed. Con-[p. 681] tinuing the voyage. Along the coast we had a fine view of the ice covered [blank space] and for a short time of Hekla in the distance. About sundown we saw the last of the mountains of Iceland as the ship steered away toward Scotland. I conversed with fellow passengers till a late hour, and then retired to have a good nights rest. Among the passengers were a number of Icelandic students going to the Copenhagen University to study. I talked morals and Mormonism to them and they seemed to enjoy my principles.²⁹

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The author thanks Darron S. Allred for translating several Icelandic newspaper articles used in this study and for carefully reviewing the article. Appreciation is also extended to Friðrik Rafn Guðmundsson who helped provide the proper Icelandic contextual understanding for this study. Thanks also to William W. Slaughter and April Williamsen of the Church History Library for going the extra mile to provide the images used in this article.

1. Keith W. Perkins, "Andrew Jenson: Zealous Chronologist," in *Supporting Saints: Life Stories of Nineteenth-Century Mormons*, ed. with an introduction by Donald Q. Cannon and David J. Whittaker (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1985), 86.

2. "From 1850 to 1905 the Scandinavian Mission embraced Denmark, Sweden and Norway, but from 1905 to 1920, it consisted of Denmark and Norway only and . . . [was] called the Danish-Norwegian Mission. With the separation of Denmark and Norway in 1920 this mission ceased to exist, and the three countries, originally included in the Scandinavian Mission then became the Swedish Mission, the Danish Mission, and the Norwegian Mission respectively." Andrew Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1927), 410.

For the full story of the Icelandic Latter-day Saints, see Fred E. Woods, *Fire on Ice: The Story of Icelandic Latter-day Saints at Home and Abroad* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2005), and the Icelandic translation of this text, *Eldur á ís: Saga hinna íslensku Síðari daga heilögu heima og að heiman*, trans. Friðrik Rafn Guðmundsson (Reykjavík, Iceland: University of Iceland Press/Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2007). For an overview of the LDS Icelandic history, see Fred E. Woods, "Icelandic Conversion and Emigration: A Sesquicentennial Sketch," in *Regional Studies in Latter-day Saint Church History: Europe*, vol. 4, ed. Donald Q. Cannon and Brent L. Top (Provo, Utah: Department of Church History and Doctrine, Brigham Young University, 2003), 1–22. For the story of two young Icelanders influential in the establishment of missionary work, see Fred E. Woods, "Fire on Ice: The Conversion and Life of Guðmundur Guðmundsson," *BYU Studies* 39, no. 2 (2000): 56–72.

3. Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission*, 422.

4. Allan Kent Powell, "Andrew Jenson," in *Utah History Encyclopedia*, ed. Allan Kent Powell (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994), 284. For more biographical information on the life and accomplishments of Andrew Jenson, see Louis Reinwand, "Andrew Jenson, Latter-day Saint Historian," *BYU Studies* 14, no. 1 (1973): 29–46; Keith W. Perkins, "A Study of the Contributions of Andrew Jenson to the Writing and Preservation of LDS Church History" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1971); Keith W. Perkins, "Andrew Jenson: Zealous Chronologist" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1974). A distillation of his dissertation is found in Perkins, "Andrew Jenson: Zealous Chronologist," in *Supporting Saints*, 83–99.

5. Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission*, 431–32.

6. Jenson's maturity in handling this opposition can be contrasted to his first mission to Denmark in 1873, when he was not quite twenty-three years old. Not long before that mission, in the summer of 1871, Andrew had worked as a cattle driver in Utah. Drawing on a few of Jenson's own words, Reinwand explains that "Andrew encountered the usual frustrations of the Mormon missionary. At one time, after being insulted at a small meeting in Saeby, he 'squared up' to the

accuser 'with clenched fist, the spirit of the cowboy life asserting itself, ready to strike him.'" Reinwand, "Andrew Jenson, Latter-day Saint Historian," 32–33.

7. Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission*, 432–33.

8. Iceland's designation as the Land of Fire and Ice derives from the fact that its geographical landscape is largely made up of volcanic materials; the result is occasional hot lava as well as many glaciers. For more information concerning how this unique country has developed, see "Forged By Fire, Honed By Ice," *Insight Guides: Iceland* (Maspeth, N.Y.: Langenscheidt Publishers, 1999, 4th ed.), 17–21.

9. Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission*, 433.

10. Andrew Jenson, *Autobiography of Andrew Jenson* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), 482. Alma L. Petersen, from Huntsville, Utah, arrived in the Danish-Norwegian Mission on February 26, 1910. The following two years (1911–1912), Petersen served as the president of the Aarhus Conference in Denmark. Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission*, 429, 499.

11. Jenson, *History of the Scandinavian Mission*, 433.

12. Andrew Jenson, *Autobiography and Journals*, August 13–22, 1911, Andrew Jenson Papers, January 1909 to December 1912, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. Jenson's *Autobiography of Andrew Jenson*, 482–85, contains a record of the Iceland visit, though it differs somewhat from the original journal entries that I have used for this article. Keith Perkins notes that at the suggestion of local missionaries in Denmark, Andrew began to keep a journal at age thirteen, which he continued through his entire life. Perkins, "Andrew Jenson: Zealous Chronologist," in *Supporting Saints*, 85. In a *Deseret News* article published in 1936, Jenson recorded, "History has been my major interest since the age of fourteen when a missionary's journal inspired me to record my personal history. . . . In keeping this journal, which has been uninterrupted since that day, I have learned that a person can't be a natural historian until he commences with his own life." "Historian, 86, Needs Century More to End Work," *Deseret News*, December 11, 1936, 17.

13. "July 8, 1914 Elder Einar Eriksen . . . was released today, on account of a discontinuance of missionary work in Iceland, and in compliance with instructions received by the First Presidency." "Historical Record of the Icelandic Mission, 1873–1914," Church History Library. A week later it was reported that "Elder Einar Eriksen had been released from his missionary activities on Iceland, and the work on that island was now discontinued." "Danish-Mission Manuscript History," Church History Library, July 15, 1914. Two weeks later (August 1, 1914), this same manuscript "contained a greeting (culled from the *Skandinaviens Stjerne*) from Pres. Hans J. Christiansen to all the Elders laboring in the Danish-Norwegian Mission, encouraging them under the now existing regrettable conditions into which all Europe had been thrown (brought on by the war, . . . which caused anxiety) to remain at their posts and labor like brave men for the cause." Yet the following month, the Danish-Mission Manuscript History (September 27, 1914) cites a telegram for this date stating that "most of the missionaries laboring in the Danish-Norwegian Mission would soon be released to depart from Liverpool on October 14th [1914]." It would be another six decades before missionary work would be reopened in Iceland and a branch of the Church reestablished.

14. Several of these photographs were used in a lecture given by the author at the University of Iceland on March 3, 2007. He will be returning there in Spring

2009 to teach an intensive course on Mormonism at the invitation of Professor Pétur Pétursson.

15. Jenson, *Autobiography*, 486.

16. Keith W. Perkins, "Andrew Jenson: Zealous Chronologist," diss., 178, notes, "On March 8, 1912, he [Jenson] was officially released with compliments of the First Presidency."

17. The "Manuscript History of the Iceland Mission [1851–1914]" is housed at the Church History Library in Salt Lake City. The *Deseret News* noted that this Manuscript History of the Iceland Mission would be Andrew Jenson's "last of the mission histories to be compiled." "Will Write History of Iceland Mission," *Deseret News*, March 2, 1926; Journal History, Church History Library.

18. Jenson, *Autobiography and Journals*, August 1, 1938. Eva was the daughter of Andrew Jenson and his wife Emma Howell. Powell, "Andrew Jenson," 284. See also Perkins, "Andrew Jenson: Zealous Chronologist," diss., 174.

19. This title is written at the top of the page.

20. It is interesting that Jenson first discusses the Westmann Islands, for here is where Mormonism was first introduced to the native Icelanders in 1851. Of the four hundred Icelandic converts who joined between 1851 and 1914 and gathered to Utah, about half were from the Westmann Islands. Woods, *Fire on Ice*, 201.

21. Jacob B. Johnson or "(Jakob Baldvin Jonsson) was born 21 May 1843 in Reykjavik, Gullbringu. . . . Jakob left Iceland in early 1876 and arrived in Winnipeg, Canada on 8 August 1876. One year later he made his way to Spanish Fork, Utah, where he joined The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1879 Jakob and Jon Eyvindsson were called to serve as missionaries in Canada and Iceland. . . . In July of 1881 Jakob returned from Iceland with a small group of Icelanders. Sigridur Bjarnadottir and her son Einar Jonsson were among these Icelanders. Jakob and Sigridur were married 20 October 1881 in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City, Utah, and Einar was adopted by Jakob. Sigridur was born about 1834 and died 25 May 1896. Jakob married again, this time to Petrea Knudsen, and they became the parents of five children. Petrea was born in Denmark 20 October 1864. They were married 8 October 1896. Jakob lived in Spanish Fork until he moved to Cleveland, Utah, where he homesteaded 160 acres in 1885. Jakob went to Iceland on another mission in 1910. . . . Jakob died 22 July 1930 and is buried in the Cleveland Cemetery." David Alan Ashby, *Icelanders Gather to Utah, 1854–1914, From Iceland to Spanish Fork, Utah* (Spanish Fork, Utah: Icelandic Association of Utah, 2008), 63.

22. "Halldor Jonsson [Johnson] was born 1 March 1856 at Skurdbaer, Medal-landsting, Vestur Skaftafell." In 1879, he married Guðrun Jónsdottir, and the following year they were baptized. In 1881, Halldór, Guðrun, and their son Jóhann immigrated to Spanish Fork and soon thereafter moved to Cleveland, Utah. They had seven children. He returned to Iceland to serve a mission (1899–1901) and a second mission (beginning in 1910). "Halldor died 11 January 1936 in Cleveland, Utah and is buried in the Cleveland Cemetery." Ashby, *Icelanders Gather to Utah*, 50.

23. Reykjavík means "Smoky Bay," from the smoke created by geothermal springs. *Insight Guides: Iceland*, 153. The town of Reykjavík was officially established by royal decree in 1786, and fifteen years later, the 1801 census revealed that the town had a population of only 307. Gunnar Karlsson, *The History of Iceland* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 182–85. A century later (1901), Reykjavík had a mere 5,000 inhabitants. *Insight Guides: Iceland*, 156.

24. Jenson's word *bait* is likely derived from *beita*, an Icelandic word that may be translated "to feed or graze." Thus they were stopping to feed their horses. G. T. Zoëga, *Icelandic-English Dictionary* (Reykjavík: Sigurður Kristjánsson, 1922), 47.

25. For an account of Jenson's travels to New Zealand (1895) and Palestine (1896), see Jenson, *Autobiography*, 267–306, 321–57.

26. An advertisement was posted in a Reykjavík Icelandic newspaper stating, "A Danish-American Mormon intends to present a message about the Mormons and the situation in Utah in Bárubud [a public hall in Reykjavík] tonight and tomorrow night." *Ísafold*, August 1911, 201.

27. One major reason for such low attendance is that the day before Jenson gave his first illustrated lecture, an unidentified woman with the initials Í. Ó. wrote a lengthy anti-Mormon article titled "Mormóna-villan" (Mormon Heresy) with reference to the coming of Andrew Jenson, a Mormon missionary and polygamist from Utah. The article also noted that Joseph [F.] Smith was a polygamist with five wives and forty children and noted that "the Mormon missionaries paint a bright picture of Utah in every detail, so that those who are ignorant think that there is some kind of earthly paradise there, but when they arrive there the many evils amaze them. . . . The missionaries intend to have 5–10 wives each." See the Icelandic newspaper *ÞJÓÐÓLFUR*, August 18, 1911, 119. Elder Jacob B. Jonsen responded to this attack in an article by the same name, "Mormónavillan." See *ÞJÓÐÓLFUR*, September 8, 1911, 131. Not to be outdone, the crafty Í. Ó. wrote another article with the same name as a rebuttal to Jonsen. See *ÞJÓÐÓLFUR*, September 23, 1911, 140. However, Halldór Jónsson joined the debate with a rebuttal, and he had the final word. The editor of *ÞJÓÐÓLFUR* attached a note to this article: "Additional articles on this subject will not be accepted." "Mormónavillan" *ÞJÓÐÓLFUR*, November 17, 1911, 172. In this piece, among other things, Jónsson informed Í. Ó. that polygamy had ceased in 1890 and wrote, "I feel that the 15th stanza of the 11th psalm of the Easter psalms is suitable here: 'By his speech, often, may a man be known, who preferably he would be, Deceived at first, he himself must be, with freedom censure then employs, Best it is, a temper pure, gentle words do prove, be sure; Abuse from one most evil seen, saved last for lack of purest clean.' If a picture of the author of this article is not painted in the aforementioned stanza, I do not know where a good one could be found."

28. On June 17, 1911, the centenary of Jón Sigurðsson's birth and just two months prior to this lecture, the University of Iceland opened its doors in Reykjavík. Sigurðsson, the epitome of Icelandic identity, ignited the spark for Iceland to obtain its independence from Denmark. The commencement of this institution seems to have signaled a renewed thirst for education in general and no doubt fanned the flames of freedom. Thirty-three years later to the day, on June 17, 1944, Iceland claimed independence. See Jón R. Hjálmarsson, *History of Iceland: From the Settlement to the Present Day* (Reykjavík: Iceland Review, 1993), 129, 159; Karlsson, *The History of Iceland*, 208.

29. The following day, August 23, 1911, Jenson provides another journal entry that sheds light on the international flavor of this return voyage. He notes, "I spent the day . . . conversing with the passengers. There were representatives of 12 nationalities on board, to wit., Danish, Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, English, Scotch, Irish, German, Hollandish, American, Canadian & Australian."

Mormon Media History Timeline, 1827–2007

Sherry Pack Baker

The widespread use of the media has been an important element in the history and experience of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its members. In recognition of this fact, the Mormon Media History Timeline (1827–2007) has now been made available at <http://lib.byu.edu/sites/scholarsarchive/mormon-media-studies> for the deliberate purpose of marking a distinct branch of study. Mormon studies has come into its own in recent years as a recognized academic discipline, and while much good work already has been done in Mormon *media* studies, this area has not as yet been overtly recognized as a discipline unto itself. As the field increasingly comes into its own, it will take on a scope and characteristic that is unique from other areas of Mormon studies. There might come a time in the future when an academic journal will be needed as a forum for scholarship about Mormon media, relating, for example, to Mormon media history, content, technologies, books, films, Internet sites, public relations, biography, cultural issues, framing, media effects, theory, criticism, ethics, Mormon image and representation in the media, and all other matters related to Mormon use of the media by the official Church and its individual members, not to mention the media coverage of Mormons by those outside the faith.

In the meantime, the timeline is available as a basic reference tool to facilitate scholarship and contribute to the backbone of the discipline of Mormon media studies. It is intended to encourage and inform the development of new scholarship in this area and to provide a chronology and background for historical contextualization and juxtaposition with other Mormon media developments. It is also meant to serve as a

foundational reference resource for scholars working in other emphases in Mormon studies.

Background of the Timeline

In 2001, I participated on a panel at the Broadcast Education Association (BEA) conference to talk about Mormon historical involvement in broadcasting. For that occasion I began to construct a timeline related to the topic. The need had arisen before to compile a limited, subject-specific chronology relating to the media and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for focused academic projects. Additionally, when graduate and undergraduate students wrote theses or papers on Mormon media issues, they invariably needed to start from scratch in creating chronologies that related to their topics of interest. After the BEA panel presentation, I decided to address the need for a more comprehensive timeline by building upon what I already had accumulated. In the process of consulting various books and articles, it became apparent that a thorough bibliography of academic studies about the Church and the media also was needed. This focus resulted in the compilation and the publication in 2003 in *BYU Studies* of “Mormons and the Media, 1898–2002: A Selected, Annotated, Indexed Bibliography.”¹ Meanwhile, the timeline project also proceeded.

Although the Mormon Media History Timeline (1827–2007) is not yet a polished document and always will be a work in progress, I decided to make it available as is, to save research time for other scholars and perhaps to spark further scholarship in Mormon media studies. After consulting with John W. Welch at BYU Studies and Gideon O. Burton (then on the journal’s arts and sciences editorial review board), I determined that it should be posted on the ScholarsArchive hosted by the Harold B. Lee Library. This would have many advantages over print publication, especially in that the timeline would be searchable, updatable, and available to scholars worldwide.

Content and Criteria for Inclusion

The timeline covers 180 years (1827–2007) of key events relating to the development and use of media by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It begins with the events leading up to the printing of the Book of Mormon on a mechanical handpress and ends with the launch of BYU Television International by satellite in 2007. As with most timelines and chronologies, the emphasis is on firsts, lasts, important events and developments, and major historical figures.

Falling within the category of institutional media history, the timeline focuses on official, Church-sponsored development and use of media. This includes Church-owned print and electronic media and other media products (such as magazines) that were privately owned but Church sanctioned as outlets for the auxiliary organizations (especially in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries).

The timeline emphasizes the adoption of new communications technologies by the Church (such as the telegraph, film, radio, television, and Internet), the introduction of Church-produced media (such as scriptures, Mormon Tabernacle Choir broadcasts, and websites like FamilySearch), and the beginnings and endings of various Church media properties (such as newspapers and Church auxiliary magazines). It focuses on technological and organizational developments rather than on media content (what was written or broadcast *in* the media).

Generally not included in the timeline are member-produced media, whether or not they were officially Church sponsored or Church sanctioned. Local nineteenth-century community newspapers in Utah, for example, are not included.² Also, with rare exception, the timeline does not reflect books written by members of the First Presidency of the Church or the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, nor does it catalog the tracts and audiovisual and media materials that were used by the Church for missionary purposes.³ Also, with rare exception, the timeline does not cover Mormon film history.⁴

Mormon history is sometimes written as a stream of isolated events outside of a broader historical framework. While the timeline maintains its primary focus on Mormon media history, it also includes infrequent references to other significant historical events to provide a wider context for understanding of the Church's adoption and use of the media. The historical entries emphasize the dates when major communications technologies were invented (such as radio and television), key events relating to LDS Church history in the United States, and a few contextual references to key events in American political history (such as the Civil War). Also, the beginning and end of each Church president's administration is included to allow a clear picture of the media developments that took place under that president's leadership.

While some entries relating to early Mormon publications in other countries are included, major events in Church or political history outside of the United States are generally not noted. Selected early Mormon publications in England are included, however, because of their importance as firsts in Mormon media, their significance to the early missionary and "gathering" efforts of the Church, and their role in proclaiming and organizing Church doctrine. References to other selected international

publications are also provided for contextual purposes to illustrate the Church's outreach and growth through media to other countries and cultures at particular times in its history and to acknowledge the presence of the Church press and media involvement outside of the United States. I leave it to the future and to other scholars to do the important work of including missing timeline entries about Mormon media in countries and territories outside the United States.

Church efforts to document and memorialize its own history (such as the celebration of the sesquicentennial in 1980) are included in the timeline because they are examples of Church media outreach and public relations. These are also events that have received extensive coverage by non-Mormon media and therefore provide a reference point for studying these events. For more information about what is included and excluded, go to the timeline website.

Mormon Media Studies: The Example of the Telegraph

Scholars in Mormon studies often turn to historical and contemporary media as their primary sources. They might look, for example, at what was written about Mormon issues in newspapers and periodicals or at what Church leaders said and thought as evidenced by Church publications. While scholars in Mormon media studies might address topics of interest to other subdisciplines, they nevertheless will ask questions from different perspectives—and with different theoretical assumptions.

One example of a media studies perspective relates to the sharp distinction drawn in communication theory between the medium and the message—between a newspaper and its content, or television and its programming. Marshall McLuhan is well known for his statement that “the medium is the message.”⁵ Although this phrase would seem to blur medium and message, among the meanings that can be derived from (or read into) his words is the understanding that communications media themselves, apart from their content and programming, are dynamic and even determinative forces. The medium changes and shapes history and culture; it creates and alters perceptions of reality and truth. Changes in communications technology, according to Neil Postman, are ecological:

One significant change generates total change. . . . A new technology does not add or subtract something. It changes everything. . . . In the year 1500, fifty years after the printing press was invented, we did not have old Europe plus the printing press. We had a different Europe. After television, the United States was not America plus television; television

gave a new coloration to every political campaign, to every home, to every school, to every church, to every industry.⁶

The arrival of the telegraph in Salt Lake City, “the information highway of the 1860s,”⁷ is an example of just such a technological development of monumental importance to the Church, isolated as it was in the desert of the American West. The railroad did not arrive in Utah until 1869, so communications were still traveling into the area even more slowly than by train—primarily by horse—until the arrival of the telegraph. The transcontinental telegraph line reached Salt Lake City from both east and west in October 1861. Its completion “raised the question of the possibility of a Territorial line which would connect the hundred or more isolated Mormon settlements in the Great Basin with Salt Lake City and the ‘outside’ world.”⁸ Following the Civil War in 1865, when materials needed to build such a north-south line in Utah finally became available, Brigham Young wrote to Church members in the outlying areas that the Church needed to build a telegraph system so that “the center should be in position to communicate at any moment with the extremities, however remote; and the extremities be able, with ease and speed to make their wants and circumstances known to the center.”⁹ “We should bring into requisition,” he wrote, “every improvement which our age affords, to facilitate our intercourse and to render our inter-communication more easy.”¹⁰

As a result of his call, the Deseret Telegraph Company was organized, local settlements sprang into action to build assigned segments of the regional telegraph system to connect communities throughout the Mormon territory, and young people received Church assignments to learn telegraphy in Salt Lake City. “On January 15, 1867, the Deseret Telegraph was opened from Salt Lake City to St. George in southern Utah, and in December 1869, northward to Franklin, Idaho.”¹¹

Postman might well have said that the telegraph’s arrival in Utah Territory did not result in Mormondom plus the telegraph. Rather, it had become a new territory and society, changed by the ability to send and receive communications quickly, without dependence on available modes of transportation. Only time will tell if the availability and use of international broadcasting and new media technologies will have for the Church a transformative (ecological) effect, as did the printing press in Europe in the 1500s and the telegraph in the Mormon territory in the 1860s. All past history suggests that it will.

Clearly, knowledge about the introduction, adoption, and use of communications technologies—in addition to the study of media content, effects, audiences, images, and all other matters relating to media—is foundational to understanding societies, cultures, and religions. Mormon

studies will benefit greatly from the inclusion and recognition of the distinct subdiscipline of Mormon media studies under its umbrella.

As an online publication in the ScholarsArchive, the timeline is designed to be updated so new entries can be added and other changes, corrections, and improvements made. Those interested in the topic are invited to participate in the further development of the timeline by suggesting additions, corrections, or expansions of citation references. To do so, please contact Sherry Baker at sherry_baker@byu.edu. Suggested items should conform to the inclusion criteria discussed briefly above and explained more fully on the website, and full citations for the items suggested should be provided. Through a collaborative effort, this document can be improved and enriched, thus making a lasting contribution to the emergence and recognition of the field of Mormon media studies.

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1. Sherry Baker and Daniel Stout, "Mormons and the Media, 1898–2003: A Selected, Annotated, Indexed Bibliography," *BYU Studies* 42, nos. 3 and 4 (2003): 125–81.

2. For studies of these papers, see Baker and Stout, "Mormons and the Media," 125–81.

3. See Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 212–21, about missionary materials and early treatises on Mormonism.

4. See *BYU Studies* 46, no. 2 (2007) special issue on "Mormons and Film."

5. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 7.

6. Neil Postman, *Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology* (New York: Vintage Books 1993), 18.

7. Miriam B. Murphy, "The Telegraph was the Information Highway of the 1860s," *History Blazer* (October 1995), available online from the Utah State Historical Society, History to Go, http://historytogo.utah.gov/utah_chapters/pioneers_and_cowboys/thetelegraphwasinformationhighwayofthe1860s.html, taken from Miriam B. Murphy, "The Telegraph Comes to Utah," *Beehive History* 8 (1982).

8. Leonard J. Arrington, "The Deseret Telegraph—a Church-Owned Public Utility," *Journal of Economic History*, 11, no. 2 (1951): 118.

9. Arrington, "Deseret Telegraph," 122.

10. Brigham Young, "Circular Letter of Instruction," November 9, 1865, as cited in Arrington, "Deseret Telegraph," 122.

11. Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1941), 189–90.

In the Night Yard

For I.

Roots rib the ground where dark grows out
from trees, and I stumble among our own
plantings: birch, filbert, cherry.
It's for silence . . . no, the form
of silence . . . that I turned off house lamps
and stepped out alone into shapes holding
between them a present more tangible
in an absence of light—a quiet that keeps poised,
on the verge of spill, whatever moments mean.

No breeze flutes down limbs and trunks;
a scent of ripening grapes hangs faintly.
When I look at a slant,
I see paler night in the west sky,
like that aura reached as darkness
begins to become light.
Time that rivers swiftly in our lit hours
pools now, still and deepening;
the slowed self seems to float
and sink at once . . .

and you say my name
with that upturn at the end,
not sure to expect I'm here.
Solitude moves instantly
to something fuller . . . who I am linked
to who you are, and though some say
love is a kind of grief, it's only
that absence is carved so exactly
out of presence.

—Dixie L. Partridge

Terryl L. Givens. *People of Paradox:
A History of Mormon Culture.*
Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007

Reviewed by Neal W. Kramer

Despite the recent boom in academic Mormon studies, there has continued to be a gap. History and ancient studies, theology and polemical apologetics, and scriptural interpretation and application have dominated the scene, while relatively little work has been done in the humanistic disciplines. A refreshing and intelligent exception is the work of Professor Terryl L. Givens, literary critic and scholar of religion from the University of Richmond. In *The Viper on the Hearth*, Givens employed the tools of contemporary literary theory to interrogate the production and reception of anti-Mormon literature in nineteenth-century America; in *By the Hand of Mormon*, he explored the Book of Mormon in its rich nineteenth-century religious and literary contexts. Now comes a third book, *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture*. In the best Given-sian fashion, this new book presents us with two impressive explorations. The first is a highly developed and exciting theoretical interpretation of seemingly paradoxical forces at the heart of the restored gospel. The second is an equally impressive interpretation of Mormon high culture in terms of these paradoxes. Givens is the first to attempt so thorough an analysis of Mormon artistic endeavors, and the book admirably fills the gap referred to above. This review will focus on Givens's theoretical matrix for cultural interpretation and the insight the critical paradoxes he identifies brings to the study of Mormon literature.

Cultural criticism has long been an important approach to the study of literature. Cultural critics study the social roles of the arts and of intellectuals, including processes of spiritual, aesthetic, and moral development that lead to the distinctive way of life of a particular people. Givens derives his theoretical understanding of Mormon culture from the careful study and analysis of doctrines and practices that have helped create LDS institutions of high culture and their artistic products: poetry, drama, music, architecture, painting, museums, universities, theaters, journals,

publishing companies, orchestras, choirs, and literary societies, to name a few. By his felicitous and important decision to especially consider the teachings of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, Givens emphasizes the intellectual, spiritual, and social energy vitalizing Mormon society and reminds us of the impact of early revelations and practices on our present culture. From these teachings and practices, Givens identifies four generative paradoxes, conflicts between “authority and radical freedom” (3), “searching and certainty” (22), “the sacred and the banal” (37), and “election and exile” (53). These four paradoxes establish a rich critical framework within which to understand the expansiveness of Mormon culture and evaluate its highest achievements. At the same time, Givens relies on the tradition of the humanities to place the Mormon life of the mind in easily accessible categories: the visual arts, architecture, music and dance, drama, poetry, fiction, and film. Each chapter is a thorough and compact exploration of how paradox informs and enlivens each Mormon art.

Authority and Radical Freedom

Givens’s first paradox bound tightly to Mormonism is the conflict between “authority and radical freedom.” To some, this paradox seems more like a set of options. One may choose either one or the other, but not both. We might think of extreme versions of either option, like fear of “mindless conformity to authority” or absolute “respect for free agency” (16). Givens suggests that preserving the paradox is more important than firmly choosing one alternative over the other, because the tension between the two is productive of high culture. He describes the “resulting collision of views and valuations [as] inevitable” but positive (16). The tension does not separate Mormons into ideological camps so much as it creates a space for creative and imaginative expression. Artists and intellectuals probe the tension and find a richness of belief that can inspire sermons drenched with the call to conformity, novels depicting the happy consequences of obedience, poems exploring individual suffering and conversion, and essays challenging the triviality of thoughtless conformism. Each exploration reveals another perspective on the paradox. Thus, an artist’s critical imagination explores the consequences of the conflict for the community of Saints. The art produced within Mormon culture reveals the weakness of believing one must choose between extremes. Instead, high art evidences Mormonism’s ongoing cultural adaptability and individual Mormons’ capacity to adjust to pressures from within and without the culture and to conform or not conform in utterly trivial ways.

Givens relies on Brigham Young to illustrate how this paradox is inherent in Mormonism. A simple quotation from Brother Brigham illustrates how Saints are not to become extreme conformists and thus mere caricatures of themselves: "I am not a stereotyped Latter-day Saint. . . . Away with stereotyped 'Mormons'!" The paradox in the doctrine allows for "priesthood authority" to direct Mormons "in the use of . . . agency," because the priesthood will not "coerce or preempt it." Such doctrine thunders that "coercion and ignorance alike are antithetical to human autonomy" (17). On the other hand, "the primacy of agency over coercion does not translate into choice without accountability" (19). Authority may be misconstrued as coercive power, but Mormonism rejects such a simplistic view. Mormon culture thrives on the paradox.

Searching and Certainty

Givens describes the second paradox as the conflict between "searching and certainty." From its inception, ongoing searching has been central to Mormonism. The quest for "salvation is for Mormons an endless project, not an event, and is therefore never complete, never fully attained, never a realized state or object of secure possession" (28). Such searching typifies missionary work, genealogy, gospel study, and other regular features of Mormon life. Givens locates the paradigm for searching in Joseph Smith's "insistence that his pronouncements did not always carry prophetic weight," which "meant that the process, the ongoing, dynamic engagement, the exploring, questing, provoking dialectical encounter with tradition, with boundaries, and with normative thinking should not be trammled by or impeded with clerks, scribes, and disciples looking for a final word, interrupting a productive process of reflection, contestation, and creation" (29). For Mormons, the search is the impetus for revelation and inspiration. The unfolding of eternity is stimulated by individual desire to know and discover.

Such religious exploration may suggest an anxious or even radical uncertainty. That is not the case in Mormonism. Claims of certainty provide the framework within which searching is carried out. For example, Mormon testimonies are assertions of certainty about fundamental gospel truths. Joseph Smith states with sincere and certain clarity that he saw a light and heard a voice and he cannot deny it. The Church itself articulates its authority with a certainty that can distress and even provoke believers of other traditions. Mormon scriptures announce with boldness the restored presence of "the only true and living Church on the face of the earth." This bedrock certainty enables the search for a vast eternity of treasures hoped

for and available to those who honestly seek. Again, Givens finds that the paradox “spurs vigorous debates in the Mormon intellectual community and provides fodder for artists who both explore and depict the cultural tensions that result” (33). Givens suggests that the tension itself drives the production of a searching yet certain art, depicting scenes such as the First Vision or exploring the travails of a Latter-day Saint in a sometimes brutal and unforgiving world. At the same time, Mormon artists should know their place. Mormon art will never become a panacea for loss of faith. “The Saints may not look to art, as others have done, with the same desperate hope of finding consolation for a heaven that has failed us” (34). Heaven has not failed. Hence, Mormonism continues to produce “genuinely religious art and intellectual expression” (35) that searches and affirms, adding richness and adventure to the lives of the Saints.

The Sacred and the Banal

Givens’s account of the paradox between the sacred and the banal in Mormon teaching and culture again reveals the strength of his critical methodology. Those familiar with Givens’s earlier discussions of dialogic revelation will recognize its similarity to this paradox of the sacred and the banal. Stated simply, this paradox consists of finding the divine in common, everyday human experience. The core of the paradox is the Mormon belief that human beings are literal spirit children of God and therefore have divine potential. The idea is shockingly optimistic. As Givens puts it, “Mormons ennoble human nature to such a degree that even the most exuberant Renaissance humanists would blanch” (42). The consequence of the paradox for Mormon thought and practice is to emphasize the closeness between God and us by minimizing the distance between the realm of the divine and our own daily existence. While Latter-day Saints believe that God is more likely to be found in a temple than a casino, we still are not averse to believing the spirit world is very close, communication from beyond the veil common, and that the Father and the Son could appear to us as they did the boy prophet. Givens describes a rich and fascinating “culture that sacralizes and exalts the mundane even as it naturalizes and domesticates the sacred” (42).

The immediate consequences of this peculiarly Mormon doctrine for artists and intellectuals are not necessarily obvious. Seeing it through the eyes of Mormon audiences may be more revealing. For example, Latter-day Saints are perfectly comfortable with illustration (sometimes seen as simply popular or mundane) as sacred art. Illustration looks normal and down to earth, which is the way we often think of our religion. We want

to sanctify the day-to-day intimacies of family life: bathing children, tilting the hall floor, reading to a child, cleaning a room. The humorous and silly experiences of dating take on the gravity of the eternal in Mormon romance novels. We want scrubbed children and happy parents as the stars of wholesome comedies that depict normal life as the repository of God's glory.

We Mormons are even confident that our Heavenly Father would feel comfortable at family night, singing Primary songs and sampling the marshmallow crispy treats. He might not even notice that the house is not perfectly tidy. In a word, we want life to be *nice*. As Givens notes, this paradox can be painful to anyone interested in producing high art. It is not entirely uncommon for Mormon artists or intellectuals to "crave . . . a source of mystery and splendor" (50) or a human psychological complexity that fusing the sacred and the banal prevents. For fairly obvious reasons, mysterious and complex art finds a small audience among Mormons. The challenge of serious fiction for the Saints moves us away from the banal into a darkened, fallen world untouched by the sacred. While anxiety hovers over such an artist, his Mormon neighbor finds peace in the family room.

Election and Exile

The final paradox Givens identifies, the conflict between election and the experience of exile, manifests itself in the need for Mormons to assimilate with the larger culture while preserving our uniqueness, our special covenant relationship with God. Latter-day Saints have been and can be driven into exile in a wide variety of ways. For example, recent mischaracterizations of LDS beliefs and practices in the media and anti-Mormon literature are powerful methods of creating a form of otherness that is tantamount to exile. Exiles lose their ability to define themselves and become subject to powerful images and prejudices generated by the dominant culture. Exiles struggle to wrest the power to classify away from entrenched cultural institutions like universities, governments, the press, and so forth. This struggle, a part of the tension between being chosen and being rejected, generates significant cultural energy for Mormons. For artists, the project has included mastering the forms, genres, criticism, and traditional values of the dominant culture. From the earliest days of the Church, as Givens writes, "establishing affinities with the dominant culture was . . . necessary to guarantee the church's survival and ability to serve as a force for good" (57). While "the larger world was still a corrupt Babylon," building Zion also led to the realization that "Joseph's open

eclecticism ('we will claim truth as ours wherever we find it') meant some borrowings were not only allowed, but mandated" (59).

Mormon artists have not been entirely successful borrowers. They are often perceived as participating in discourses of exile rather than of election. As Church members continue to be scorned as the unassimilable "other" by ideological critics of all stripes, it seems inevitable that novelists, poets, painters, composers, and playwrights who critically engage Mormon culture will find themselves exiled, often by their own impulses, to the boundaries of the dominant culture.

Paradox in Literature

The conflict between the world and the Church has been especially pronounced in literature. The four paradoxes provide good insight into the production of Mormon literature, and Givens's exploration of the subject serves as an excellent example of the quality of his critical approach.

Givens identifies a core challenge for LDS literature as an expression of paradox: "It is virtually taken as a truism today that great literature must be born of mental anguish and existential disquiet, a mirror of the spirit's turmoil and the world's fractured condition" (157). In other words, the "spiritual" and "absolute self-assurance" (74) of Mormonism find little room in Western high culture these days. If one chooses the dominant culture as the model of excellence in literature, then excellent Mormon literature, by default, will feature little of the optimistic expansiveness of the Restoration and more of the anxiety of "Humean doubt and Enlightenment rationalism" (157–58).

Mormon poets, writers of short fiction, and novelists have struggled, as did Joseph Smith himself, to find a language of transcendence to capture the character of mortality while not rejecting "the collapse of sacred distance" (28) central to the prophet's revelations. This meant for Joseph the development of a sincere naturalistic discourse in which to capture both the sanctity and the normality of his own story. His use of language has been the standard for the personal essay and the Mormon journal ever since.

Givens traces this language into Mormon poetry as well. Verse was the earliest form of Mormon creative expression. In the Church's early days, it seemed that poetry would be a natural form for the expression of sacred truth. Its elevated diction and emphasis on the figural, a characteristic shared with the King James Version, provided a vehicle for bringing the transcendent down to earth. Joseph's own attempt (his authorship cannot be verified), however, to present "The Vision" (D&C 76) in verse turned out

to be “mediocre” (167). He never tried to write a poem again. Others, however, succeeded, and it soon became apparent that poetry could provide memorable and beautiful expression of restored truths. Givens makes special note of Eliza R. Snow and Parley P. Pratt, whose poems were published without much acceptance to the wider literary public but found great and lasting acceptance among the Saints. This relative failure in the wider culture did not remove Mormons’ awareness that poetry and prophecy shared access to inspiration. Brigham Young said that “Joseph Smith was a poet and poets are not like other men; their gaze is deeper, and reaches the roots of the soul; it is like the searching eyes of angels; they catch the swift thought of God” (157). This claim, later seconded by Orson F. Whitney, reveals a vital and driving force in the history of Mormon poetry. Connecting Joseph to the arts became a primary justification for Mormons to embrace literature.

The novel did not make its appearance in Mormon high culture until later. This, too, occurred in response to changes in English and American high culture. But just as importantly, and perhaps underappreciated by Givens, it was also the process of the Americanization of Mormon culture that became more intense in the second half of the 1880s. As another expression of Givens’s paradoxes, Americanized fiction emerged in the middle of a movement toward “home literature” (173), a homegrown culture built on the foundations of Zion itself. It was a call to protect the uniqueness of Mormonism while exploring the greatness of the Restoration within the generic bounds of the world. B. H. Roberts was an important force in laying out the case for fiction, “the most effectual means of attracting the attention of the general public and instructing them” (175), but it led primarily to didactic fiction. Fiction became another form of sermon, though it slowly developed into an outlet for the beautiful expression of gospel principles and explorations of the consequences of gospel living in the lives of Mormons. It also became a means for Latter-day Saints, via their own authors, to encounter the temptations of the world, to see luminous promises of wealth, prominence, and power, and to reject them. Fictional romance between a Latter-day Saint and an unbeliever in the cosmopolitan cities of Chicago or Boston, resolved by conversion or rejection, became a staple plot.

Givens’s handling of the “Lost Generation” (178) of Mormon fiction is particularly helpful. These often praised writers, including Vardis Fisher, Maurine Whipple, and Virginia Sorensen, used Mormon subject matter in fiction crafted for an American national audience. Their commitment to modernism produced a fiction of genuine complexity, addressing the concerns of individuals who were often in conflict with the larger interests

of the Mormon community. This often meant candid explorations of the challenges of the Mormon experience. To Mormon insiders, however, the novels often read like exposés, including severe critiques of Church founders and an unhealthy focus on the abandoned practice of plural marriage. Today it is easier to see how Mormons were not really prepared educationally or emotionally to interpret and understand such powerful fictional modes, but the aversion to these novels ran deep. Here again, Givens's paradoxes help to reveal both the authors' desire to explore and the Mormon audience's uneasiness with the results. The effort is impressive indeed.

Consequences

The four paradoxes Givens has identified form a credible matrix within which to begin thinking about the production of Mormon culture. They highlight an important and troubling cultural challenge faced by the Church's artists. While the Church defines its doctrines and religious practices, it has no specific inspired standards for art. There is no revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants about writing fiction, painting, or composing music. That obviously creates tension between authority and creativity. But it also means that Mormonism has had to import its art forms from the dominant culture. It should, therefore, come as no surprise that the high Mormon culture Givens analyzes is a subset of European and American culture. Until recently, Mormon art has always been defined by complex transactions between European and American culture and Mormon culture, with artists necessarily having to bring a standard of artistic excellence from elsewhere into the Church; the quality of a particular LDS artist has come to be defined by critics who are the arbiters of the dominant culture.

But that is now beginning to change as critical excellence is found from within; *People of Paradox* is the jumping-off point for a new generation of Mormon cultural studies, highlighted by its theory-driven methodology and thorough coverage. We have previously had no such encyclopedic works of Mormon cultural history available to scholars of Mormon high culture. Earlier literary scholars such as William Mulder, Richard Cracroft, and Eugene England have laid the groundwork for such a work as this, but Givens's many thumbnail explanations of key works by gifted artists across time will be an important starting point for scholars in the future. While there remains an uneasy suspicion among many scholars that Mormon culture is inferior and parochial, the critical standards of canonicity that once locked Mormon literature out of the mainstream are considerably less imposing than they once were and are now notably

less important to cultural studies. In this new environment, Givens's book leaves us with a sense of the heft, consequence, and value of Mormon culture, a culture that can and ought to be studied in terms of the expectations the culture itself has for the life of the mind and the beauties of art. This book ought to be plumbed by any scholar or artist trying to come to terms with and transcend a worthy tradition.

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Terryl L. Givens. *People of Paradox:
A History of Mormon Culture*.
New York: Oxford University Press, 2007

Reviewed by Claudia L. Bushman

Mormonism is rife with paradoxes that raise many questions. How do we keep ourselves unspotted while battling against the world? How can we be equally grateful for the good and the bad things that happen to us?

Latter-day Saints often see themselves as living in an evil universe that must be tempered by a huge store of Mormon optimism. As I like to say, we believe in the Atonement but not in original sin. We celebrate the Resurrection more than the Crucifixion. We look to immortality but look away from death. These contradictory views help us make sense of our suffering; but no one has made as much of them as Terryl L. Givens. In his *People of Paradox: A History of Mormon Culture*, Givens introduces a set of four central paradoxes embedded in Mormonism.

Givens shows Mormons' complex contradictory responses to their faith and culture, which may surprise observers who consider Mormons to be rigid and fanatical in their obedience to rules. In part 1, he sets out a roadmap of LDS cultural formation based on tensions found between doctrines, practices, and culture. In part 2, Givens abandons his oppositional approach to consider the varieties of Mormon cultural expression. He writes chapters on education, architecture, music and dance, theater, literature, and visual arts from the founding of the Church in 1830 to the pioneer West of 1890. Part 3 explores the same categories through to the present day.

Throughout the book, Givens makes little use of the usual historical events. They are mentioned and assumed, but his foremost concern is the Mormons' culture—the water they swim in but are unaware of. Givens takes seriously activities other historians and theologians consider peripheral, such as music, dancing, art, and fiction. Most Latter-day Saints would relegate these aspects to a lesser order than gospel studies. Givens makes them primary. Perhaps his point of view comes from being a student of

literature, which as a discipline focuses more on interpretation than on austere facts. Consequently, he looks at things with fresh eyes and in elegant prose explores their implications. Givens's work is worth reading as much for its eloquence as for its keen insights.

In establishing the first major paradox, Givens sets out the poles of authority and radical freedom by citing Richard Poll's comparison of "Iron Rod Mormons" and "Liahona Mormons." Poll's genius, I believe, was choosing two positive, equally compelling Book of Mormon images as symbols of dichotomy. Iron Rod Mormons cling to the banister in Lehi's dream, always knowing where they are and how they are guided. Liahona Mormons, named for Lehi's compass, are given information but must puzzle out the directions and find their own way (16–17). Givens also points to the War in Heaven as the "first cosmic conflict on record . . . between the principle of agency and the threat of compulsion" (5). He idealizes the freedom Smith stressed, who taught "correct principles" so people could "govern themselves" (8). Givens then compares Joseph's expansion of the prophetic voice and priesthood governance with the authoritarian control of Brigham Young. Young, he notes, needing a loyal group of followers on the frontier, brought all aspects of life under his direction. Givens finds it ironic that the Church organized by Joseph Smith is now "one of the most centralized, hierarchical, authoritarian churches in America" (8). Mormons are thus divided on the issue of freedom versus authority. While some Mormons "will always be disposed to see unquestioning obedience to priesthood counsel as weakness and abdication of moral autonomy, . . . others will see independent-mindedness as a euphemism for the fetishizing of difference and pride" (19). Such tensions, Givens suggests, are most apparent in those engaged in creative and intellectual pursuits.

The second major paradox is between searching and certainty, between the "Endless Quest and Perfect Knowledge" (chapter 2). Givens further divides certainty into faith and knowing. Ours may be the only religion where a procession of very young children will assure the congregation that they "know" the Church is true. While this behavior may be easy for children, it requires the constant labor of study and prayer for adults, or as Givens says, a "ceaseless struggle through which we must engage the universe—and define ourselves morally" (29). Those with doubts may feel obligated to express more surety than they feel. Givens sees hope for creative Mormons here: "It may be in that very space between security born of possessing precious certainties and abject smallness before the magnitude of an almost unquenchable ignorance that Mormonism finds a tension productive of a genuinely religious art and intellectual expression" (35). I must note that while Mormons are willing to pledge their certainty of

knowledge, the list of “things to know” is not definitive—they subscribe to no creeds and gather “true principles” from all sources.

Givens’s third paradox steers between the sacred and the mundane, or, as he entitles chapter 3, between “Everlasting Burnings and Cinder Blocks.” In this paradox, the sacred distance between God and man is collapsed, making it possible for man to rise to a heavenly state. This view of a God who condescends to bring men and women to godhood is memorably stated in Lorenzo Snow’s couplet, “As man now is, God once was. As God now is, man may become” (42). Other Christians deplore what they see as a hubristic human view that eliminates the sacred mystery of God, but Givens makes it clear that this view is not man’s ambition but God’s plan. God wants to elevate his creatures to exaltation. This paradox reflects contrary tendencies in a culture “that sacralizes and exalts the mundane”—the pioneering, the farming, the building—“even as it naturalizes and domesticates the sacred”—the sacrament, the relationship to deity, and the temple ceremonies (42). Joseph Smith’s worldview provides access to the miraculous by doing the ordinary.

Givens’s fourth and final paradox contrasts election and exile in chapter 4, “Peculiar People and Loneliness at the Top.” He compares the Mormons to the Puritans, saying that both claimed exclusivity, but that Puritans lived in a remote wilderness and that the early Mormons lived “in the context of a hostile culture” (53). The Mormons confronted an alien world surrounded by the riches of a host society that offered both temptation and promise. How could they remain pure?

Mormons wanted exclusivity from the time the Christ of the First Vision told Joseph Smith to join none of the churches. Mormons sought to be separate both doctrinally and physically. “The Mormon temple concretizes Mormon exceptionalism,” physically isolating the “spiritual elect in their own domain, while holding the rest of the world at bay, through strictly enforced admission procedures involving worthiness tests” (55). Still, the Mormon sense of uniqueness and exile is counterbalanced with a theology, rituals, and research programs that aspire to universal integration. We want to be part of things at the same time we distance ourselves from them. As Givens says, “After predicating their very existence on the corruption of all other Christian faiths and asserting their unique claim to be its ‘only true’ embodiment, Latter-day Saints are chagrined when they are excluded from the very community of believers that they have just excoriated” (58).

Having explored paradoxes within Mormonism in part 1, Givens sets Mormons’ creative and intellectual expressions into religious and artistic contexts in parts 2 and 3. Besides covering significant people and their

achievements, he supplies the perfect passages and quotations to the topic at hand. In doing so, he illuminates Mormon culture with vivid details: Sarah Kimball, a suffrage leader in Salt Lake City, attended Joseph Smith's School of the Prophets in Nauvoo when she was in her teens; when Joseph Smith got tired of studying Greek and Latin, "he would go and play with the children in their games about the house" to get some exercise (76); Brigham Young sent John Bernhisel to New York City to buy \$5,000 worth of books for the territory's library—it opened in 1852 at "about the same time that Boston's first public library opened, and before Chicago had one of its own" (91); in 1870, a higher percentage of Utah children attended school than did those of New York, Pennsylvania, or Massachusetts; according to the 1880 census, Utah literacy was 95 percent while it was only 87 percent in the nation as a whole (99).

In a time when the major denominations of the nineteenth century "were one in opposing the dance as a wicked sport" (131), Latter-day Saints were establishing a music band and a strong tradition in dance. But the sectarian fervor against music, dance, and other frivolity was difficult for Mormons to abandon at first. As an example of the contraries discussed above, Joseph Smith allowed the mansion house to be used for dances, but was reputed to retire alone to his room as a sign of quiet disapproval. The Church in Kirtland once disfellowshipped twenty-two brothers and sisters "until they [made] satisfaction for uniting with the world in a dance the Thursday previous" (134). Joseph's stance apparently softened in his last years when he authorized the formation of a brass band to be used at dance parties throughout Nauvoo (134–35). Brigham Young was a force that firmly entrenched music and dancing in Mormon society. For example, on February 9, 1846,

by request of Brother B. Young, the band met in the upper room of the Temple; played a few tunes, after which Brother Young arose and said that, as we were about to leave Nauvoo, we had come together, to pass off the evening, and that he thought it no harm to have a little recreation in singing, etc., as long as it is done in righteousness. He then called on the Lord to take charge of the meeting; the brethren and sisters then joined in and danced; during the evening they handed round some of our Nauvoo grape wine, which was excellent. About 3 o'clock they dismissed and all went home.

"Two days later, reported the *Warsaw Signal*, 1,000 Saints were wending their way west across the Mississippi" (130).

In early 1844, a reader wrote to the editor of the Church newspaper to clarify the apparent contradiction, asking whether dancing was approved. The anonymous editor, probably John Taylor, noted that dancing was fine

in the abstract but problematic when practiced. Dancing “leads people into bad company and causes them to keep untimely hours, [and] has a tendency to enervate and weaken the system, and lead to profligate and intemperate habits. And so far as it does this, so far it is injurious to society, and corrupting to the morals of youth” (135). I am so glad to have the question of dancing cleared up.

This book yields many such rewarding historical pearls. Givens continues his cultural exploration to the present, tracing the Church’s rapprochement and distancing from science, the tensions between faithfulness and intellectual striving, and the strains of reconciling Zion and the world. Today we find another seeming paradox: the Church backing away from teachings that would raise doubt or uncertainty and yet moving to a new, open look at the historical record.

Givens explores the arts chronologically with sharp comments and evaluations. He is particularly detailed while analyzing LDS-themed films and literature. He examines three novels published from 1939 to 1942, which received national attention largely due to their literary exploration of human drama created by polygamy. “There is just no getting around the fact that the public’s fascination with Mormonism has been predominantly a prurient obsession with this strange institution” (292). He sees Mormon writers as effective in shaping a Mormon identity with many threads, exploring the ideas, themes, and anxieties of Church members.

But what is in the future? Can Mormon artists find avenues to elaborate a “specifically Mormon theory of the beautiful?” (341). Givens sees promise in exploring human preexistence and in considering our esoteric theology. He thinks that Mormons would do well to move toward the universally human rather than the culturally particular. Mormons should avoid being narrowly provincial. “The tendency toward shallow triumphalism, on the one hand, and facile demonizing, on the other, has plagued more than one people in the process of self-definition,” he says (343). Let us hope that Mormon culture can overcome its limitations and fulfill the artistic promise of the expansive restored gospel.

People of Paradox can be used as a guidebook and should be on the reading list of every student of Mormon culture. I await with interest Givens’s report on our next cultural epoch.

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Donald W. Musser and David L. Paulsen, eds. *Mormonism
in Dialogue with Contemporary Christian Theologies.*

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Reviewed by Jennifer Lane

This volume of academic discussions provides an important new resource to both LDS and non-LDS scholars as well as an educated, nonscholarly audience. It consists of eleven “dialogues,” which include overviews, responses, rejoinders, and replies. Because the various authors share a background in contemporary Christian thought, some of the essays may be initially disorienting for Latter-day Saints without academic theological or philosophical training. On the other hand, Christians and most non-LDS scholars encountering Latter-day Saint belief systems for the first time may also occasionally feel as though they have entered into uncharted territory. This volume is the first to offer navigation of these theological landscapes to all parties. Donald W. Musser begins by giving an excellent overview of twentieth-century Christian thought; his background as professor of religious studies at Stetson University and co-editor of the *New and Enlarged Handbook of Christian Theology* (Abingdon, 2003) makes him an ideal co-editor with David L. Paulsen, Brigham Young University professor of philosophy.

It is precisely in offering an entry into both worlds where this volume succeeds most admirably. The book cannot, of course, offer a definitive statement of “Mormonism.” The voices of the LDS writers give thoughtful but distinctive engagement with the most important strands of mainline or liberal theology. The volume might better express the diversity of these voices if it were entitled *Latter-day Saints in Dialogue with Contemporary Christian Theologies*. The LDS writers all express their understanding of the fundamental doctrines of the Restoration as well as their personal response to contemporary issues of Christian thought; these responses are, however, clearly individual and, while uniformly faithful, cannot be said to

represent “Mormonism” as some kind of static entity. Many other faithful and thoughtful Latter-day Saints will have their own perspective on a number of the issues. In fact, the volume does contain multiple perspectives on a given topic, thus offering a depth and richness to the discussion.

One striking example of these various viewpoints is found in considering the question of theology itself. Does the belief in ongoing revelation and prophecy require that Latter-day Saints avoid the analysis and speculations (the mantic-sophic contrast) of theology? Can LDS thought about religion be described as a systematic theology, or is it more accurate to say that we focus on obedience and practice (orthopraxy) rather than creating a fixed system of doctrines (orthodoxy)? Or do we inevitably “do” theology every time we think about religion? In response to David Tracy’s comments in “A Catholic View of Philosophy: Revelation and Reason,” Jim Siebach, James Faulconer, and Benjamin Huff all offer varying reflections on these questions.

For any of you Latter-day Saints who have wondered what it might be like to do graduate work in theology or religious studies, this volume offers an excellent introduction to the range of thought that has been central to mainline or liberal non-LDS twentieth-century theology. Here is your chance to find clear summaries on the thought of seminal theologians such as Barth, Niebuhr, and Tillich, as well as find discussions of process, liberation, feminist, black, womanist (theology from the perspective of minority women), and myth theology. The book’s scope also extends to more recent trends including theology as hermeneutics and openness theology. While previous publications, such as those initiated by Stephen E. Robinson and Robert L. Millet, have offered dialogues between Latter-day Saints and the Evangelical wing of Protestantism, until this volume there has been nothing that has tried to engage the intersection between Latter-day Saints and mainline or liberal theology. While some of these issues may not find universal appeal, for many people of broad intellectual curiosity there is much that they will find engaging and rewarding.

The title of this volume appropriately reflects the tendency in many cases for somewhat one-sided dialogue. The non-LDS writers’ initial task is to summarize their field of specialty to a general audience, a task that, given their academic experience and training, they are all eminently qualified to accomplish. They are not writing, however, so much “in dialogue with Mormonism” as offering a jumping-off point for discussion. Their summaries are typically presented without any significant reference to the LDS position. This lack is understandable given the dearth of understanding of the LDS position, which this volume is helping to correct. While making the volume less of a two-way dialogue, this format does permit

the theologians to speak in their own voice and not have their approach shaped by external issues or concerns.

Because of this structure, the LDS participants are placed more in a position of respondent. In these responses, they have a chance to travel on intellectual and personal journeys as they interact with the different fields of thought. Part of the richness of this volume is the extent to which each topic and each intellectual interaction has its own flavor and degree of warmth. This very personal interaction involves back-and-forth responses that help to reveal some of the core differences but also provides moving resonances between those in dialogue.

More explicit information on the history of these exchanges would have helped to explain the unevenness in some of these dialogues. In some instances, the participants had passed away before the publication of *Mormonism in Dialogue*, as is the case for Eugene England and Robert McAfee Brown. In the introduction, Martin E. Marty suggests that the volume is the product of a conference held in the 1990s, but David Paulsen has clarified elsewhere that while the structure of the book is dialogical, there was no actual face-to-face conference with these participants. Instead, as the Richard L. Evans Chair for Christian Understanding at Brigham Young University, he invited the non-LDS scholars to come and give several presentations on the BYU campus; the responses to their presentations were then written later. More background on the initial stages of bringing these participants to BYU and the decade-long process of turning this into a book would have helped both to highlight the groundbreaking role of Paulsen's effort in interfaith understanding and to clarify the development of this dialogue in the intervening years.

Examples of resonance and shared concern among the contributors to the book abound. Some striking examples are found in David Ray Griffin and James McLaughlin's discussion of process theology, in which they share a sense of the primacy of human agency and explore the implications of rejecting *creatio ex nihilo*. In this exchange, Latter-day Saints have the chance to fine-tune their thinking about what is implied in their beliefs about God's power and the role of human agency. Clark H. Pinnock and David L. Paulsen's discussion of openness theology is another example of respectful theological resonance and distinction. Essentially agreeing on their personal understanding of God's foreknowledge, they discuss other points of theological difference, including the issue of whether Latter-day Saints can be considered social trinitarians (the idea that the persons of the Trinity are united in a way other than the ontological unity found in classical trinitarian thought). The social and political implications of theology and its role in the public sphere are likewise amicably explored in Dennis P. McCann and Richard Sherlock's discussion of the theology of

Reinhold Niebuhr. Other examples of resonance are found in expressions of sympathy to general concerns and values, as is seen in Eugene England's response to black theology, Valerie M. Hudson's response to womanist theology, and Warner Woodworth's response to liberation theology.

While these essays represent a focus on our shared ideals, other essays highlight intrinsic tension as they expose fundamentally different premises and conclusions. Not surprisingly, the fundamental LDS beliefs about an embodied God, human beings as literal spirit children of God, and the nature of the Godhead, wind their way through many of these discussions. LDS divergence is most obvious in relation to thinkers like Karl Barth, but as Roger R. Keller observes, "common emphasis on the Savior binds the two thought systems together" (56). In a few cases, the positions presented by these contemporary Christian theologians are so influenced by modernism and scientific naturalism that they seem to redefine traditional categories of Christianity or even theism in general. This is Truman G. Madsen's evaluation of the theology of Paul Tillich, describing it as a naturalism "presented in biblical vocabulary with an existential swerve" (154).

The theological tension between Camille S. Williams and Rosemary Radford Ruether takes a somewhat feisty tone over the conclusions of feminist theologians, who see Christian tradition and their traditional understanding of the family as wrong and oppressive. The feeling of deep personal engagement comes through in all the essays of this volume, but in this case, the conviction of Williams and Ruether heightens the conflict. Their clash is, understandably, sometimes personal because it turns on the value and meaning of the lives women live today and throughout history. However, I think that overall there is always more light than heat, and throughout the volume there is surprisingly often a great deal of congenial warmth.

This volume offers an important chance to grapple with assumptions about reality and worldviews that are different than our own. While conducted on an academic level, the discussions and debates are clearly outlined and offer Latter-day Saints the chance to wrestle with some of the key intellectual trends of the twentieth century. Those of other faiths can also, in this helpful volume, work their way through both important similarities and profound differences with the faith of Latter-day Saints.

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Donald W. Musser and David L. Paulsen, eds. *Mormonism
in Dialogue with Contemporary Christian Theologies.*

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Reviewed by Douglas J. Davies

Martin E. Marty opens his brief foreword to this extensive volume with the question “Why bother?” Why bother writing a book comparing conventional Christian doctrines with Latter-day Saint beliefs when “those who are curious about religion . . . are likely to be busy readers, who have to budget the time” they can devote to a volume like this? (vii). One potential answer is that Latter-day Saint scholars, having studied Christian theology at “Harvard or other graduate schools” while their colleagues in turn know little about Mormon theology, are in a certain kind of “responsive-defensive mode” (ix); hence, a book comprised of dialogues comes naturally.

This project originated when David Paulsen was appointed to hold the Richard L. Evans Chair of Religious Understanding at Brigham Young University (1994–98), a position set aside for “increasing mutual understanding . . . between Latter-day Saints and other Christians” (xi). Likewise, the preface clearly sets the aim of the book as being “to foster conversations between Latter-day Saints and others in the Christian world” (xiii). What might appear to traditional Christians as a “responsive-defensive” act by Latter-day Saints could, however, just as easily be viewed as a proselytizing move; holders of the Evans Chair could be seen as merely intellectual missionaries. It is far more important in my opinion, however, to think of people like David Paulsen as individuals whose native faith, lifelong reflection, and sense of charity prompt them to “foster conversations” with others who share similar interests in the nature of life and God and the philosophical theology of religion but who differ on the radical issue of Joseph Smith as a prophet of a restored religion.

So, why bother with this book, especially if one is not LDS? Some academics will do so because they are invited to participate by LDS peers, some apologists will because they wish to convert Mormons, and others will because Mormonism stands in sharp contrast on the social profile

of religious presences, especially in the United States. In terms of both theology and religious studies, another valuable reason for “bothering” with this lengthy book is that it presents an example of Christianity that is thinking about itself. Theologies should try to exemplify self-reflection through the preferred thought-forms of particular times and places as people seek understanding of God, the world, and human existence. As is the case with this book, human curiosity and self-reflection are often fostered through mutual discussion. This is to be applauded, especially given the motives of power and status that often drive human identity. Many, even in these postmodern times, still pursue a sense of truth, as did young Joseph Smith, without whom this volume would not exist. Taking Mormonism as one movement within Christianity, we find on a theological level what LDS missionaries often find on a street level, namely, the need of using existing Christian knowledge as a basis for explaining Mormonism’s own rationale and *raison d’être*. Christianity is an immensely complex tradition whose theological debates enable it to “come to itself” over time, though sometimes one message predominates and shouts down others. But in this book, as the non-LDS contributor Clark H. Pinnock puts it, “Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are finding a voice” (490).

Each of the book’s ten major chapters provides “a dialogue” on a single theologian or tradition within the standard syllabus of Christian theology. An extensive traditional Christian account is followed by a Latter-day Saint response; sometimes there are further rejoinders. Acting almost as monograph essays, many of the opening accounts serve as valuable introductions to their topics. Critically speaking, these accounts would be better served by a more thorough index (such topics as hell and Satan are missing) and by a unified description of contributors.

Donald K. McKim and Roger R. Keller discuss the theology of Karl Barth; Dennis P. McCann and Richard Sherlock discuss the theology of Reinhold Niebuhr; and Joseph L. Price and Truman G. Madsen discuss the theology of Paul Tillich. Thematic chapters deal with process (David Ray Griffin and James McLachlan), liberation (Robert McAfee Brown and Warner Woodforth), feminist (Rosemary Radford Reuther and Camille Williams), womanist (Dwight N. Hopkins with Linda E. Thomas and Valerie M. Hudson with Alma Don Sorensen), and black theologies (Dwight N. Hopkins and Eugene England). Then follows myth theology (Gary Dorrien, Kent E. Robson, James E. Faulconer and D. Gregory Sapp) and theology as hermeneutics (David Tracy, James E. Siebach, James L. Faulconer, and Benjamin Huff). A final chapter by Clark H. Pinnock and David Paulsen deals with openness theology. Given Mormonism’s origins, it is understandable that Protestant thought predominates within the

opening accounts, with exceptions including parts of David Tracy's highly valuable contribution (448–62).

I found Gary Dorrien's exposition of Langdon Gilkey's "Myth-Creative Liberal Theology" among the most interesting in the book for two reasons. First, the chapter demonstrates the book's prime methodological shortcoming by outlining a non-LDS theology with practically no reference to LDS thought, followed by an exclusively LDS response, then a rejoinder by Dorrien, followed by another response, rejoinder, and reply. This dialectical exchange may be inevitable when relatively few Christian thinkers have a natural interest in Mormonism, and Mormons often know little about twentieth-century Christian theologies. Perhaps a virtue of this book will be to prompt natural interest on all sides rather than apologetic or invited interest, which will lead to informed people talking together about an issue rather than simply talking about their own beliefs or theological methods.

Second, and far more importantly, this chapter deals with a question relevant to all theological traditions, namely, are doctrines myths? Are theological formulations simply creative outgrowths of the human condition, including the experience of what they call God, or is there something akin to a revelation from deity to humanity in them? Doubtless, this question relates to how faith is conceived within different traditions as well as to issues of dogma and authority. The question of myth is, perhaps, part of "the difficulty of being religious" as Faulconer's response intimates, though his own assumption that "secularism washes everything in gray" (435) does not show the greatest appreciation of some secularists nor does it acknowledge that sometimes within the theological arena the simple assertion of dogma prevails. Certainly, in relation to doctrine and myth, it would have been valuable to see the LDS notion of a plan of salvation (not cited in the index) explored in relation to how other theological traditions and their churches rationalize their belief and basis for authority.

Indeed, the confessional nature of theological methods is rather underplayed in this book and raises profound issues of how, for example, theology and religion are taught within the United States in public and private universities. For some readers, there may be an air of unreality about this book—an air not unfamiliar in many Christian theologies and systematic philosophies—caused by a perceptible gap between belief and ethical-ritual practice. Keller's clear but brief comments on temple rites (49–51) and Tracy's appeal for a link between theology and spirituality (461) are notable exceptions. Perhaps this might prompt a companion volume, much needed in Mormon studies, in which traditional Christians and Mormons are allowed to engage in dialogue with each other about

their rites. LDS authors need to discover how most effectively to treat the rites that relate to their religious experience and its allied beliefs, and share these—as best they may—with other Christians, who in turn need to do the same. In this regard, Keller’s reminder of the vital interplay of orthopraxy and orthodoxy (55) in daily living is valuable and needs developing, especially in light of LDS temples, which stand as a prime symbolic expression of Joseph Smith’s theological rethinking of Christianity. Certainly, then, this book is worth “bothering about.” However, it may not be suitable for sustained reading, which prompts a final question as to whether the LDS responses to the distinctive thought-worlds portrayed here are too monochromatic in nature. Still, *Mormonism in Dialogue with Contemporary Christian Theologies* stands as an excellent resource for referencing and teaching.

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Blake T. Ostler. Exploring Mormon Thought.
The Attributes of God.

Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2001

Blake T. Ostler. Exploring Mormon Thought.
The Problems of Theism and the Love of God.

Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2006

Reviewed by James McLachlan

In the foreword to the book *Mormonism in Dialogue with Contemporary Christian Theologies*,¹ Martin Marty playfully chides the Latter-day Saint contributors to the book who say that Latter-day Saints do not really have a theology and then go on to elaborate on their theology. Of course, there is truth to both sides of the theology question. On one side, Latter-day Saints, like Buddhists, Jews, and Moslems are, as a whole, less concerned with theology than with practice. Because Latter-day Saints do not have formal seminaries, do not train professional theologians, and have a lay priesthood, they tend to not be obsessed with theology. On the other side, Latter-day Saints employ theology whenever they reflect on the meaning of the revelations and doctrine. A minor classic in the field, Sterling M. McMurrin's *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion*,² points to the problem that Latter-day Saints want to avoid in approaching theology, namely, the idea that there are definitive theological foundations to all religious practice. This is just not a very Mormon way of looking at religion. (From a religious studies point of view, it does not really work for any tradition.)

Of course, we can easily imagine numerous theologies that can be spun through reflection on the revelations that make up the Restoration. The problem comes when we mistake our reflections and interpretations for the revelations. This would be like theologizing about my beloved and then falling in love not with her but with my idea of her. This, of course, does not mean that we should not reflect on our faith or our love; we just need to remember what we are doing.

Approached properly, our reflections can illuminate our faith, and recently there has been a swelling of activity in Mormon theology and philosophy. Oxford University Press has published Terryl Givens's *The Viper*

on the Hearth: Mormons, Myths, and the Construction of Heresy (1997) and *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (2002).³ The 2005 celebration of Joseph Smith's bicentenary at the Library of Congress included papers examining Smith's impact on religious thought.⁴ In 2003, the conference "God, Humanity, and Revelation: Perspectives from Mormon Philosophy and History" was organized by Kenneth West and held at Yale University, and the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology was formed at the meeting. In 2007, Mercer University Press published *Mormonism in Dialogue with Contemporary Christian Theologies*, a collection of essays edited by David L. Paulsen and Donald W. Musser.

One tremendous moment in this rebirth of Mormon philosophical and theological reflection has been the publication of the first two volumes of Blake T. Ostler's *Exploring Mormon Thought*. In line with the LDS lay approach to religion, Ostler is not a professional academic, but a Salt Lake City attorney who studies and writes philosophy at night. In his preface to the first volume, *The Attributes of God*, Ostler explains that the books began as notes for his own use; only later did he decide to attempt to clarify "the Mormon concept of God for responsible theologians, philosophers and professionals outside the Mormon religion" (1:xi). Both of these volumes are written in the analytic philosophical tradition, and a recently published third volume, *Of God and Gods*,⁵ is written from a theistic existential point of view.

The project aims at two audiences. The Mormon audience would seem obvious, but much of the first volume is highly technical and there are few Mormon analytic philosophers; the average reader will get bogged down in many of the arguments that assume familiarity with the work of analytic philosophers of religion in the Anglo-American tradition. Still, there is plenty in both volumes that is accessible to the lay reader. Part of the book's major import is that it serves as an LDS response to some of the recent overtures by evangelical critics of Mormonism. An anthology edited by Francis Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen, *The New Mormon Challenge*,⁶ includes an array of quite competent Anglo-American evangelical philosophers of religion and is an improvement on earlier works critiquing LDS theism, but it is hardly irenic in character. Ostler goes a long way in providing a response to what might be called their "New Evangelical Challenge."

For example, in chapter 3 of volume 2, "The Relations of Moral Obligation and God in LDS Thought," Ostler accomplishes two tasks. He answers some of the critics of Mormon theism as a foundation for ethics (particularly from LDS critic Francis J. Beckwith) and outlines an LDS theory of

ethics based on an LDS conception of God. Critics of Mormon theism have argued that traditional Christian theism can better explain the ground of ethics because it associates God with *being* whereas Mormon theism associates God with *becoming*. The idea here is that a God who is becoming is finite, and, though not responsible for the evils of the world, he cannot provide the unchanging basis that is required for ethics. Ostler thinks that such views are shortsighted with respect to the Mormon view of the relation between ethics and God: “The revelations of the Restoration point to a profound and thoroughly Christian view of ethical obligation that is not available to creedal Christians” (2:78). Many Christians have accepted a divine command theory in which whatever God commands is good. The difficulty with this position is at least two-fold: metaphysically, God could have created a universe like the one described by the original “sadistic” author Marquis de Sade in *120 Days of Sodom*, and the types of torture described would have been good, dependent on the divine will. Practically, the problem is determining what the divine will might be. Self-proclaimed prophets like the Lafferty brothers have claimed murder was commanded by God. Francis J. Beckwith rejects divine command theory and sees the moral law as intrinsic with God’s nature. This idea might be seen as an improvement over command theory, but Ostler argues that Beckwith’s position leads to the view that God must obey the moral law, even if it is ulterior to God, in order for God to achieve divine status; God is not the source of the moral law but subject to it.

In traditional theism, all of God’s commands are good because they are issued by a perfect being, who is the source of all goodness. But, asserts Ostler, if God’s nature is logically prior to God’s will, then God is stuck with whatever his nature happens to dictate, and in this sense, moral values are arbitrary. Given his assumptions about God’s nature, Beckwith’s position says that the moral law cannot be the result of a personal mind, because the moral law is prior to any thought or rational input on God’s part. Ostler argues that “if God is perfectly good by nature rather than by choice, then God is an amoral being” (2:86); God is not morally good, because he is not subject to any moral obligation. If so, then it follows that God is not morally praiseworthy, because God does not have the ability *not* to do good. It also follows that God cannot be tempted.

Ivan Karamazov in Fyodor Dostoevsky’s parable of the Grand Inquisitor claims if Jesus, a God, were not tempted by the three temptations, not only must we ask how we could praise him for something that he did not have to overcome, but we must also ask how he could expect us to resist any such temptation. Ostler does not deny the logical possibility that God could do evil, but he does deny “that the logical possibility of God’s doing

something evil is a reason for failing to trust or have faith in God” (2:87). In addition, he claims that without the ability to do wrong, God cannot be genuinely trusted in the same way we trust our most intimate friends or loved ones. If we were to think that they were faithful merely because they logically and necessarily could not be otherwise, their actions would seem more automatic than personal. If our friend were an immaterial spirit who could not be unfaithful, then our faith in him or her would be based on logical meanings and usage of terms, not on trust.

Ostler then moves to outline an LDS theory of ethics, which begins with Joseph Smith’s teaching that our relationship with God gives us the opportunity to advance in knowledge, and that God has instituted laws that the weakest of us might be exalted with him. Ostler states that the “most natural view . . . grounds moral obligation in the eternal nature of uncreated realities.” Moral laws are thus communal and “define the conditions that are necessary for the growth and progress” of the individual and the community (2:110). Good is whatever leads us to greater love and unity in interpersonal relationships. Personal growth is the increased capacity to love and be loved. Evil is what destroys a relationship—it is alienation.

In chapter 4 of volume 1, “Maximal Divine Power,” Ostler discusses such topics as the Book of Mormon contention that if God’s mercy were to rob justice it would be a form of coercion and “God would cease to be God” (Alma 42:25). Ostler appeals to B. H. Roberts’s generic idea of God from *The Mormon Doctrine of Deity*,⁷ saying that if “God” is seen as a title, it is at least logically possible that a person called God could cease to be God, “though the person may continue to exist” (1:109). He continues: “We have faith in the Father’s goodness not because it is logically impossible for him to do anything wrong, but because of the excellence and fullness of his character” (1:110). In other words, there is not a metaphysical guarantee of God’s goodness, but God has chosen and continues to choose righteousness and noncoercion.

This rich work far exceeds anything that I can say in a short review. While parts of it are quite difficult, several chapters and sections in chapters will reward any educated reader with a systematic attempt to provide a reasoned account of LDS theism. In volume 1, for example, the first three chapters—“The Meaning of ‘God’ in Mormon Thought,” “The Apostasy and Concepts of Perfection,” and “The Restoration and Systematic Theologies”—are all quite accessible and provide an overview of what Ostler will be doing in the book. Chapter 2 contrasts process philosophy’s dynamic conception of God’s perfection with the absolutist notions of traditional theism. Like the process philosophers Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne, Ostler sees traditional theism, with

its impassible, changeless God, as a Greek invasion of the more personal Hebraic ideas of the divine being. I found the summaries of the thought of Joseph Smith, Orson and Parley P. Pratt, John A. Widtsoe, and B. H. Roberts in chapter 3 especially helpful. Ostler also discusses what he labels as Bruce R. McConkie's "neo-absolutist Mormonism" and includes a nice summary comparison of what he calls a "Dynamic Perfection" conception of God, held by Widtsoe and Roberts, and a "Static Perfection" conception, held by Pratt and McConkie (1:99–100). From these three chapters, the concluding two sections of chapter 13, and all of chapter 14—"A Mormon Christology," which is a very original interpretation of the meaning of Christ in LDS theology—a reader will get a nice idea of Mormon theism and Christology. If a significant number of people were to read at least this much, gospel doctrine class discussions and late-night Mormon debates about the meaning of the Apostasy, God, the Atonement, freedom, and divine foreknowledge would rise to a new level.

Ostler discusses, critiques, and offers Mormon alternatives to various interpretations of the traditional attributes of God. This can be pretty tough reading, but I would advise the reader to persevere, even if he or she skims through the fine logical distinctions, because each chapter has its own particular delights. Chapter 5 in volume 1, "Models of Divine Knowledge," discusses providence and God's foreknowledge. Like process theologians, Ostler takes the position that God is omniscient insofar as God has perfect knowledge of past and present. However, God may know all future possibilities but not which possibilities will be actualized (1:117, 152–53). To think differently is to reduce time to space; instead, the future is open. This discussion continues in volume 1 chapter 6, "The Incompatibility of Free Will and Infallible Foreknowledge," where Ostler considers the consequences of this concept of foreknowledge for both human and divine freedom. "Simple foreknowledge thus has the strange consequence of binding God to a determinate future before he can providentially get involved. It follows immediately that God cannot plan or deliberate about the future—or even his own future acts" (1:146). Ostler notes that based on D&C 130:6–7, many Mormons interpret God's knowledge as an eternal present as if time were space and God sees the whole as you or I would look at a painting. But this is inconsistent with verses 4–5, which talk about God's time. Time is creative; it is new at each moment. Ostler proposes that it makes more sense to say that God's time can be measured from God's perspective than that he exists in an eternal now (1:151).

The final two chapters of volume 1 and chapters 6, 7, and 12 of volume 2 are very important. In "The Problems of Conventional Christology," "A Mormon Christology," "Soteriology in LDS Thought," "The Compassion

Theory of Atonement,” and “God the Eternal Father,” Ostler develops a theory of atonement and Christology that is consistent with the Latter-day Saint belief in freedom and noncoercion. Ostler does an admirable job here, opting for a largely kenotic interpretation of Christ. He rejects all economic transaction theories, which really include all the main theories of atonement provided in the classical tradition. He seeks to base his compassion theory on Matthew 25, 2 Nephi 9, and especially the “mighty change of heart” in Alma 5. The mighty change of heart is becoming like Christ in feeling compassion for the pain of others (2:216–20). True deliverance from sin is not merely escape from penalty but deliverance into active righteousness and fellowship with our Father in Heaven. This is a powerful way of reading the LDS doctrine of atonement, and these chapters are precisely what should spawn the greatest discussion in LDS circles.

Finally, Ostler opposes Roberts’s and Widtsoe’s reading of the King Follet Discourse. His position is similar to that of some of the nineteenth-century Romantics, Cambridge Platonists, and speculative theists who maintained God’s and the Godhead’s uniqueness and difference from human beings while affirming a strong notion of deification. In Ostler’s view, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are and always will remain divine, and they are different from us in that respect. I do not agree with a good deal of Ostler’s vision here. I especially find his justification for this reading of the King Follet Discourse strained, but this is still a daring proposal that presents a new “Mormon challenge” to those who read the King Follet Discourse and the LDS ideal of deification following Roberts and Widtsoe.

I hope that Ostler’s work finds a wide audience within the Church. Anyone who thinks seriously about the meaning of LDS doctrine should read it. It is a book that will take some time to unpack and some time for its influence to be felt. My own training is far from analytic philosophy of religion, but I will return again and again to these volumes when I want to think about Mormon views on key theological issues. Even when I disagree with Ostler’s explanations of LDS doctrine, I have never read them discussed with such theological subtlety and depth.

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4. John W. Welch, ed., *The Worlds of Joseph Smith: A Bicentennial Conference at the Library of Congress* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2006). Available at byustudies.byu.edu.
5. Blake T. Ostler, *Of God and Gods*, Exploring Mormon Thought (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2008).
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7. B. H. Roberts, *The Mormon Doctrine of Deity: The Roberts-Wan Der Donckt Discussion, to Which Is Added a Discourse, Jesus Christ, the Revelation of God: Also a Collection of Authoritative Mormon Utterances on the Being and Nature of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1903).

William J. Hamblin and David Rolph Seely.
Solomon's Temple: Myth and History.

London: Thames and Hudson, 2007

Reviewed by Daniel B. McKinlay

This book is a compelling survey of the impact of Solomon's Temple from the standpoint of its construction, symbolism, and legacy throughout the centuries, offering highlights of interesting information throughout its five chapters. Printed by a respected publisher in England, *Solomon's Temple: Myth and History* is one of an increasing number of books by Brigham Young University professors that have been published internationally. To an extent, I can see how the LDS interests of professors William J. Hamblin (history) and David Rolph Seely (ancient scripture) informed the decisions of what to include and how to express the concepts in the book. At the same time, I can see how the book might stimulate the fascination of non-LDS readers as well. It is clear that the authors read widely in preparation for writing the book. The endnotes are exclusively devoted to reference material, both primary and secondary; the authors did not choose to add content material within the notes. For each chapter, they provide a selected bibliography of useful resources for those interested readers who desire to study the material in further detail.

One of the enjoyable aspects of the book is a rich display of full-color photographs and artwork. Michael Lyon, who has illustrated a number of projects for the Neal A. Maxwell Institute at BYU, prepared some of the sketches especially for the book. Lyon also assisted in locating many of the art pieces included.

The first chapter deals with the concept of ancient temples in general, with descriptions of features that characterized them. Hamblin and Seely give vital material about Solomon's Temple and its predecessor, the tabernacle, and then compare those structures to other temples throughout antiquity. They show how the Israelite buildings compare to similar structures in Egypt and the Mesopotamian area. The authors note that the original temple was destroyed during the Babylonian captivity and then rebuilt as the Second Temple, or Zerubbabel's Temple (41), after the

Exile; this temple in turn fell into ruin and was rebuilt by Herod, and it was finally destroyed by Titus in AD 70.

Chapter 2 explains how Solomon's Temple with its various themes was expressed in post-Old Testament Judaism. The temple was still sacred to pious Jews, and they came to grips with its loss in a variety of ways, such as allegorizing the temple in rabbinic writings or incorporating some of its features into worship at the synagogue.

In chapter 3, the authors report the ways early Christians dealt with the loss of the temple. Many of them felt that with the rending of the veil at the time of the Crucifixion or the destruction of the temple a generation later, the physical structure became obsolete. It was assumed by some that Christ's Atonement fulfilled the typology of the temple and it was no longer needed. Therefore, some of the Church Fathers spiritualized the temple, emphasizing the Church, or the body of Christ, as a kind of temple.

Chapter 4 explains the entry of Islam into the site of Herod's destroyed temple. Muslim history tells us that Muhammad had a very sacred experience near the temple site—he was carried up to the heavens near the traditional site where Abraham almost offered his son as a sacrifice. To commemorate the holiness of the event, Muslims erected the imposing and beautiful Dome of the Rock. Historically, Muslims have shared with Jews and Christians the view that Solomon's Temple was a sacred edifice.

In chapter 5, the authors point out many trajectories stemming from Solomon's Temple that have developed from late antiquity to the present time. A number of those spin-offs are enshrouded in myth. They include the activities of the Crusades as well as the Templars and Freemasons. As one might expect from two LDS authors, Hamblin and Seely express the view that our modern temples contain the restoration of rites and beliefs that were characteristic of the tabernacle and temple. They explain the LDS viewpoint skillfully, and they appropriately include beautiful photographs of the Nauvoo and Salt Lake Temples.

Within the five chapters are a great many observations and explanations that have engaged my interest. I note some of them here so that LDS readers may catch a glimpse of the sundry insights that will likewise be of interest to them:

1. The authors emphasize the sacred and esoteric nature of temples as understood by the ancients (175–80).
2. They note the significance of creation and cosmos at the temple sites. Temples were aligned with the sun, moon, and stars, and the space within temples was considered the realm of the gods (11).
3. Temples had real or artificial gardens that represented the archetypal garden at creation (12).

4. The brazen sea in the tabernacle and temple represent the water the Lord subdued at the time of creation (14).

5. There was no temple (in the sense of a physical structure) in the Garden of Eden, nor will there be one in the celestial New Jerusalem, since the presence of God was already or will be there (14–15). Similarly, there is no temple in heavenly Jerusalem because the whole city is a holy of holies (97). Some of the pseudepigrapha describe ascents of biblical worthies to the heavenly temple (51).

6. Due to the perception that the priesthood had been corrupted in the Jerusalem Temple, the Essenes considered themselves to be the true temple; as such, they anticipated the Christian view that they as a community were the Lord's temple (55). Along that line, some early Christians believed that their community was the successor to the earthly temple "made with hands" (99). The Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria also spiritualized the meaning of the temple (57–60).

7. When Jesus told the moneychangers that his "house shall be called a house of prayer," he was quoting Jeremiah, who spoke prior to the destruction of Solomon's Temple at the time of the Babylonian captivity. "Jesus' reference to Jeremiah was thus understood as an ominous foreshadowing of the destruction of the Temple." Such a setting for Jeremiah's oracle may have exasperated the hostility of some of Jesus' contemporaries (91).

8. The temple was the model of Jesus' ministry and Atonement (98).

9. Some Christians made pilgrimages to the Muslim Dome of the Rock, since they saw it as a temple (101–3). Affording the Ka'ba the highest level of sacredness, Muslims nevertheless hold the Temple of Solomon in high regard (131–40). For some Muslims, Solomon is regarded as the prototypical Sufi mystic (154–59).

10. Themes from Solomon's Temple were carried over into the New World during the period of European exploration (174–75).

11. Freemasonry is enshrouded in much legendary speculation concerning temples; there are competing myths that trace its origins, some of which claim to go back to the Temple of Solomon (182–86). Similarly, there is much confusing Templar mythology in connection to Solomon's Temple (187–90).

12. There are still some elements in Judaism and evangelical Protestantism that anticipate the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, while many Jews and Christians see no need for rebuilding. Because Muslims hold the Dome of the Rock to be sacred, as well as the temple wall that still stands, any attempt to reconstruct the temple has volatile potentialities (197–203).

I feel that the authors were successful in accomplishing their goal of giving the interested reader an overview of Solomon's Temple and the lasting effect it has had throughout much of subsequent history. The book is ideal for those who seek an introduction to a study of Solomon's Temple or who want to understand how many historical phenomena and traditions are rooted in this temple. This book deserves to be in the libraries of many Latter-day Saints.

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Margaret Barker.
Temple Themes in Christian Worship.
London: T&T Clark International, 2008

Reviewed by Don Norton

The thesis of Margaret Barker's book *Temple Themes in Christian Worship* is simple and straightforward: "Christian worship was modelled on temple worship" (16).

Three prior theses, amply developed by Barker in her earlier books, underlie this thesis. First, the second temple, begun about 535 BCE by the Jews returning from Babylon, was in many ways a false temple. In *Temple Theology*, Barker explains that despite the reforms of Josiah—or perhaps *because* of "Josiah's purge"—the "impure" second temple lacked the essential artifacts and corresponding worship patterns of Moses' Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple. The theology of Solomon's Temple was preempted by those whom Barker calls "Deuteronomists," whose temple worship and theology were based on the Deuteronomic law and not on the original temple.¹ That is why a number of Jewish groups, questioning the temple worship of the time, fled from Jerusalem.

Second, the early Christians restored the true temple theology. How else, asks John McDade SJ in the foreword to *Temple Theology*, could the early Christian "theology and mysticism of the Jerusalem temple" emerge "so clearly, so rapidly and with such a high degree of definition"?²

Third, despite efforts by Jewish and Christian editors and canonizers to suppress temple theology, references and allusions related to the myths and rituals of the "old theology," as Barker labels it, can still be identified in the "coded" language of both the Old and New Testaments—if one knows what to look for. For example, the Psalms are temple hymns; the writings of Enoch (held in high esteem by the Qumran community and early Christians) are explicit in temple theology;³ parts of the Qumran and the

Nag Hammadi libraries are full of allusions to temple theology; and the Book of Revelation is essentially a temple text.

Although we are told in Acts 2:46 that the early Christians continued “daily with one accord in the temple,” the details of those activities are nowhere made explicit in the gospels or other New Testament writings. There is much evidence, however, especially in the writings of John and Paul, that there existed among the early Christians a public and a private doctrine and pattern of worship, the latter centered in the temple.⁴

The key phrase, and the main point of Barker’s many books, is thus *knowing what to look for*. The newly discovered Jewish Qumran texts (1947+) as well as the Nag Hammadi Christian Library (1945) have led to a major reassessment of both traditional Judaism and early Christianity, and they point to a need to revise the meaning and significance of previously known texts. The blandness of many modern translations of the Bible has also been a serious hindrance to accessing authentic Bible imagery: “A diluted ‘instant’ Christianity has been offered as junk food for the mass market,”⁵ and worship practices in most Christian religions have over time been allegorized and reinterpreted. Though we have nowhere an explicit description of what was actually done in the temples, we do know the context and significance of temple theology, which centers on the theme “the Lord in the midst” (3), a theme that recurs in the Old Testament and also in the New. In fact, Barker objects to the term *new* in reference to the New Testament corpus; what happened in the early Christian church was but an extension of the authentic ancient *eternal* or *everlasting covenant* (phrases Barker uses often in her writings), “set in the holy of holies” (3).

Barker draws extensively from biblical apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, writings that were held in high esteem by devout groups of Jews and Christians. These writings often give hints, even make explicit reference, to the true temple tradition. The writings of early Christian church fathers and Christian clergy of the first five centuries CE are also useful, as well as theology and practices preserved to an extent even today in the Eastern Christian churches. A twelve-page annotated bibliography lists these sources that Barker cites.

The book consists of elaborately developed references and assertions, for example, that early Christian worship was not an extension of the synagogue, but the temple. The themes of the Last Supper “seem more akin to the Day of Atonement than to Passover” (23), the blood implying more a temple setting than the Passover, despite the Passover imagery and the date of the rite. In the chapter “Sons and Heirs,” Barker takes up the huge debate over the meaning of the phrase “Son of Man,”

suggesting that among the visionaries, the word *man* referred to angels, and the word *animal* to humans outside the covenant. Since the Man was the Great Angel and the Messiah, the title *man* makes much more sense as it is used in the scriptures. Covenant Christians thus became *angels*, and angels figure prominently in all early Christian worship and hence in Barker's writings.

Other chapters discuss rites and imagery closely associated with atonement, special clothing, anointing ("a clear sign of restoring the ancient royal priesthood" [126]), washing and baptism, resurrection, the eternal covenant, what it means to become a *son*, and the wearing of the name of Christ. According to Barker, the original Christ symbol was an X (the Hebrew letter *tau*, which was written as a diagonal cross in the sixth century BC), the baptismal cross, which later was reinterpreted as a vertical cross, the sign of the Crucifixion adopted by Christian communities (100).

Barker resumes in this volume several themes she has developed over the last two decades. Jewish monotheism was a later development among the Jews, perhaps as a reaction to Christianity. Yahweh (Jehovah) of the Old Testament is Christ of the New Testament, the son of El, the Most High God, and he was present at the creation. A female figure, the ubiquitous Wisdom, complements the godhead, though "how wisdom related to the Holy Spirit is not clear" (127). The identity and role of Wisdom are discussed in chapters and other sections in this latest work, as well as full chapters in earlier Barker volumes.

Hymns were a central part of early Christian worship (as they were in the temple). We learn in the Qumran texts that "worshippers committed themselves to stay within the covenant and keep the 'engraved precept' on their tongues" (227). Similarly, "Christian writers compared the music of their worship to the harmony of the angels" (235).

Barker discusses the sense of profound loss Christians felt at the destruction of the Second Temple as well as attempts over the centuries to restore the original temple, despite the disappearance of many of the most sacred of the artifacts of Solomon's Temple, which were absent even in the Second Temple.

Barker has certainly not been without her critics: "I have often been reminded how far I have travelled (or even strayed!) from the mainstream," she acknowledges.⁶ Barker's meticulous explorations of temple theology over the last two decades (included in ten books and numerous articles) certainly warrant careful scrutiny. Her conclusions are not to be easily dismissed, however new or different they may seem at a cursory glance. Barker

is careful to note throughout her writings when her conclusions are complex or tentative. Clearly, something central to Jewish and Christian worship was lost with the loss of the temple, and a reconstruction of early Christian worship, such as Barker offers, thus becomes entirely appropriate.

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1. Margaret Barker, *Temple Theology: An Introduction* (London: SPCK, 2004), 5–7.
2. Barker, *Temple Theology*, vii.
3. Margaret Barker, *The Lost Prophet: The Book of Enoch and Its Influence on Christianity*, 1988 and recently reprinted).
4. See Barker’s conveniently available article “The Secret Tradition,” 1993, at www.margaretbarker.com, listed under “Papers.”
5. Margaret Barker, *On Earth As It Is in Heaven: Temple Symbolism in the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995), 2.
6. Barker, *Temple Theology*, 1.

James L. Kugel. *How to Read the Bible:
A Guide to Scripture Then and Now.*

New York: The Free Press, 2007

Reviewed by Eric A. Eliason

Biblical scholar James Kugel will be familiar to careful readers who checked the footnotes of Elder Jefferey R. Holland's October 2007 general conference talk, "The Only True God and Jesus Christ Whom He Hath Sent."¹ In describing the nature of God, Elder Holland cited Kugel, an orthodox Jew—who presumably has nothing to gain by supporting Latter-day Saint doctrines—in contending that the earliest writers of Genesis understood God to have a body like a person and that he interacted with the patriarchs literally face to face. In *The God of Old*, Kugel claims that later interpretive modes still dominating Jewish and Christian thought today—the beginnings of which can be seen in the Bible itself—were used to render these straightforward descriptions as figurative.²

This finding is just one of several that Latter-day Saints might find interesting. Kugel's *The Bible As It Was* contends that the Bible cannot be grasped without understanding the ancient interpretive assumptions that shaped how the book was written and assembled, which assumptions continued to operate well into the Christian era, influencing New Testament writers as well.³ Some of those assumptions are still with us; most of them, however, have been eclipsed by new interpretive modes of fundamentalism and modern scholarship.

One example of a ubiquitous biblical understanding derived from this ancient interpretive history is the identification of Satan as the serpent in the Garden of Eden. The biblical text does not say this anywhere. It is puzzling that virtually the whole Judeo-Christian world assumes this with no textual support, unless one understands this association as part of an extrabiblical interpretive tradition so venerable that it had probably already begun during biblical times. Latter-day Saints have the Pearl of Great Price to support the serpent's diabolical identification, but other Christians and Jews do not—even those Evangelicals who claim to rely on the Bible alone for their religious understandings.

In *How to Read the Bible*, Kugel gathers the insights of his earlier works and applies them systematically to the Bible as a whole. He looks at most of the well-known stories of Hebrew scripture through the eyes of both the ancient interpreters and modern scholars. Key to this process is how Kugel draws out these biblical interpreters' unspoken assumptions, and in so doing he invites reflection on what Latter-day Saint Bible readers' assumptions might be.

Kugel uncovers assumptions that have rarely been articulated but that can be deduced by examining the way Talmudic interpreters, ancient Jewish historians, New Testament authors, and early church fathers interpret the Hebrew Bible. The ancient interpreters assumed the following, according to Kugel:

1. The Bible is fundamentally cryptic. The easily apprehended meaning is not the most important one. The real spiritual meaning needs to be creatively extracted with the help of analogical leaps and nume-rological schemes. Many meanings ancient interpreters would have seen as reasonable and even necessary would seem like arbitrary, fanciful stretches today.⁴

2. The Bible's lessons and meanings are for the readers' day. Though the text may appear to be referring to ancient situations, the real cryptic meanings of events described in the Bible are unfolding as we read. This idea of immediacy was true for Bible readers even before it was finished; it was true when New Testament writers saw things mentioned in the Bible happening in Jesus' ministry; it was true in Joseph Smith's day; it is true right now; and it will be true for readers a thousand years from now who still read with the ancient assumptions operative in their minds. Of course, readers at any one of these periods do not think so much about other times but mostly their own. The Bible always speaks to the very moment it is being read.

3. There are no contradictions or mistakes in the Bible. It is perfectly harmonious in all its parts. It tells unambiguous stories of good and evil. Things that may seem like contradictions or needless repetitions are only opportunities for drawing out the cryptic meaning. Stories like the binding of Isaac are not examples of criminally bad parenting but, properly interpreted, the deeds of righteous men.

4. The entire Bible is divinely given. All of it was spoken by inspiration from God to his prophets—not only those parts where we read “thus saith the Lord” but also the long lists of genealogy and obscure Levitical rules. Every jot and every tittle is significant (14–16).

In contrast, but not always in contradiction, the modern scholarly approach—that grew out of the Reformation stance toward the Bible—assumes the following:

1. Scripture is to be understood by scripture alone. Sweep away all midrash, commentary, and traditional typological and allegorical interpretations. Get back to the text itself.⁵

2. We must read scripture in terms of its own language and not through the lens of our own times or values. We should take every care to make sure our own preconceptions and prejudices do not color what we say the Bible says.

3. We should assume the scripture means what it says even when this conflicts with our beliefs. It says what it says, and this may be perplexing, strange, or even appalling. We should not try to apologize for the Bible by interpreting it away. We should stare scripture boldly in the face.

4. To understand what the Bible says, we must look into how it was put together and who the people were who did so. We must study their lives and their possible political and religious motives as well as their historical and cultural contexts, including the literary forms of the day.

5. We must acknowledge that not only have there been corruptions and errors in transmission but also that, even when recorded as intended, the Bible contains contradictions between its various parts, the words of prophets not excepted. For example, the book of Ruth contradicts the Pentateuch and Ezra on taking Moabite wives. The wisdom of Ecclesiastes is not the same wisdom as Proverbs. Job even contains contradictions within itself as to what wisdom is. The personal, humanlike “God of Old” depicted in early Genesis who held counsel with other gods in Psalm 82 is not the same as the abstract, peerless, and impersonal God described by Isaiah (31–32).

Kugel shows how the Protestant *sola scriptura*, or “bible alone,” stance eventually undermined another essential Protestant belief about the Bible—its inerrancy. At least this sentiment developed in mainline seminaries among biblical scholars; the congregations in their church pews have remained much less affected. Kugel says other Protestants are self-serving in cherry-picking from modern scholars’ and ancient interpreters’ assumptions, and that this practice characterizes today’s fundamentalist and conservative Evangelical approaches to scripture.

Virtually any introduction to an Evangelical-preferred Bible translation instructs the reader to (1) understand that God is the author, (2) prefer the plainest possible meaning, (3) assume historicity unless otherwise specified, (4) realize that the Bible is *the* guide to living, and (5) be wary of allegorical or “non-literal” interpretations.⁶ (Such introductions,

extrabiblical in nature, are surprisingly common given that *sola scriptura* would seem to deem them unneeded.) This approach has more in common with modern biblical scholarship—perhaps ironically, given conservative Protestant distaste for its conclusions—than the ancient interpreters’ assumptions. But overall, the Evangelical tradition accepts and rejects some of both ancient and modern traditions.

As Latter-day Saints, we may ask ourselves when reading Kugel, What do we assume about how to read the Bible? Where do we fit into all this? As I read with Mormonism in mind, it seemed clear to me that there is at least one assumption operating among modern researchers that Kugel did not explicitly lay out. The assumption would be familiar to any thoughtful traditionalist who has read modern scholarship, and it might go like this: *An explanation of a biblical passage that does not require supernatural happenings to be understood is to be preferred over an explanation that does.* Modern scholarly insights such as the claim that multiple authors composed Isaiah (rejected by most biblical conservatives) or that David did not write some of the Psalms (more palatable for some conservatives) rely heavily on this presumption. Exegesis that settles for literal angelic appearances or actual prophetic foreknowledge would not be satisfactory. For example, in the absence of clear evidence, why say King David foresaw the Babylonian captivity hundreds of years in the future when he composed Psalm 137 when it is easier to say that someone else composed it after the events described took place?

Recognizing this version of Occam’s Razor, which prefers simple answers over complex ones, is not the same as claiming that all modern Bible scholars impose naturalistic assumptions all the time. While many scholars openly make those assumptions, Kugel seems to mostly operate following these assumptions but does not explicitly say that it is necessary to do so. Many traditionalist critics of modern Bible scholarship see, perhaps not too unfairly, secular assumptions as all-pervasive in “higher criticism.” Interestingly, even the ancient interpreters were divided on whether biblical miracles were historical events or literary devices, thus showing that doubts about the Bible’s literalness are not just the result of the acids of modernity but have old antecedents (222).

I do not know how much Latter-day Saints would be comfortable thinking of their interpretive assumptions as drawing on traditions that the Restoration has superseded. Still, it seems that Latter-day Saints would share and reject some of both the ancient and modern approaches as well as sporting some unique features of their own. Key to understanding LDS interpretive methods is realizing that perhaps *the* central assumption for traditional LDS believers is quite the opposite from the naturalistic

assumption above. They take for granted the literal reality of angelic appearances and prophetic foreknowledge unless there are compelling reasons to do otherwise. The content of Restoration scripture and its claims of how it came to be make such assumptions compelling for Mormons.

A second feature of Mormon biblical interpretation might be, “Interpret ancient scripture as it has been interpreted by modern prophets.” This idea comes to mind in another Kugel claim that Latter-day Saints might appreciate—namely his take on the Song of Solomon. In fact, the Song of Songs is the showcase for Kugel’s contention that interpretation is inextricable from, and sometimes trumps, the text in the Bible’s formation. Traditionally, the Song of Solomon’s inclusion in the Bible has been explained by claiming that it was written as an allegory of God’s love for Israel or the church. Kugel says no, it was originally written as an erotic love poem but was allegorized over the years by later interpreters. Eventually, the allegorical interpretation took on such authority that those who selected the Song of Songs for inclusion in the canon did so because of the weight of this tradition alone. To Kugel, it was not intended to be accepted as sacred scripture but only came to be read as such by centuries of creative interpretation. Such is the power of interpretation in the world Kugel is describing. It can collapse the distinction that would seem to exist between romantic love poems and scripture. Similarly, the Joseph Smith Translation manuscript contains the short but oft-quoted note, “The Song of Solomon is not inspired writing.” Apparently, the Prophet also did not buy the explanation that it was intended as an allegory.⁷ Again Kugel’s modern scholarly methods lead to a place where Latter-day Saints have been for quite some time.

In pointing out resonances between LDS understandings and modern biblical scholarship, I am perhaps guilty of heading into the “dead end” Kugel warns of in an essay on his website “Apologetics and Biblical Criticism Lite,”⁸ which is intended as an online appendix to *How to Read the Bible*. He warns against picking and choosing from modern biblical scholarship only those things that bolster favorite notions, because the exact same methods that help build comforting buttresses for faith also lead to conclusions requiring cherished beliefs to be rethought or abandoned. According to Kugel, the modern scholarly view of the Bible as an internally flawed and somewhat haphazard anthology of remnant scraps of old folklore and feverish visionary rantings, cobbled together over many centuries by politically motivated redactors and interpreted later to be something it is not, seriously undercuts the traditional view of scripture as a miraculous, God-directed composition that speaks authoritatively to us today.

Fair enough. One must be cautious. Moreover, much of what Kugel claims the Bible is and how it was put together could be downright disturbing to faithful Latter-day Saints even with the acknowledgement of errors and corruptions in the human transmission of the biblical record. However, I would suggest that much of the potential discomfort for Mormons would come from the naturalist leaning of modern scholarship rather than the scholarship itself. Ironically, for a book that is centrally about drawing out interpretive assumptions, Kugel curiously does little to note the naturalistic and secular assumptions often at play in modern Bible scholarship and has little to say about secularism being the starting premise as much as the end result of much critical Bible scholarship.

Overall, I found this book a feast of fascinating information and insight, and I plan to adopt it as a text for my “Bible as Literature” class. However, the book makes one claim that my training as a folklorist caused me to question. Echoing other scholars, Kugel suggests that many of the stories in the first part of Genesis did not originally have any religious significance but were only interpreted that way by later readers who, following the ancient assumption that God gave *all* scripture, believed these stories *must* have religious significance (136, 362). Kugel claims that stories such as the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, and various episodes from Abraham’s wanderings are what folklorists call “etiological legends,” or stories that explain the origins of things: why men have to work for their bread, why women suffer pain in childbearing, why the snake does not have legs like other animals, how the Kenites got their name and came to live where they did, and how certain wells and rock formations got their names. These questions are all answered in Genesis stories that read a lot like etiological legends. Such stories are universal, found in all societies and in all times. Scholars like Kugel suggest that if stories in the Bible read like etiological legends, then they probably *were* originally etiological legends with no moral or religious significance until later interpreters and redactors worked them into scripture.

The problem with that contention is not that Bible stories do not have an etiological component or likely oral narrative antecedents; they do. The problem is that Kugel seems unaware of how the last few decades of scholarship have qualitatively changed how folklorists see the significance of etiological legends—and these are mostly secular folklorists with no religious agenda and probably little awareness of the implications of their work for Bible interpretation. Kugel appears to be working from an earlier understanding that the main point of such stories is explaining the origin of some small fact. But contemporary folklorists have demonstrated that this is not how cultures who pass them on understand or use them.

Etiological stories are *not* primarily about how something came to be. By looking closely at the various cultures that tell them, folklorists have discovered that the etiological nature of the story is usually secondary to its main purpose—not only secondary but actually in service to the main purpose of the story, which is moral teaching after all. But the moral teaching, in the tradition of the best oral literature, is often subtle, oblique, nondidactic, and laid out by a trickster’s negative example.⁹

Scholars such as Keith Basso and Barre Toelken have shown how etiological legends tend to be told originally and *primarily* for their moral content, and etiological motifs are included as reminders of the story.¹⁰ So every time people of a particular society see a snake, wonder why there are weeds in the garden, or draw water from a certain well with a funny name, they will remember the attached story and think of their moral obligations as implied in the story. Etiological aspects of certain narratives, in different cultures at different times, work as triggers for moral remembrance and only incidentally as pseudoscientific or pseudohistorical explanations of how things came to be. Why should it be any different for Bible stories?

If we want to recover the original meaning and purpose of biblical stories with etiological motifs, it is probably best not to discount the story of the serpent in the Garden of Eden as a morally insignificant tale of origins. Rather, every time we see a snake in all its slithery legless glory we might be prompted to remember the importance of resisting temptation and not seeking to thwart the plans of God. Linguistic anthropologist Keith Basso has a name for this phenomenon of moral tales forcing themselves into our minds as we interact with the creatures, places, and things of our daily lives. He calls it “stalking with stories.” I know the tales that James Kugel has told and interpreted in *How to Read the Bible* will be stalking this reader for a long time.

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1. *Ensign* 37 (November 2007): 40–42.
2. James Kugel, *The God of Old: Inside the Lost World of the Bible* (New York: Free Press, 2003).
3. James Kugel, *The Bible As It Was* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

4. Even though he covers only the Hebrew Bible, Kugel draws heavily on New Testament writers as examples of how ancient readers thought. The many uses of Hebrew scripture by New Testament authors reveal pervasive use of allegorical, typological, and cryptic readings. Understanding Isaiah's and Micah's comments on events of their own day to more significantly refer to Jesus' life as well as accepting Paul's explanation in Galatians 4:22–24 that Abraham's rejection of Hagar for Sarah actually refers to the eclipse of the Jews' covenant of bondage by God's new Christian covenant of freedom are just two examples of readers' accepting interpretations that today might seem highly speculative and far beyond what is justified by the text were it not for the fact that these explanations are already in the Christian Bible and have been for two thousand years. There are implications here for Mormon biblical interpretation. Modern scholars would favor dismissing the interpretation of favorite proof texts such as Ezekiel's reference to "the stick of Joseph" and "the stick of Judah" as referring to the coming together of the Bible and the Book of Mormon. The term "stick," these scholars would say, refers to a tree serving as a metaphor for the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah and not a book. If Lehi, Joseph Smith, and Latter-day Saints make creative leaps beyond what the text might seem to signify in its original historical context, they are in the good company of biblical authors.

5. Cheekily one might suggest here that to disregard other interpretive assumptions is in and of itself an interpretive assumption.

6. See, for example, the front matter to various editions of the New American Standard Version, the New International Version, the New Living Translation, and Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message Remix* (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2003).

7. Note that the Prophet did not say it should not be read, or that it has no value, or that it should be removed, or even that it cannot be usefully read as an allegory despite its original intention. The Bible Dictionary in the official LDS scriptures paraphrases Joseph Smith in saying that the Song of Solomon "is not inspired scripture." However, Joseph Smith's original wording of "writing" instead of "scripture" does not preclude the possibility that the Song of Songs should be retained as canonical for reasons other than its initial inspiration. I must admit that I am thankful for the Song of Solomon's transmission to our day, being somewhat partial to a more recent rationale given for its inclusion—namely that the Lord allowed it to be there to remind his people that romantic and even erotic love is a sanctioned blessing for those properly married.

8. www.jameskugel.com/apologetics.php.

9. The same terse and sparse style that Kugel regards as indicative of "schematic narratives" with "no inner life" and points to as evidence of the stories' mundane origins is lauded by equally prestigious Bible scholar Robert Alter as "the art of reticence," or a conscious literary style of effective understatement that displayed remarkable and unique accomplishment for its time and still has the power to move today. Kugel, *How to Read the Bible*, 147. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 63–87.

10. Keith Basso, "'Stalking with Stories': Names, Places, and Moral Narratives among the Western Apache," in Keith Basso, *Western Apache Language and Culture: Essays in Linguistic Anthropology* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1990); Barre Toelken, "The 'Pretty Languages' of Yellowman: Genre, Mode, and Texture in Navaho Coyote Narratives," in *Folklore Genres*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976).

Bible Gateway and The New Testament Gateway

Two Biblical Websites

Reviewed by Ryan Combs

BibleGateway.com is a website designed for online study and access of the scriptures. Unlike other sites that may have only one version of the Bible in one language, BibleGateway boasts thirty-five different languages and twenty-one versions of the Bible in English. Among the oldest are Jerome's Vulgate (AD 405) in Latin, the Wycliffe New Testament (1382) in English, the Luther Bible (1545) in German, and the King James Bible (1611) in English. There are also many modern versions, such as the New International Version and modern translations in Chinese, Arabic, and Creole. For those who would prefer to listen to the Bible, the site offers ten different versions and translations to play directly from the Internet in streaming audio.

The site also features a "verse of the day" and a blog—both available through RSS (Really Simple Syndication), which allows users to receive updates through their RSS reader. There is a tutorial, as well as the interactive ability to personalize the site for specific user preferences. For example, users could choose the King James Version, show apocryphal books, display the words of Christ in red, and change the text size as part of their personal default setup. The site also has the complete text for two Bible commentaries and three Bible dictionaries: InterVarsity Press's *New Testament Commentary* series,¹ Matthew Henry's *Concise Commentary on the Bible* (1706), M. G. Easton's *1897 Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, *Hitchcock's Bible Names Dictionary* (1869), and *Smith's Bible Names Dictionary* (1863).

The different versions of the Bible are searchable by book and verse, keyword, or topic, all directly from the home page. The search results are quickly displayed, and it is easy to switch between versions, allowing comparisons between translations or languages. Many of the texts offered on the site are in the public domain and are therefore downloadable as text or PDF files. The versions that are not covered by public domain copyright laws are still available to search and view but not for full download. There

are many versions of the Bible, however, that the site does not include, probably because the publishers will not grant viewing permission without a paid subscription. While the site does not offer every version of the Bible, the use of public domain versions keeps the site free and available to the widest variety of users.

One indication of this wide usage is found in comparing Google search rankings. As of October 2008, typing the word “Bible” into a Google search will result in BibleGateway appearing at the top of the list. (As an interesting aside, typing “Old Testament” or “New Testament” into Google will give you lds.org as the second result after Wikipedia.) These results, calculated by Google and called PageRank, are determined by the number of times other sites link to the page. The more links a site gets, especially by high PageRanked sites, the more likely the site will appear high on Google searches. Holding the primary spot means that most people who search the Internet to read from the Bible will probably end up at BibleGateway, which is useful because BibleGateway offers the Bible as a stand-alone document left to the interpretation of the reader, as opposed to a ministerial site like www.bible.com (currently second on the list in a Google search).

BibleGateway offers a quick tutorial with search examples and functions of the site. Another interesting feature of the site is the inclusion of several reading plans used by permission from *How to Read Your Bible* by David and Renée Sanford.² The plans offer cover-to-cover biographical readings (in which a different person in the Bible is featured daily), survey readings (which include highlights from every book in the Bible), and chronological readings (for key stories placed in chronological order).

Compared to other free-access Bible websites, BibleGateway is robust. Logos Bible Software, which specializes in CD-ROM software of Bible study tools, has created a free-access website that is essentially a scaled-down version of their software. Located at <http://bible.logos.com>, the site looks better, is very easy to use, and is very quick to search but lacks many of the extra functions found on BibleGateway. For example, Logos offers only the Bible (no reference works) and a handful of versions and languages. Logos also offers a site called “What Does the Bible Say about . . .” at <http://wbsa.logos.com>, which is organized by topic and is very useful but not necessarily more useful than BibleGateway’s topical index.

A useful function that is not currently part of BibleGateway is the ability to search multiple translations for the same word. Currently, to accomplish such a search, one would have to perform separate searches within each version. There is also no option available to search within the commentaries or dictionaries on the site; perhaps both of these options are

not in high enough demand to warrant their addition. Overall, the site is excellent at providing what it is meant to provide—access to the Bible for the widest possible audience.

The New Testament Gateway

Mark Goodacre, associate professor of New Testament at Duke University, created The New Testament Gateway (ntgateway.com) as a site for scholarly research in the New Testament and related subjects. Unlike BibleGateway, which houses its own content, this site directs the user to other sites to help them find information. Therefore, the home page layout consists of links to topics, and each topic page is full of other links to books, photographs, maps, and other media.

The site topics include many books and films that touch on the subject of the New Testament. While the media is generally limited to scholarly works, some questionable materials are listed—specifically among the films. Depending on the scholar, any item might be considered important for scholarly research, but most of the popular films listed would be useful only for studies on Hollywood's portrayal of Christ. Further investigation into the Frequently Asked Questions reveals that any media on the site that is linked to amazon.com, amazon.co.uk, or amazon.de provides The New Testament Gateway with a small percentage of the sale resulting from these links. Despite this function of commerce and a few odd items, the site is rich with the best sources about the New Testament.

Most of the sources and subjects covered require prior knowledge of the topics. The items listed on the site are presented without approval or criticism, unless not being included is proof of criticism. In this way, both BibleGateway and The New Testament Gateway present their information without bias. Mark Goodacre freely invites anyone to submit sites they are aware of or their own sites for inclusion in The New Testament Gateway, as long as they meet his requirements of scholarship.

The site also features a weblog available through RSS, which differs in content from the BibleGateway blog. Where the BibleGateway gives infrequent updates regarding new texts of the Bible available online, the New Testament Gateway blog is Goodacre's own academic blog, featuring news items relating to biblical studies, reviews of biblical literature, and reports on the various conferences Goodacre attends and lectures he presents. The blog is understandably updated more frequently than BibleGateway's blog, which usually consists of updates on additional versions of the Bible added to the site. Of particular interest is The New Testament Gateway blogroll, which consists of links to other Bible-related blogs.

The “All-in-One Biblical Resources Search” is another of Goodacre’s projects housed on The New Testament Gateway. It is a collection of searchable websites related to biblical studies, and the sites are linked so that a user can search directly from The New Testament Gateway. The sites are arranged into six different topical sections, representing some of the best biblical scholarship available over the Internet.

The New Testament Gateway is a site that anyone with a serious interest in the New Testament should check regularly. The site provides easier access to a wider variety of sources than searching Google or browsing a library will provide. BibleGateway is also an excellent tool for the specific task of searching the Bible and comparing versions and languages. Both sites provide a free service in biblical study that anyone can use.

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1. Grant R. Osborne, ed., *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*, 20 vols. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1997). All other titles are in the public domain.

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John P. Hoffmann.
Japanese Saints: Mormons in the Land of the Rising Sun.
Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2007

Reviewed by Henri Gooren

Why Christianity is successful in South Korea and a failure in Japan seems a straightforward story. In Korea, Christian leaders became involved in the nationalist struggle against the Japanese, who occupied Korea from 1910 to 1945. Christianity thus became associated with Korean nationalism, freedom, and foreign support, and some forms of the religion even later tied in with traditional shamanism. Christian growth accelerated after the Korean War (1950–53), until by the year 2000 about 28 percent of South Koreans considered themselves Christians—about 23 percent Protestant and 5 percent Catholic.¹

In Japan, however, Christianity was associated with foreign interventions, especially the American occupation after the disastrous ending of World War II. The perception among the Japanese that Christianity is a religion of foreigners started when Portuguese, English, and Dutch friars and sailors brought the religion to Japan in the sixteenth century. The Tokugawa regime (1603–1868) only tolerated Christians in its early beginnings. After the Christian Shimabara Revolt of 1637–38, Christianity was prohibited and its members executed. In 1639, “under threat of destruction . . . , Iberian ships, seen as the main propagators of Christianity, were prohibited from visiting Japan. In the ensuing years only a few Christian groups survived, mainly by hiding their beliefs and practices from official eyes” (17).

The ban on Christianity remained effective until U.S. gunboats forced the opening of Japan to the outside world in 1853 (18). Catholic and Protestant missionaries arrived in full force in the 1870s, but were unsuccessful for various reasons (20–22). For one, the exclusivist and monotheistic claims of Christianity went against a long Japanese tradition:

Most Japanese people take a highly syncretic approach to religion and spirituality. Various traditions combine into an amalgam of practices and beliefs, most of which stem from selected aspects of Buddhism,

Shintoism, Confucianism, and native folk religion. . . . Normative Japanese religious behavior includes, for example, Buddhist funerals and Shinto weddings; veneration of ancestors through household Buddhist altars (*butsudan*) or Shinto altars (*kamidana*); and the annual pilgrimage to the Shrine in one's hometown at the festival of New Year's. (145)

Japanese took (and obviously continue to take) great pride in their culture and religion and were reluctant to change it for a foreign religion. Additionally, foreigners had to live in isolated settlements until World War II, and Western missionaries found it almost impossible to learn the Japanese language well. Finally, many Japanese who were sympathetic toward Christianity became confused by its internal fragmentation. Inter-denominational squabbles were prominent, especially between liberal and conservative missionaries (21–22). All these reasons explain why Christians nowadays make up at best about 1.5 to 2 percent of the Japanese population.²

Since Mormonism tends to gain new members especially in parts of the world that are already Christian, like the U.S. and Latin America, one would expect the Latter-day Saints to be successful in Korea and not very successful in Japan. According to the 2008 *Church Almanac*, Mormons made up 0.15 percent of the population in South Korea (almost 80,000 members), against 0.09 percent in Japan (almost 122,000 members). This means that according to the membership on record, one in every 632 South Koreans is a Latter-day Saint, against one in every 1,060 Japanese.³ The difference is smaller than expected, but still significant.

John P. Hoffman is a sociologist at Brigham Young University studying the sociology of religion. *Japanese Saints: Mormons in the Land of the Rising Sun* is the first book-sized sociological study of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Japan.⁴ The book's guiding concept is identity; the central chapters deal with religious and Japanese identities (chapter 3), the long and gradual conversion process to Mormonism (chapter 4), and "What It Means to Be a Latter-day Saint" (chapter 5). Chapter 6 explores the conflicts arising from attempts by LDS converts to combine Japanese and LDS identities, which most are unable to reconcile.

Hoffman found that the minority of converts who remained active in the LDS Church—informally estimated at only 15 to 25 percent (105)—were mostly young people, especially women (172–73). They managed to turn the many forms of "Church work" (callings, meetings, missionary work, and other forms of assistance) into a central part of their primary identity. This still meant they had to juggle their Japanese identity, for instance, by continuing to go to the New Year's festival in their hometown with their family. Moreover, many converts were reluctant to give up a calling they

really liked after a few years. When they did not like their new calling, many would drop out (161–62). Other disaffiliation factors were the ascetic behavioral restrictions of Mormonism, perceived insults by other members, or anti-Church pressure by spouses or other relatives (191). Many Japanese husbands, for instance, will not accept that their LDS wives want to spend over three hours in church on Sunday, the only day the family can be together.

Hoffmann's book provides fascinating insights on the conversion process among LDS members in Japan:

Conversions were processual and might be likened to a personal journey with numerous fits and starts. There was also a lack of dramatic emotion or immediacy to their LDS conversion narratives. Thus, adopting a Mormon identity tended to be gradual and develop along with interpersonal linkages to Church members, learning the narratives of the group, and balancing presumed interpersonal opposition from family members and friends against interpersonal comfort with members of the Church. (190)

The book has many wonderful interview quotes to bring these issues to life, which show how important the LDS missionaries are in the conversion process.

However, I do wonder about the selection of the interviewees and about the way these interviews were conducted by “two native Japanese women (non-Mormons)” (199). The informants all came from one LDS branch near Hokkaido University in Sapporo, where Hoffman spent time in 1998. Although Hoffman provides ample data on the branch members (199–201), there is no way to compare it to other branches and thus gauge whether they are representative of LDS branches throughout Japan. Hoffman also interviewed twenty-five Americans who had served as LDS missionaries in Japan, but he was unable to interview any Japanese ex-members. This is unfortunate, but drawing from my own research experiences in Central America, I can understand this omission. Hoffmann used sophisticated software to code and cross-reference his different data sets. I can accept the book's methodology and its limitations, because the author is frank about them (197–206).

The book sometimes tends to essentialize social and cultural identities, like in this quote: “Western forms of spirituality . . . tend to be conceptually grounded, experiential, and focus on univariate truths; and Eastern forms . . . are more syncretic, multifaceted, this-worldly, practically beneficial, and centered on kinship ties” (175). This reduction should be more nuanced: Hoffmann's “Western” spirituality here is obviously derived from Protestant Christianity, because Catholic and New Age spiritualities are much closer to the supposed “Eastern” one.

I very much enjoyed this fascinating and highly readable book, as it does not just give insights into the Mormon Church in Japan but also sketches its members and organization against the wider Japanese religious and political context. Hoffmann offers many new insights into the LDS conversion experience in a country that is rarely studied and is, to Western sensibilities, sometimes difficult to fathom. Part of the Japanese self-image is a sense of being inscrutable and uniquely different from the rest of the world; Hoffman is to be commended for bridging those differences.

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1. Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World: When We Pray God Works* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2001), 387. To arrive at these numbers, I subtracted proportional shares of double counting. The inflated raw population percentages for Protestants and Catholics in South Korea are 36.2 and 8.1 percent.
2. Johnstone and Mandryk, *Operation World*, 370.
3. 2008 *Church Almanac* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Morning News, 2008), 398, 450.
4. Primarily a history, *Taking the Gospel to the Japanese: 1901 to 2001*, edited by Reid L. Neilson and Van C. Gessel (Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2006), was published a year earlier. In that work, a chapter is devoted to John P. Hoffman's qualitative analysis of Japanese members and the LDS Church.

Brian C. Hales.
*Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism:
The Generations after the Manifesto.*

Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2006

Reviewed by J. Michael Hunter

In *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism*, Brian C. Hales takes on the arduous task of making the convoluted story of modern polygamy comprehensible to the average reader. Hales approaches the subject not as a historian or sociologist but as an active Latter-day Saint who has questions about the authority claims of modern polygamists.

Hales's central theme is what he calls the "One Man" principle (11). This theme is essentially that LDS scriptures teach that one man holds the keys of the sealing power, and this man is the only one who can authorize plural marriages (D&C 132:7, 18–19). Hales is frank in acknowledging his belief that the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only man on earth who can grant the sealing power, including the sealing of plural marriages.

Thus, according to Hales, notwithstanding the bold and elaborate claims to priesthood authority made by many modern polygamists, no genuine sealing authority exists among them. For this reason, Hales's book will hold particular appeal to Latter-day Saints, although others will certainly find it a useful handbook for understanding modern-day polygamy as well.

Hales begins by providing background information on the practice of plural marriage among the Latter-day Saints as far back as 1840 in Nauvoo. According to Hales, selected Church members practiced plural marriage as a divine command between 1840 and 1852. All Latter-day Saints were not yet ready to have this be a command binding on them, so the Lord selected strong members to secretly begin the practice.

After Joseph Smith's death in 1844, Brigham Young authorized and encouraged Latter-day Saints to practice plural marriage. In 1852, Church leaders openly acknowledged plural marriage as a Church practice. According to Hales, the Latter-day Saints were thus under command to practice plural marriage after 1852.

This command lasted until 1890 when Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto, which took the Latter-day Saints out from under the command to practice plural marriage but did not altogether forbid the practice. The Manifesto led to a great deal of confusion among Latter-day Saints since, just as in Nauvoo, Church leaders secretly authorized a select few to practice plural marriage. Whom the “One Man” had authorized or had not authorized became a matter of dispute.

At the April 1904 general conference, President Joseph F. Smith issued an “Official Statement” later referred to as the “Second Manifesto.” It was very similar to the 1890 Manifesto except that it promised excommunication for LDS members who would not comply. Hales explains that between 1890 and 1904 plural marriages were essentially “secret and authorized” while marriages after 1904 were “secret and unauthorized” (102). Where the 1890 Manifesto had not forbidden plural marriages, the 1904 second manifesto had. Hales wrote that “the secrecy that camouflaged legitimate plural marriages prior to 1904 created an atmosphere (for a few years) during which unauthorized post-1904 unions might occur without the local leaders truly understanding the ‘one’ man’s directives” (102).

Hales relies heavily on the research of others in his discussion of nineteenth-century plural marriage as he lays the foundation for his real contribution—the history of plural marriage between 1904 and 1934. Hales reaches his stride as he throws light on what has heretofore been a shadowy period where authorized plural marriage morphs into renegade polygamy.

In 1910, Joseph F. Smith firmly declared that all persons involved in new plural marriages would be “cut off from the Church” (103). That same year, the Quorum of the Twelve began holding disciplinary councils and excommunicating polygamists. Polygamists began hiding from both government and Church authorities.

However, by the 1920s, the government showed less interest in prosecuting polygamists and many had already been excommunicated from the Church, so polygamists began to openly congregate in loosely structured groups. They also began to publish their beliefs. Hales does an excellent job of elucidating how the stories of one man and the publishing efforts of another brought these loosely structured groups together into a formalized priesthood structure in the early 1930s.

In the 1920s, Lorin C. Woolley, an eccentric and highly imaginative individual, began telling stories about President John Taylor conferring special sealing authority on Woolley and four other men in 1886—authority allowing these men to perpetuate plural marriage independent of

Church authorities. Woolley claimed that Taylor also administered an oath to the men to never forsake the practice of plural marriage.

Hales points out many flaws with the story—some based on historical fact and others on Church doctrine. Historically, Woolley claims to have been a bodyguard for John Taylor, but no records exist to support this claim, and Woolley's small stature was not exactly suited for the task. Woolley waited decades after the fact to begin telling the story, even though publications by him in support of polygamy as early as 1912 provided ample opportunity and need for his use of the story. Woolley lists thirteen individuals who he says were in attendance at this special meeting. Yet, there is no evidence that any of these thirteen individuals ever mentioned the meeting or allowed it to direct their future actions. None of the four other men supposedly ordained by Taylor left a record of those events. Doctrinally, Hales points out that secret ordinations violate Church procedures as put forth in Doctrine and Covenants 42:11, which states that no one should preach the gospel or build up the Church unless that person has authority and "it is known to the church that he has authority." Hales also argues that it violates the doctrine that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (153; D&C 6:28).

The other central figure in the formalizing of the modern polygamy movement was Joseph Musser, who convinced Woolley to commit his story to writing in 1929. In 1933, Musser published a book that claimed a priesthood organization with greater authority and keys than any found in the Church. Over the next few years, other publications came out that elaborated this basic idea, including the concept of a "Council of Seven Friends" (195) that acted as the governing body of this superior organization. This somewhat complex organization and how it claimed to have descended from the 1886 John Taylor ordinations is explained by Hales using helpful charts.

From these early beginnings in the 1930s, organized polygamy expanded to include various groups that have often made headlines over the past seventy years. Hales provides charts to illustrate how many modern polygamists trace their authority claims back to Woolley's story. Even polygamists who do not claim direct authority through Woolley often have some connection to Woolley or Musser.

Hales gives interesting information on the 1944 federal raid on Short Creek, Arizona, which is often overshadowed by the later and larger Short Creek raid in 1953. He discusses prominent polygamist families such as the Allreds, Barlows, Jeffs, and Jessops. He has a chapter on the Kingstons and one also on the LeBarons.

Hales brings the polygamy story right up to the present with happenings in Colorado City (the former Short Creek) and that community's unique teaching of the "Law of Placing," which requires young girls to submit themselves to priesthood leadership and their fathers to choose a husband for them. This controversial practice has resulted in numerous arrests of men in this community and the highly publicized raid on the community's satellite community in Texas. Hales's book came out before the raid, but he does discuss the establishment of the branch community in Texas.

For events after 1954, Hales's narrative becomes less detailed and more dependent on the works of others. He offers only a shallow summary of the Naylor group, Tom Green, Ogden Kraut, Royston Potter, John Singer, Addam Swapp, James D. Harmston, the Laffertys, and others. Hales notes that if his research "is deemed inadequate by critics and historians, possibly it could at least serve as a springboard for additional research and further publications on this topic" (xiv). Indeed, it would be impossible to give detailed coverage to all of the various polygamist groups in a single volume.

Hales is to be commended for providing such a fine one-volume overview of modern polygamy, which succeeds in making this complex story comprehensible to the average reader. For the core of his story, covering the years 1904 through the early 1950s, Hales has compiled an impressive list of sources, including the Joseph White Musser journal, the B. Harvey Allred journal, sermons of numerous polygamist leaders, photocopies of letters that are apparently not readily available, and interviews of insiders that he himself conducted. For those areas that he was able to only touch on, such as the Kingstons, he has provided an admirable foundation on which other researchers can build.

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Mack Wilberg. *Requiem and Other Choral Works*.

The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Orchestra at Temple Square.

Mormon Tabernacle Choir Recordings, 2008

Reviewed by Greg Hansen

While not the first review of Mack Wilberg's *Requiem*, this review by a contemporary fellow composer may bring to light several insights not previously illuminated. Wilberg's *Requiem* is unique in at least three ways: First, it represents a historic departure from previous works by Latter-day Saint choral composers in that it is a requiem rather than an oratorio; second, it is singular given the circumstances under which it was composed; and third, it contributes significantly to a dynamic artistic direction for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir organization originally set in motion by former director Craig Jessop.

The requiem as a compositional form started as a Catholic mass for the departed, then was later adapted to Lutheran, Anglo-Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox usage. Over the last hundred years, the requiem has become representative of a more generalized expression of longing for peace and solace, and a genre unto itself.

Wilberg's judicious use of both time-honored craftsmanship and a near-cinematic orchestral style makes his work accessible yet eloquent. The use of a four-chord unifying motif together with tasteful use of the Lydian scale gives the work an ethereal quality that evokes peace and a sense of timelessness in the listener. Impeccable counterpoint, implied extended chord harmonies, strong melodies, and competent orchestrations add to the overall solace inherent in the work. The program notes by Dr. Luke Howard provide a refreshingly intimate and excellent analysis.

Wilberg indicates that his work is indeed a "requiem for the living,"¹ making it completely applicable and appropriate to the doctrines of the restored gospel. Since the oratorio is the more accepted form of expression within the ranks the LDS community of composers, Wilberg's *Requiem* represents a fresh departure from the norm.

Wilberg's characteristic sincerity, his absence of ego, and his roots in a humble Utah mining town all add to the appeal of the work as a personal

expression of the composer. Wilberg dedicated the score “in memory of loved ones passed”—no doubt a reference to his own life’s losses. Yet the work remains tremendously comforting and positive.

With his *Requiem*, Wilberg has demonstrated he is more than a nationally recognized arranger of folk songs and hymns, beloved by the Choir, his audience, and ecclesiastical leaders. He has risen to the stature of a composer of significant works, a formidable original artistic force of his own. Wilberg’s musical journey to the point of writing an original requiem completely sanctioned by his patron was an accomplishment of significance. Overcoming the label of an “arranger only” was a delicate task known only to a few in similar circumstances. Inherent difficulties arise with such a venture.

One difficulty in achieving respect as both an arranger and a composer is that arranging is commonly held to be something less than composing, as is the art of orchestrating. Newell Dayley, a composer and former academic vice president of Brigham Young University, once stated that “arranging is nearly the same as composing; the difference is that part of the work has already been done.”² Any accomplished arranger will experience some angst concerning the accurate perception of his work. To those familiar with arranging, the craft can become as rewarding and challenging as composing.

When taking a familiar hymn melody as a starting point, a competent arranger must address a number of critical issues: the traditions or “baggage” that particular hymn may bring with it in terms of audience perception, the cultural understanding of music within the society for which he is writing, the generational style vocabulary of that audience, and even the musical tastes of those employing him. The parameters of such a challenge have been the downfall of many a composer who insisted on art over effectiveness, atonality over western harmonic traditions, and who ignored any propriety toward the listener, subject matter, and patron. Wilberg has overcome—even moved well beyond—all of these issues so effectively over the last nine years in his position with the Tabernacle Choir, that he has earned the trust of both his leaders and his audience. Because of that trust, his original *Requiem* enjoys the position of being a significant, original contribution to the artistic achievements of the Choir since starting its own label.

It is a credit to Wilberg’s devotion and testimony that he has so effectively reached such levels with his humble genius and disdain of personal recognition. He is first to acknowledge former director Craig Jessop’s vision and encouragement for setting in motion the idea of Wilberg composing a full requiem, coming as a result of his commission to write an *Innoit* and

Epilogue to Vaughan Williams's *Dona nobis pacem* for the Carnegie Hall National High School Choral Festival. His *Requiem* now joins with Leroy Robertson's *Book of Mormon Oratorio*, Robert Cundick's *Redeemer*, and other significant contributions burned into the collective consciousness of Restoration art history.

Upon the framework built by those who have gone before, Wilberg has added both walls and roof to the LDS Church's sole officially sanctioned musical voice. To date, few contemporary classical composers have enjoyed such broad commercial market recognition, except perhaps John Rutter and the Cambridge Singers. Since the Tabernacle Choir is an entirely unique artistic entity that could not be financially feasible in either a commercial or educationally sponsored setting, it also enjoys singular status in the world. Surely the actual role of the Tabernacle Choir director could not have been more effectively understated than in this published job description: "To provide missionary and public relations service through performances with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, the Orchestra at Temple Square, the Temple Square Chorale and the Bells of Temple Square, such service to include telecasts, recordings, tours, concerts, and other appearances."³

Given these circumstances and his recent rise to full directorship, Wilberg now has the opportunity to continue to build village, castle, and crown jewels upon the foundational fires of momentum lit by former Choir directors.

It would seem to be providential that the greatest potential of the organization should exhibit itself in this era—one of unsettled and uncertain world conditions. The voice of the Tabernacle Choir and Wilberg's own future work can ring true as a vehicle for peace, comfort, and surety; as a light on a hill; and as a powerful musical voice of the Church.

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1. Mack Wilberg, interviewed by Greg Hansen, July 2008.
2. Author's notes from BYU Media Music class, October 1980.
3. Job description for the associate music director's position posted on August 1, 2008, on the Tabernacle Choir's website, www.mormontabernaclechoir.org.

The Errand of Angels. Directed by Christian Vuissa
Excel Entertainment and Mirror Films (2008)

Reviewed by Dennis R. Cutchins

Let me begin by stating that I thoroughly enjoyed this film. Yes, *The Errand of Angels* is yet another LDS missionary film, but eight years after the release of the groundbreaking *God's Army* (2000) the genre has matured a great deal. The drama in the film is subtle. No one dies, for instance, or turns from the faith, and there are no gang members terrorizing the neighborhood. Writer and literary critic William Dean Howells suggested that realism should not deal with what is possible but with what is probable, and this film definitely meets that standard. It is a mature Mormon movie. Viewers who have served LDS missions will likely recognize many of their own experiences on the screen. Moreover, this is not an "inside joke" film that only LDS audiences will understand. Rather, it is about people and relationships. In that respect, this is not exclusively an "LDS film" in which religion is the major issue. It is, rather, a film in which the principal characters happen to be Latter-day Saints and happen to be serving missions. Director Christian Vuissa notes that "understanding relationships and showing the process of discovery and realization are driving forces when I write a screenplay."¹ Those relationships, both between the missionaries and with their investigators, form the dramatic backbone of the film, and despite a lack of "action movie" action, there is plenty here to keep your attention.

Based on an original story by Heidi Johnson who served a mission to Austria in 1993, *The Errand of Angels* follows the mission of Sister Rachel Taylor, a new American missionary in the Austria Vienna mission. Taylor, played by Erin Chambers, is young and immature but is dedicated to her faith and willing to work. She soon discovers, however, that her companions, played by Americans Rachel Emmers and Eunicia Jones, Austrian Bettina Schwarz, and German Katrin Mayer, are vastly different people, and she struggles to understand them and to get along with them well enough to do her work. This process is complicated by having to deal with

investigators who often do things that are completely incomprehensible to the green missionary. In one wonderfully uncomfortable scene, the sisters are invited into a home and given treats, only to discover that the “investigators” have made an embarrassing mistake and have invited them in assuming they were missionaries from a different church. All of Taylor’s struggles are made more difficult by her attempts to speak a foreign language. Some of the funniest moments in the film come as a result of reading the subtitles as she does her best to speak German. There are a handful of subtitled scenes, but for the most part the characters speak English and the subtitles never get in the way of the narrative.

The film is carried, in large measure, by Erin Chambers’s outstanding performance as Sister Taylor. Chambers has a delicate beauty onscreen that is matched by her character’s determination to be a good missionary. Although Vuissa does not resort to extensive point-of-view shots, his narrative is definitely told from Taylor’s point of view. This creates a sympathy for the character that is not necessarily always deserved. Thus viewers like me may find themselves recognizing their own culpability in Taylor’s mistakes. Bettina Schwarz and Rachel Emmers deserve particular recognition for their supporting roles in this film. Both actors create believable and memorable characters and give wonderful performances. The film is well edited and moves quickly, although it spans most of Sister Taylor’s mission. Vuissa accomplishes this time compression effectively by using still photos and journal entries as transitional elements.

Like many LDS films, this production, which was made for an incredibly modest \$200,000, relies on the goodwill and kindness of Latter-day Saints. Interior scenes were filmed in an apartment building owned by an LDS family in Austria, for instance, and viewers will see cameos by a handful of real missionaries working in the Austria Vienna mission. That being said, this is a thoroughly professional production. *Errand* does not look like a small-budget, indy film at all. Brian Wilcox, the director of photography, deserves a good deal of the credit for this. Wilcox has thirty years of experience as a cameraman and director of photography, and that experience certainly shows. *The Errand of Angels* was filmed in high definition video, but the images look like the best 35-millimeter film. The colors are deep and gorgeous, the camera work is slow and gentle, and the scenery is nothing short of spectacular. This is one of the most beautiful films of the year, and though most viewers will likely see it on DVD, the full effect can only be seen on the big screen. Vuissa says he loves to scout and film on location, and that is pretty clear from the film. Most of *Errand* is shot on location and out of doors. As an Austrian, Vuissa was apparently keen to show his country in its best light, and he certainly does that. All of

this is even more impressive when you learn that the film was shot in only fifteen days.

If the film has a weakness, it is the ending. Vuissa uses a voiceover and montage to recount major events and tie up many of the narrative's loose ends. As I sat in the theater, it seemed a bit abrupt. Still, I definitely recommend this film. Its beautiful cinematography and very human storyline perfectly complement each other. It is appropriate for younger viewers, although the narrative may move a little slowly for preteens. But prospective missionaries, particularly sister missionaries, will get a fairly realistic idea of what it means to serve a mission, and viewers will be counting their euros to see if they can afford a trip to Austria.

The DVD was released on December 2, 2008. Special features include outtakes, an interview with the director, and subtitles in English, Spanish, and German.

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1. *The Errand of Angels* Press Notes, <http://www.errandofangelsmovie.com>.

Oliver Cowdery: Scribe, Elder, Witness, edited by John W. Welch and Larry E. Morris (Provo, Utah: The Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2006)

This volume, edited by John W. Welch and Larry E. Morris, is a collection of seventeen essays originally published in *BYU Studies*, *FARMS Review*, and other publications. The volume was published in commemoration of Oliver Cowdery's two-hundredth birthday. The contributing scholars seek to detail the highs and lows of one of Mormonism's most important early leaders. Editors Welch and Morris have compiled a well-rounded biography of the man and his life.

Cowdery's many contributions to the Restoration are the focal point of this compilation. Richard Lloyd Anderson begins with a brief overview of Cowdery's life; Larry E. Morris covers Cowdery's Vermont years; John W. Welch and Royal Skousen each treat aspects of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and Brian Q. Cannon and others cover the restoration of the priesthood. This volume reminds readers how integral Cowdery was to the major events of the Restoration. As Joseph Smith's scribe and assistant, Cowdery was present when the Prophet received many of the great early revelations. He also received both the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods with Joseph, and transcribed nearly the whole Book of Mormon, as dictated by the Prophet. Along with Martin Harris and David Whitmer, Cowdery was privileged to view the gold plates and declare his witness of the record's truthfulness. Cowdery was later called to be one of the Church's first missionaries.

Although some controversy surrounds Cowdery's life and character, this compilation does not shy away from the debate. Larry E. Morris's essay

on the private character of Cowdery gives well-researched insight into the controversy. By relying on contemporary journals and correspondence, several of the authors, along with Morris, dispel many of the rumors surrounding Cowdery's past.

The volume also explores Cowdery's falling away from the Church. With the help of correspondence between Cowdery and his brother-in-law Phineas Young, the authors confirm that although Cowdery left the Church, he never denied his testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Along with Cowdery's much-discussed falling away, Scott H. Faulring and others explore a lesser-known episode in Cowdery's life, but one that deserves greater attention—his reconciliation with the Church.

Oliver Cowdery is an important work for any student of early Mormon history. The insights of the contributors, along with the plain evidence into the actual events of his life, make this work one of the most informative accounts on the life and deeds of Oliver Cowdery.

—Reid L. Neilson and Paul Olson

Before Zion: An Account of the Seventh Handcart Company, by Allen C. Christensen (Springville, Utah: Council Press, 2004)

This book is Dr. Allen C. Christensen's contribution to the various histories of the ten handcart companies. He is the director of the Benson Agriculture and Food Institute at Brigham Young University and a descendant of some of the members of the Seventh Handcart Company.

The author points out in the first few sentences of the introduction that the Seventh Handcart Company is not as well known as other handcart companies, in part because "there is a paucity of written documentation on

their journey” (3). However, he does tell their story competently, and he uses some sources that are not generally available.

The book begins with a substantial amount of background information. The specific story of the company does not begin until page 68. Up to that point in the narrative, the author gives a general overview of the conditions in Europe and Scandinavia as the gospel was being spread prior to the company’s departure. The overview includes comments regarding members of the Seventh Company along with many other associated individuals. This initial background information is thorough and well footnoted.

The book presents the handcart trek in chronological order, making it is easy to follow the story of the Saints’ challenges as they struggled across the country. However, the book does contain some digressive supplemental material. For example, the author includes the story of Mark B. Garff’s work as a mission president in Europe at the start of World War II. President Garff’s story is fascinating but not relevant to the handcart history and takes up multiple pages. Likewise, the last chapter of the book is supplemental material regarding the Utah War that does not touch on the Seventh Company’s trek.

Still, scholars who are interested in the many handcart companies (most of which were quite safe and successful), as well as readers from the large body of descendants of those in the Seventh Handcart Company, will find this background information and ensuing history satisfying.

—Paul D. Lyman

Forty Ways to Look at Brigham Young: A New Approach to a Remarkable Man, by Chad M. Orton and William W. Slaughter (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2008)

Chad M. Orton, a Church archivist, and William W. Slaughter, a Church photo historian and senior reference specialist, have both published extensively, their past works including *Joseph Smith’s America* (Orton) and *Trail of Hope: The Story of the Mormon Trail* (Slaughter). In their new biography, they challenge the slanderous news articles targeted at Brigham Young in his day and seek to illuminate the true character of the man who “often remains hidden in the shadows of the hats” he wore, such as prophet, family patriarch, and colonizer (xiii).

Rather than being organized chronologically, the book is divided into forty chapters that focus on Brigham Young’s traits and accomplishments, painting him as a man of faith, tenacity, vision, and compassion—despite his being “a hard-spoken New Yorker” (150). Chapters like “Brigham as Renaissance Man” highlight his extraordinary talent, while other chapters like “Trust and Loyalty: Two Strengths and a Weakness” reveal his human capacity to falter. Some chapters provide historical context, such as a life chronology, a list of contemporary world and Church leaders, and a list of his wives, his marriage dates, his children, and family birthdates.

The authors do not skim over the libel directed at Brigham Young in a chapter called “America’s Bogeyman,” and at the book’s conclusion, the authors include both positive and negative notices written at his death. The *New York Tribune* editorialized: “Even his dupes will find out some day that their prophet was really nothing, but a cunning, clever old rascal, . . . and they will wonder how he could have left them without so much as a parting wink, to show that he had enjoyed the joke” (264).

Outside perspectives provide a sharp contrast to the way Brigham Young saw himself: “My whole life is devoted to . . . service and while I regret that my mission is not better understood by the world, the time will come when I will be understood and I leave to futurity the judgment of my labors and their results as they shall become manifest” (267). The authors have contributed well to this end. Both Latter-day Saints and others who are interested in Mormon history will want to read this multifaceted examination of the man the authors describe as “enigmatic,” “vilified,” and “the most misunderstood individual on the lists of the 100 greatest and most influential Americans” (xiii).

—Kimberly Webb Reid

Images of the New Jerusalem: Latter Day Saint Faction Interpretations of Independence, Missouri, by Craig S. Campbell (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2004)

Other than being the hometown of former United States President Harry Truman, Independence, Missouri, does not have much extraordinary history to offer mainstream America. Unless, as Craig S. Campbell rightly points out in this noteworthy book, one considers a specific religious heritage held by several related movements; then the history is “one that transcends the prosaic and is very beautiful, fantastic in fact, depending on ‘which end of the day you see it from’” (xiii–xiv). Within several blocks in this city, one can find temples, churches, and visitors’ centers belonging to several different groups all claiming this area to be sacred space. Regardless of what each group believes today, they all share a common history that involves a prophet, a place, and a promised future.

Craig S. Campbell, professor of geography at Youngstown State University, has contributed a fine volume to Mormon historiography with his *Images of the New Jerusalem: Latter Day Saint Faction Interpretation of Independence, Missouri*. In the preface, he describes the book’s objective as “a historical interpretation of the millennial geography of Independence and its surroundings as seen by the Latter Day Saint churches” (xiv). “Churches” is listed in the plural, and a hyphen is missing between “Latter” and “Day,” because the book focuses on several religious movements that claim lineage from Joseph Smith, mainly focusing on the LDS Church, the RLDS Church (now known as the Community of Christ), and the Church of Christ (Temple Lot). The result is a rich manuscript chronicling how these different people have, for almost two centuries, viewed an area that they believe has both a sacred past and a millennial future.

While the history of the groups other than the “Utah” Mormons will obviously be new and exciting for most readers, Campbell’s analysis of the LDS Church is also quite laudable and worthy of close attention. He narrates the fascinating progression of how the Church went from viewing Zion in Independence as something that needed to be immediately established (48) to a future incentive to be used as a “carrot-before-the-horse teaching” in order to inspire the Saints to build up Utah (129). Today, references to Zion are rarely taken to mean the specific location of Jackson County, and Church leaders almost never mention Missouri in reference to the future hopes of the millennial day (200). The author does an exemplary job of identifying the tensions that exist among believers today while speculating on

what Independence really means in today's international Church.

Just like any other book, however, there are parts to be quarreled with. While Campbell often keeps remarkably objective throughout the book to most of the different Mormon groups, his tone at times seems harshest toward the LDS faith. Also, he can sometimes appear quite judgmental toward those who hold more speculative views about scripture and millennial prophecy, such as the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) interpretation that Isaiah 2:2—"the mountain of the Lord's house"—refers to Missouri (257). Also, while the book is commendable in its historical accuracies, there are still a few small errors, including stating that the Saints bought the temple land in 1832 (46), rather than 1831. But these are minor quibbles, and they do not detract from the overall quality of the work.

While many other important themes and points could be presented as evidence for this book's importance, I will single out three that I feel are especially meaningful. First, the book was published by University of Tennessee Press, which is a new publisher to the Mormon scholarship scene. Second, as a geographical study, it is a new framework in which to explore Mormon history. I especially appreciated chapter 9, entitled "Independence Classified," where Campbell places the Mormon view of Zion within the larger view of other "sacred spaces," particularly in Asia. And third, I really enjoyed the fact that the study looked at several different groups within the larger Mormon movement, a trend that this reviewer hopes will continue. Overall, this is a significant book that deserves much more attention than it has heretofore been given.

—Benjamin E. Park

Sergeant Nibley, PhD: Memories of an Unlikely Screaming Eagle, by Hugh Nibley and Alex Nibley (Salt Lake City: Shadow Mountain, 2006)

Alex Nibley has taken his training as a playwright and filmmaker to bring readers an important book about his father's wartime memoirs as well as the larger context of war and its meaning. The format of the book is unusual; it reads like a screenplay or a documentary film that has been maneuvered and cajoled onto paper. Readers are guided in such a way that the authors' voices are interrupted often in order to bring attention to ancillary material. Some may find this interweaving of several narratives frustrating; but if readers are patient, they will be rewarded.

A highlight of the book is Alex Nibley's solid sense for story structure and form. It is refreshing to find creative use of literary devices in a history book. There is exposition, development, foreshadowing, and a recapitulation of earlier philosophical themes that punctuates the contradictions of war. This structure successfully heightens emotion in a way that the pages of a well-crafted book of fiction might.

Readers follow Hugh Nibley from his schooling at UC Berkeley (a period of time that was almost not covered in the book due to Nibley's reticence to publish letters that he felt betrayed his youthful arrogance) to his mission in Germany, where Nibley served the people he later fought during World War II. The book is full of personal letters and diary entries that reveal Nibley as articulate and moody with a sharp, downright biting wit. Readers are also given insight into Nibley's keen spiritual senses as they follow his "five o'clocks," the vivid and oracular dreams that often occurred at that morning hour (26).

The greater part of the book chronicles his wartime experiences, where Nibley is vaulted into the perilous mission of the 101st Airborne Division, the first division to land in Normandy. Nibley was in the thick of it all: he distinguished himself in advanced intelligence, helping to write *Invademeum*, a top-secret guide used in the invasion of Normandy; he landed on Utah Beach on D-Day in a jeep he had waterproofed; and he survived the near-suicidal air invasion of Holland (part of Operation Market Garden) despite his Waco glider being hit by excessive machine-gun fire. Readers interested in World War II, as well as the harrowing campaigns of the 101st Airborne, will not be disappointed in this narrative.

The book ends in philosophical reverie rather than historical detachment, an unusual but effective approach considering the milieu already established in previous chapters. Dwight D. Eisenhower's prescient warnings on the "military-industrial complex" as well as his feelings on preemptive war—"I wouldn't even listen to anyone seriously that came in and talked about such a thing"—are timely reminders, considering the current deliberations on the ethical use of war (318, 335). His reminders have extra rhetorical zing when placed toward the closing of the book. Considering Eisenhower's positions as the supreme Allied commander in Europe and later as the U.S. presidential nominee of a party that was firmly promilitary, he had ample reason to hide his bitterly won wisdom concerning the strife of nations. Instead, he gave candid warnings as one who knew, a sage who had seen everything of war. If Alex Nibley hopes that readers might find their understanding of war somewhat refined and reshaped, the author has succeeded at least with me.

As a professor at BYU, Hugh Nibley wrote an editorial during the Vietnam years renouncing war. It created a small firestorm, and most responding editorials disagreed with his argument. He gained a reputation as antiwar, but Nibley was not a stereotypical pacifist—he volunteered to serve his country in World War II and did not shirk when war's horror encroached upon him. "He was proud of his association with the Screaming Eagles," writes Alex Nibley. "He held soldiers in high esteem, but he had no admiration for the industry of war" (331). Eisenhower understood that war was sometimes necessary, but having suffered through it, offered this: "I hate war only as a soldier who has lived it can" (333). Likewise, Nibley's pacifism was an outgrowth of experience, epitomized in these words: "I saw the war. It's the saddest thing there is. I renounce war not because of what I have read, but because of what I have lived" (329).

—James T. Summerhays