



Editor in Chief

Steven C. Harper

Associate Editor

Susan Elizabeth Howe

Editorial Board

Trevor Alvord *media*

Richard E. Bennett *Church history*

Carter Charles *history*

W. Justin Dyer *social science*

Dirk A. Elzinga *linguistics*

Sherilyn Farnes *history*

James E. Faulconer *philosophy/theology*

Kathleen Flake *religious studies*

Ignacio M. Garcia *history*

Daryl R. Hague *translation*

Taylor Halvorson, *scripture and innovation*

David F. Holland *religious history*

Kent P. Jackson *scripture*

Megan Sanborn Jones *theater and media arts*

Ann Laemmlen Lewis *independent scholar*

Kerry Muhlestein *Egyptology*

Armand L. Mauss *sociology*

Marjorie Newton *history*

Josh E. Probert *material culture*

Susan Sessions Rugh *history*

Herman du Toit *visual arts*

Lisa Olsen Tait *history*

Greg Trimble, *entrepreneurship,
internet engineering*

John G. Turner *history*

Gerrit van Dyk *Church history*

John W. Welch *law and scripture*

Frederick G. Williams *cultural history*

Jed L. Woodworth *history*



INVOLVING READERS
IN THE LATTER-DAY SAINT
ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE





BYU STUDIES QUARTERLY

Vol. 58 • No. 4 • 2019

ARTICLES

- 4** Those They Left Behind:
A Look at Missionary Wives and Children
Chad M. Orton
- 49** The Use of *Gethsemane* by Church Leaders, 1859–2018
John Hilton III and Joshua P. Barringer
- 99** Into Arabia: Lehi and Sariah's Escape from Jerusalem,
Perspectives Suggested by New Fieldwork
Warren P. Aston
- 143** Using Science to Answer Questions from Latter-day Saint History:
The Case of Josephine Lyon's Paternity
Ugo A. Perego
- 155** Captain Moroni's Revelation
Duane Boyce

POETRY

- 48** At least in heaven there's food.
Jared Pearce
- 127** Forerunner
Merrijane Rice
- 142** Green Things
Sarah Dunster
- 160** January Night
Susan Jeffers



ESSAYS

- 128** Mary Whitmer and Moroni:
Experiences of an Artist in Creating a Historical Painting
Robert T. Pack
- 151** The Lucky
Chelsea Bagley Dyreng

REVIEW ESSAY

- 77** *A Preparatory Redemption: Reading Alma 12–13*, edited by
Matthew Bowman and Rosemary Demos
Reviewed by Charles Harrell

BOOK REVIEWS

- 161** *Your Sister in the Gospel: The Life of Jane Manning James,
a Nineteenth-Century Black Mormon* by Quincy D. Newell
Reviewed by Carter Charles
- 165** *The New Testament: A Translation for Latter-day Saints:
A Study Bible* by Thomas A. Wayment
Reviewed by Philip L. Barlow
- 169** *Bible Culture and Authority in the Early United States* by Seth Perry
Reviewed by Kent P. Jackson

BOOK NOTICES

- 173** *Lot Smith: Mormon Pioneer and American Frontiersman*
The Earth Will Appear as the Garden of Eden
Life beyond the Grave: Christian Interfaith Perspectives



Studio photograph sent to Albert Manwaring while he served a mission in the British Isles, showing his wife, Bertha, and daughters Arvilla, Ora, and Bessie praying for him, 1903. Courtesy Daughters of Utah Pioneers and L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.



Those They Left Behind

A Look at Missionary Wives and Children

Chad M. Orton

In September 1900, thirty-three-year-old Mary Bennion bid good-bye to her husband, William, as he left to serve a mission for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Southwestern States Mission. Mary, pregnant with the couple's seventh child, stoically noted his departure in her journal: "Wm left about 11 Oclock. We all feel very sad about his leaving us for such a long time, it looks a long time to be away from his family, but hope he will fulfill an honorable mission, return home a better man than when he left."¹

Five years later, in December 1905, thirty-year-old Catherine Stevens said farewell to her husband, George, as he left her and their four children to serve a mission in New Zealand. Catherine later recounted their parting with deep emotion: "The time had come to say good-bye and we all gathered just inside of our front room door and had a family prayer. Then George took me in his arms and smothered me with hugs and kisses; neither of us saw each other for tears. The children were tugging at his coat and legs, and crying."²

Similar farewells to those reported by Mary Bennion and Catherine Stevens occurred thousands of times from the 1830s to the 1950s, a period when Church leaders routinely called married men away from

1. Mary Wilson Bennion, journal, September 6, 1900, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as CHL).

2. Kenneth R. Stevens, comp., *George William Stevens and Catherine Richards* (Logan, Utah: By the author, 1967), 7.



their families to serve missions.³ Attention has long been focused on these missionaries' sacrifices, but comparatively little attention has been paid to their faithful families. These supportive missionary wives and children are unsung heroes of the Restoration, who made sacrifices at home so that the gospel could go forth into the world.⁴

The Wives and Children's Accompanying Mission Call

Although mission calls were specifically issued to husbands and fathers, it was widely understood that their wives and children received accompanying calls. Though the mission of the wives and children was simple in theory—to carry on while the family's traditional breadwinner spread

3. Though men were called on a variety of missions, such as to assist emigration or to labor as "gold missionaries" in the California gold fields, the focus of this essay is on proselytizing missions. The exact number of women whose husbands were proselytizing missionaries is not known. William Hughes looked at 908 proselytizing missionaries in the last half of the nineteenth century for whom marital status was known and found that almost 80 percent were married. The number would have been higher except that between 1896 and 1900 the number of married missionaries fell to around 50 percent. William E. Hughes, "A Profile of the Missionaries of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1849–1900" (master's thesis, Brigham Young University, 1986), 161. If Hughes's findings are an accurate sampling, it means that during just the second half of the nineteenth century, around ten thousand proselytizing missionaries left wives behind to serve missions.

Many mission presidents who responded to an informal poll in 1894 felt that older or married men were better suited to the challenges of missionary work, such as having to travel without purse or scrip. One mission president, however, concluded that younger or single men made better missionaries because, without wives and children to worry about, it was easier for them to concentrate on missionary work. Hughes, "Profile of the Missionaries," 162–63.

Among the last men to receive mission calls requiring them to leave their families were Emmanuel Ballstaedt, George Paget, and Clifford Andersen. After the First Presidency, in the midst of the Korean War, asked "each quorum of Seventy to provide at least three missionaries," these men "accepted this great responsibility, each leaving a devoted wife and children." All three had completed required military service "before offering his time in a greater cause—service to the Master." Paget left behind his wife, Vera, and two daughters; Ballstaedt left behind his wife, Zina, and two daughters; and Andersen left behind his wife, Helen, and a son and two daughters. "297th Quorum Sends Heads of Families," *Church News*, August 8, 1953, 7.

4. In a few circumstances, men took their families with them. For an overview of wives who accompanied their husbands on missions to the Pacific Islands during the 1800s, see Carol Cornwall Madsen, "Mormon Missionary Wives in Nineteenth Century Polynesia," *Journal of Mormon History* 13 (1986–87): 61–85.



the restored gospel—the reality was regularly quite different, prompting one Utah newspaper to declare, “If anyone performs a mission when the head of the house leaves his family and goes out into the world it is the wife who remains at home.”⁵

To accomplish her mission, the missionary wife regularly had to add her husband’s responsibilities to her own already heavy duties, which in turn often required her children to assume greater responsibilities. Although a few families prospered financially during the mission separation, for most of those left behind, the mission call meant that they had to press forward with greatly diminished resources. As a result, those left behind regularly faced challenges and endured trials that were frequently more difficult than the trials experienced by the missionaries in the field. D. Arthur Haycock, who was five when his father left on a mission, recalled that it was all he, his mother, and younger siblings could do just “to keep body and soul together and support my father in the mission field.”⁶

The situation prompted one returned missionary to declare that he “would rather be a missionary than a missionaries [sic] wife” since “they had the hardest part of the mission to fill.”⁷ J. Golden Kimball, a member of the First Council of Seventy, which was responsible for overseeing the Church’s missionary efforts, echoed similar sentiments when he wrote local ecclesiastical leaders that “the missionaries’ wives must have our attention, as they have the greater burden and our hearts and sympathies go out to them.”⁸ In short, although the missionaries have long received the glory, the missionary wives, who had both the work and worry of home life, did the majority of the heavy lifting. The sentiments that Sarah (Sanie)

5. “Entertained Missionaries Wives,” *Box Elder News*, June 30, 1910, 1. Mary Bennion journaled the day her husband left, “I . . . realize that I have a mission to perform at home, and feel with that I cannot do it without the aid of my Heavenly Father.” Bennion, journal, September 6, 1900.

6. Personal history of David Arthur Haycock, 3, copy in author’s possession. Though missionaries during much of the missionary wife era were called to serve “without purse or scrip,” thus freeing up resources for their wives and children, in reality they often needed their family to provide financial assistance.

7. Andrew Fjeld, remarks, October 25, 1901, Lehi Missionary Wives Society minutes, CHL.

8. J. Golden Kimball to Presidents of the 48th Quorum of Seventy, February 9, 1903, 2, 48th Quorum of Seventies records, 1857–1928, CHL. In 1953, the *Church News* wrote that it was not three recently called missionaries who were “making the real sacrifices,” but “the wives and children at home.” “297th Quorum Sends Heads of Families,” 7.

Lund wrote in the midst of a mission experience were shared by thousands of missionary wives: “I think I have a pretty hard mission.”⁹

The Missionary Wife Era in Context

During the missionary wife era, the overwhelming majority of men did not initiate their mission call by volunteering to serve. While some received advance warning that Church leaders were considering calling them on a mission, such as an inquiry about their availability to serve, for others the call was completely unexpected. Some first learned of their mission when it was announced over the pulpit at general conference, while others first became aware that they had been called when they received a letter with the return address “Box B,” the Church’s Salt Lake City post office box.

Because mission calls were usually unanticipated, they seldom came at a convenient time. Olive Smoot Bean later told her children the circumstances of their father’s call: “Everything looked promising for us, and I felt that we were on easy road. . . . [Then] there came a letter to your father asking him if he could prepare to go on a mission. . . . Father said he could go so much easier a year or two later, [for] he had nothing much . . . to supply me with what we needed.”¹⁰ Recounting her father’s call, Myrtle Farnsworth Christensen wrote: “The ranch was secure, Father had a job in the Co-op store, and the future looked bright—when a call came. . . .



Olive and Will Bean, ca. 1876. Courtesy Diana Richman.

9. Sarah (Sanie) Ann Petersen Lund to Anthon Lund, March 23, 1884, Letters to Anthon H. Lund from His Family, 1883–1885, CHL. All cited letters between Sanie and Anthon, and between Tony and Anthon Lund, are from this collection. On another occasion, Sanie wrote, “It is not the easiest thing in the world to be a missionary wife.” Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, November 1, 1883.

10. Olive Smoot Bean to “Loved Ones,” June 1934, as published in “Letters of James William Bean and Olive Smoot Bean from June 23, 1882 to September 11, 1883,” compiled December 1972, typescript, CHL. All cited correspondence between Olive and Will is from this collection.



The ranch was sold, Mother and we children (there were five of us now, the youngest six months old) were moved into an apartment in her mother's home, and Father departed for a 30-month absence."¹¹

Many individuals endured the farewells and the extended separations of the mission experience more than once. During her first ten years of marriage to Brigham Young, Mary Ann Angell Young had to bear the realities of her husband serving seven missions, ranging from several months to two years. Henry S. Tanner was born while his father was on a mission and then as an adult twice left his wife, Lauretta (Laura), to serve missions, the first occurring just days after they had married. Sanie Lund likewise was born while her father was a missionary and then spent significant time as an adult raising her children by herself as her husband, Anthon, served four missions. When Clorinda Schmutz was forty-one years old, she bid goodbye to her missionary husband, Johannes (John), and then again when she was fifty years old.

So common were missionary wives and children that beginning with the first Latter-day Saint hymnal published in 1835, and continuing through 1948, Church hymnbooks featured a hymn, sometimes referred to as "The 'Mormon' Missionaries' Farewell," that included a verse that mentioned them:

Farewell our wives and children,
Who render life so sweet;
Dry up your tears—be faithful
Till we again shall meet.¹²

In the 1880s, during the antipolygamy crusades, Charles Denney wrote a song while in prison for cohabitation that was readily applicable to the mission experience. The first verse of "I Will Write to Papa" reads:

The house seems so lonely now papa has gone,
We feel quite forsaken, so sad and forlorn,
Perhaps he is lonesome: to make him feel gay,
Let's write him a letter now he is away.
Yes, write him a letter, a kind, loving letter,
A sweet, tender letter, now he is away.¹³

11. Myrtle Farnsworth Christensen, "My Life History," ca. 1935, 6, CHL.

12. "The 'Mormon' Missionaries' Farewell," *Juvenile Instructor* 18 (April 1, 1883): 144; Helen H. Macare, comp., *A Comprehensive List of Hymns Appearing in Official Hymnals of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1835–1950* (n.p., May 1961), 11a–c ("Farewell, Our Friends and Brethren").

13. Charles Denney, "Let's Write Pa a Letter," *Juvenile Instructor* 26 (November 15, 1891): 712.



Anthon H. Lund, ca. 1883. Courtesy Jennifer L. Lund.



Sanie Lund, ca. 1890. Courtesy Jennifer L. Lund.

Myrtle Christensen used to sing this song with her siblings while her father served a mission. “How Mamma [Harriet Farnsworth] cried as she accompanied us on her guitar,” Myrtle recalled.¹⁴

When Sanie Lund’s non-Latter-day Saint aunt learned that Anthon Lund had left his family to serve a second mission, she was aghast. Sanie informed her husband that the aunt “thought it was the awfulist thing” and then told Sanie that “we all must be crasy.”¹⁵ While Latter-day Saints could appreciate the aunt’s perspective—many undoubtedly expressing similar sentiments themselves—they also understood that there was an aspect to their actions that those not of their faith did not comprehend. Anthon spoke for most missionaries who left their families when he wrote, “Take our religion out of the question, and it would be an act I would not be guilty of . . . , but, as long as the Lord wants me here, I will try to do my duty.”¹⁶ Olive Bean reflected a feeling common among missionary wives when she wrote that she wanted “to do my share in rolling on our work, and if I can do it by giving my husband’s service to

14. Christensen, “My Life History,” 6.

15. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, February 17, 1884.

16. Anthon H. Lund to Canute Peterson, January 11, 1884, Peterson Family Papers, ca. 1844–1957, CHL.



Vilate Kimball, ca. 1860.
Courtesy Church History
Library.

the cause, I am willing, and proud that he is worthy [of] the mission.”¹⁷

Although missionary wives were honored to be married to someone deemed worthy to serve a mission and were willing to do their part, accepting the call and facing the subsequent separation required the exercise of faith. “I cannot understand why this had to be,” Dorothy Pectol wrote, “but God knows best. We must submit to his will.”¹⁸ While Vilate Kimball was “perfectly reconciled” to Heber C. Kimball joining other members of the Quorum of the Twelve on a mission to England in 1839, she confessed, “I must say I

have got a trial of my faith as I never had before.”¹⁹

Missionary wives were willing to endure the challenges of the mission call because they believed it was an opportunity for personal growth and for drawing closer to God. Along these lines Mary Bennion journaled regarding her own and her husband’s mission experience, “Hope we will look on it as something [that] will elevate us both to a higher standard.”²⁰ Clorinda Schmutz wrote to her missionary husband, John: “We are trying to do right at home[,] trying to live near to the Lord that he may bless us all.” She noted her hope that their time “will not be spent in vain,” concluding that it would not be if John lived up to his duties.²¹

17. Olive Bean to Will Bean, September 26, 1882.

18. Dorothy Hickman Pectol, journal, November 23, 1907, Pectol family collection, 1846–1909, CHL.

19. Vilate Murray Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, September 21, 1839, Heber C. Kimball correspondence and memorandum book, CHL. Even missionary wives of great faith likely at some point experienced the same feeling that Mine Jorgensen recorded four months into her thirty-one-month mission experience: “They did me an injustice who took my husband from me.” Wilhelmine (Mine) Marie Jacobsen Bolvig Jorgensen to Hans Jorgenson, August 16, 1881, as published in Julie K. Allen, “Double Jeopardy in Pleasant Grove: The Gender and Cultural Challenges of Being a Danish Mormon Missionary Grass Widow in Territorial Utah,” in *Mormon Women’s History: Beyond Biography*, ed. Rachel Cope and others (Madison, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2017), 194.

20. Bennion, journal, January 1, 1901.

21. Clorinda Schlappi Schmutz to Johnannes (John) Schmutz, February 7, 1900, Schmutz family correspondence, 1900–1902, 1908–1910, CHL. All cited correspondence between Clorinda and John is from this collection. Excerpts



The arrangement of having husbands serve a “foreign mission” while their wives served what amounted to a “home mission” also had an impact on helping the kingdom grow. For every Jesse N. Smith who spread the gospel in Denmark, there was an Emma West Smith who continued as a contributing member of a community such as Parowan, Utah. Additionally, the dual mission arrangement was a missionary tool. One returned missionary reported that when missionaries “tell the people of the World, our Wives are willing for us to go, on missions . . . they say, we must be sincere [*sic*], for the sacrifice we make.”²²

While hundreds of available records allow for extensive studies of the missionary program and provide insights into what it was like to be a missionary, by comparison only a handful of extant journals, letters, reminiscences, and histories recount what it was like to be the missionary wife or child left behind. Although relatively few in number, these records reveal that there were differences in their experiences depending upon such factors as where they lived and the makeup of their family. Thus, the experience of Sanie Lund in Ephraim, who had five sons, differed somewhat from that of Olive Bean in Provo, who had one daughter when her husband left and gave birth to a second while he was gone; from that of Clorinda Schmutz, who lived in St. George with her ten children, some of whom were married; and from that of Annie Hansen, a polygamous wife who shared a home with her sister-wife in Brigham City. These records also reveal common threads among these missionary wives and children that transcended differences in location, family makeup, and the time frame of the mission experience. Among these were faith, sacrifice, trials, and victories both small and great.²³

from the letters Clorinda and John exchanged during their first mission experience have been published in Richard Schmutz, “The Mundane and the Transcendent: Excerpts from Letters of Johannes & Clorinda Schmutz, 1900–1902,” *Swiss-American Historical Society Review* 34, no. 1 (1998): 49–66.

22. Andrew Fjeld, remarks, October 25, 1901, Lehi Missionary Wives Society minutes.

23. The currently available records primarily deal with those left behind prior to 1910, with the majority looking at the experiences of missionary wives and children between 1880 and 1910. Most of these records were made available to historians when Linda Thatcher published “Women Alone: The Economic and Emotional Plight of Early LDS Women,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 25, no. 4 (Winter 1992): 45–55, the first published study to look at the missionary wife experience.



Laura Tanner and children Mildred (who later composed the music to "I Am a Child of God"), Vella, and Henry, ca. 1895. Courtesy William W. Tanner.

Life without Their Husbands and Fathers

When Henry S. Tanner was called to preside over the California Mission, his wife, Laura, concluded that she would support her family by returning to Paris, Idaho, to teach, a position she had held prior to her marriage. Her father, however, would have none of it. "If I have a son-in-law that is worthy to be president of a mission I can take care of his wife and children while he is doing it," he proclaimed.²⁴ And he did, moving Laura and her three children to his home in Marsh Valley, Idaho.

When Will Bean was called on a mission to the southern states, Olive Bean declined her parents' invitation to move in with them and chose to stay in her house in Provo and make ends meet the best she could. When individuals predicted she would have to give up living on her own and move in with her parents across town, she responded that she would show them what she could do "with the Lord's help."²⁵ And she did, remaining in her home throughout her husband's mission.

Whether they stayed in their home or moved in with or near family, wives and children almost always had to adapt to a new lifestyle. Arthur Haycock recounted that his father had had a good job prior to his mission, but during his absence the family "barely existed." He likened their situation to being "orphans because our father was not there to look after us."²⁶

24. Lauretta (Laura) Woodland Tanner, reminiscence, October 30, 1949, typescript, 30, copy in author's possession.

25. Olive Bean to Will Bean, July 23, 1882.

26. Haycock, "Personal History," 3. In addition to the experiences of many missionary children being temporarily similar to orphans who struggled to survive, the situation of most missionary wives was also temporarily like that



When Anthon Lund left to serve his second mission, Sanie Lund tried to make her first winter as a missionary wife in their new two-story brick house “as comfortable and cheap as possib[le].” Although she followed the common practice of heating only the bottom level of her home, that winter was not as comfortable as hoped. Without the family breadwinner, her supply of wood and coal ran out before spring arrived.²⁷



Anthon and Sanie Lund home, Ephraim, Utah, with (left to right) Mary Thompson, Tony, Ray, Henry, Otha, Sanie, and Tute Lund in foreground, 1884. Courtesy Jennifer L. Lund.

As Matilda Hintze faced another winter during her polygamous husband’s fourth mission, she did so without “a bit of wood and coal.” On top of that, she noted that the children needed shoes and winter clothes, and her efforts to obtain money to buy those items had been unsuccessful. “I don’t know what to do,” she confessed.²⁸ Somehow, she found a way to make it through that winter.

of widows of this era. Both groups faced new and often reduced financial realities; had to assume the sole responsibility for family, home, and business affairs; and had to endure loneliness and isolation.

27. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, November 21, 1883.

28. Augusta Matilda Wall Hintze to Ferdinand Hintze, October 21, 1888, as included in “Our Grandmother, Augusta Matilda Wall Hintze, 6 November 1857–28 June 1940,” n.p., n.d., Penny F. Tolman historical collection, CHL.



Those left behind also regularly faced changes to their daily fare, just as their missionary husbands and fathers did. Two months after Brigham Young left with other members of the Twelve on a mission to England in 1839, Mary Ann Young found herself without food to feed her family. Leaving her older children, she took her two-month-old baby and set off on a “cold, stormy November day” from her home in Montrose, Iowa, to cross the Mississippi River in a small rowboat to seek help in Nauvoo, Illinois. “Almost fainting with cold and hunger, and dripping wet,” she arrived at a friend’s home, where she left her baby as she went to the tithing office to procure a “few potatoes and a little flour.” She then rowed back across the river. Several times during the winter she repeated the trip just “to obtain the barest necessaries of life,” at times “in storms that would have frightened women of ordinary courage.”²⁹



Mary Ann Young, ca. 1860. Courtesy Church History Library.

Hannah Smith Dalton reported that during her father’s mission, her family “did not have much to eat.” Breakfast usually consisted of porridge, while the dinner staple was potato soup, both made with milk from the family cow. Partway through the mission, however, the cow died. “When mother made the porridge and there was no milk to go into it, she cried like her heart would break,” Hannah recalled.³⁰

29. E. B. Wells, “Heroines of the Church: Biography of Mary Ann Angell Young,” *Juvenile Instructor* 26, no. 2 (January 15, 1891): 56–57. Additional information about Mary Ann’s experiences can be found in Lisa Olsen Tait and Chad M. Orton, “Take Special Care of Your Family”: D&C 118, 126,” in *Revelations in Context: The Stories behind the Sections of the Doctrine and Covenants*, ed. Matthew McBride and James Goldberg (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2016), 242–49; and Matthew C. Godfrey, “You Had Better Let Mrs. Young Have Any Thing She Wants’: What a Joseph Smith Pay Order Teaches about the Plight of Missionary Wives in the Early Church,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2019): 53–69.

30. Hannah Daphne Smith Dalton, “*Pretty Is as Pretty Does*” (South Africa: n.p., 1933), 12.



During his father's mission, five-year-old Arthur Haycock, having grown tired of eggs, threw them on the ash pile. His mother (Lily Crane Haycock), knowing that there was nothing else to eat, made him go outside, pick his meal out of the ashes, clean it off, and eat it. Arthur later noted, "I am sure mother . . . shed a lot of tears over the experiences we had during those two years."³¹



Wives' Expanded Work Responsibilities

For Catherine Stevens, food wasn't the problem. Prior to leaving on his mission, George Stevens had employed

Lily Haycock and sons Gordon and Arthur (who later served as secretary to five Church presidents), ca. 1920. Courtesy Brett Dowdle.

men to help him with the farm work. Because Catherine could not afford to employ these men, she and her young children had to assume responsibility for the tasks that had previously been done by her husband and the hired hands.

Catherine had the sole responsibility to take care of the farm animals, tend two fruit orchards, and harvest the berry bushes in addition to her regular duties. A particularly onerous task was milking the cows twice each day and then getting the milk to the local creamery. Not used to milking, initially her hands and wrists swelled up until she could hardly use them. "It was all such heavy work," she recalled of her mission experience.³²

Clorinda Schmutz likewise had to assume responsibility for the family farm. "We have got so much work to do, we dont know what to do," she lamented during her first year as a missionary wife.³³ John Schmutz could only send his regrets that he was not able to help her and assured

31. Haycock, "Personal History," 2–3.

32. Stevens, *George William Stevens and Catherine Richards*, 11.

33. Clorinda Schmutz to John Schmutz, August 23, 1900.



John and Clorinda Schmutz family (Lucille, far left, back row; Marcell, middle child, back row), ca. 1910. Courtesy Church History Library.

her that he would do the one thing he could—pray that she would “have health to do all [her] labor.”³⁴

Charles Shumway, who began his missionary service in 1883, left behind two wives, Sarah and Agnes, who were also sisters. Regarding their situation, Sarah recounted: “We lived in the same house, raised our children together and lived in peace and harmony together. . . . We didn’t have too much money, but we did get along. We were willing to work and the people were willing to help us. They gave us work that they could have done themselves, but in order to help us [they] gave us something to do. We did spinning, knitting, sewing, quilting, and made lace. . . . We made many quilts; we quilted at night after the children had gone to bed.”³⁵

When Franklin Seal began his mission in September 1899, he left behind his wife, Mary, who was pregnant with their eighth child. A Riverton, Utah, businessman, he had tried to ensure that his family was taken care of. The owner of a meat and vegetable business, he was

34. John Schmutz to Clorinda Schmutz, August 31, 1900.

35. “A Sketch of the Life of Sarah Jardine Shumway, Written by Herself in 1931,” *Cache Valley Newsletter*, no. 148 (February 1981): 7.

owed more than two thousand dollars by customers and had secured a promise from each that they would pay Mary the money owed. The promised money, however, did not fully materialize. Because things didn't turn out as they were planned, Mary had to take things into her own hands: "She took her little baby and went out working. She did washing by hand scrubbing on the wash board. She also sewed carpet rags. Just any kind of work she could get. She took care of women and their babies for just fifty cents a day. I have heard my mother say many times how she went to work only having a cup of ginger tea to drink for her breakfast. Sometimes her pay would be a little flour to make bread for her children."³⁶

To meet her family's needs, Dorothy Pectol, whose husband, Ephraim, had been the local schoolteacher, took in boarders, kept bees to sell honey, sewed for other people, washed their clothes, fed their animals, and made and sold goods at Christmas. Her journal entry for November 4, 1907, noting that the day had "been a mixture" of "pig feed[ing],



Ephraim and Dorothy Pectol, with children Florence, Leona, Eleanor, and Fontella, with superimposed children Golda, Devona, and Ephraim, ca. 1909. Courtesy Judy Busk.

36. Tressa Bernice Seal Davies, "Mary Ellen Bills Seal," FamilySearch, <https://www.familysearch.org/photos/artifacts/1317806?p=13394603>. See also Doris W. Seal, ed., "Franklin Edward Seal, Sr., and Mary Ellen Bills," in *Seal—Families Are Forever* (n.p.: Seal Family Foundation, 1986), 44.



Emma West Smith, ca. 1900. Courtesy Daughters of Utah Pioneers.



Hannah Smith Dalton, ca. 1930. Courtesy Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

cooking, tending to the bee's[,] house work, and all," was similar to many other entries she wrote during her husband's absence.³⁷

Hannah Dalton recalled the work her mother, Emma West Smith, did to support her family. After working all day around the house and farm, Emma also worked nights spinning yarn to earn needed money. Hannah recalled, "How I would cry when I went to bed to think my little sweet mother had to work so hard."³⁸

The Children's Expanded Roles

Because their mothers had to do more, children regularly also had to assume greater responsibilities. This meant that they had less free time and frequently had less opportunity to go to school.

Hannah Dalton, who was five years old when her father left on a mission, recalled splitting "fine splinters off from the pichy wood" during the day and then sitting with her mother in the evening tending her baby brother and "holding and lighting these pitchy sticks for her [mother] to see to spin by."³⁹ Catherine Stevens recounted that while her husband was a missionary, ten-year-old Ione was "a big help in the house,"

37. Pectol, journal, November 4, 1907.

38. Dalton, "Pretty Is as Pretty Does," 11.

39. Dalton, "Pretty Is as Pretty Does," 11.

especially “looking after the younger ones,” and that seven-year-old Kenneth “helped much with the outside work.”⁴⁰

Nearly a month after Anthon Lund left on a mission, eleven-year-old Tony Lund reported to his father that he had spent the morning milking cows and sawing twelve poles for firewood. He then devoted the afternoon to picking rabbitbrush flowers and doing chores.⁴¹ Five days later he again wrote his father about what he had been doing:

Ma and [ten-year-old] henry and me cleaned out the cellar yesterday that was quite a job. Ma has not been without wood enough yet and its now bout a month. . . . I have been busy ever since you went I helped Parley [a neighbor] to haul his grain I loaded 11 loads and not one bundle fell off. He is going to haul ma some wood for I helped him. I worked in the tithing grainery and got 70 lbs of wheat and an order on the store for 1.20 cts. I have earnt one bushel of oats and 1 bushel of wheat working on the threshing machine. I have been working for Peter Kesko 3 days [picking potatoes] and got 30cts a day I gave it all to ma.⁴²

A year later, Sanie noted that then twelve-year-old Tony did not start school with his younger brothers because “the old cellar” had caved in again and the fence needed mending, and he was needed at home to fix them.⁴³ Although Tony was still helping out, the enthusiasm he showed at the start of the mission had waned, and Sanie had to spend more of her energy getting him and his younger brothers to do the needed work. This reality prompted her to write that “our garden looks nice or would do if we could rid it of weeds but the boys are not much at that unless I can go with them, and that is not often [for] there is enough to keep me busy in the house.”⁴⁴ The reality prompted her to write Anthon, “You wonder that I get tired, but I think I have a very good reason to be tired.”⁴⁵ She further noted regarding the outside work: “Wont I be glad when I can throw all this burden off[f] on to you[.] it is entirely to much for a woman with the cares of a family.”⁴⁶

When Tony was able to attend school, his father’s absence affected that aspect of his life as well. “I cant keep up in my arithmetic so well as

40. Stevens, *George William Stevens and Catherine Richards*, 11.

41. Tony Lund to Anthon Lund, September 21, 1883.

42. Tony Lund to Anthon Lund, September 26, 1883.

43. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, September 27, 1884.

44. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, June 28, 1885.

45. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, June 28, 1885.

46. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, September 27, 1884.



Lund boys, *clockwise from left*: Henry, Tute, Ray, Tony (who served as music director of Mormon Tabernacle Choir, 1916–1935), Otha, and Will (born after his father's second mission), ca. 1890. Courtesy Jennifer L. Lund.

when I had you to help me,” he informed his dad.⁴⁷ Tony was also not able to join the band since there was no money to buy a trumpet. “He will have to wait untill you get home and make lots of money,” Sanie wrote Anthon.⁴⁸

Clorinda Schmutz had to turn the responsibility for the family herd over to thirteen-year-old Marcell. “I hate to keep him out of school but I will try to keep him studying whenever he has time,” she informed her husband.⁴⁹ Watching the herd was a daily job, but on the Fourth of July Clorinda took over for Marcell so he could join in the day’s festivities.

47. Tony Lund to Anthon Lund, February 26, 1884.

48. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, March 31, 1884.

49. Clorinda Schmutz to John Schmutz, February 28, 1900.



Christmas

In addition to everyday life, holidays, especially Christmas, were often different and difficult for missionary wives and children. Hannah Dalton later recounted her first Christmas with her father on a mission: “All of us children hung up our stockings. We jumped up early in the morning to see what Santa had brought but there was not a thing in them. Mother wept bitterly. She went to her box and got a little apple and cut it in little tiny pieces and that was our Christmas, but I have never forgotten to this day how I loved her dear little hands as she was cutting that apple.”⁵⁰

Sanie Lund reported to her husband, Anthon, the family’s 1883 Christmas without him: “You hoped we would have a merry Christmas but it was the hardest day I have seen for a long time. . . . The boys missed Santa the children was so sick that I did not think much about it but I thought it would be to bad not to put something in there stockings I had bought a few little things and towards day light when the baby seemed a little easier I went and filled them. . . . [Tony declared] it was the worst Christmas he had ever seen.”⁵¹

During her first Christmas without her husband, Olive Bean wrote him: “In all the excitement and pleasure I feel lonely and isolated, thinking constantly of the true heart absent from me. . . . Oh! If I could only be permitted to look on your dear face once, and feel one clasp of your loving arms, and receive a kiss from you, it would be worth all the money spent in presents this Christmas.”⁵²



Olive Bean, ca. 1890. Courtesy Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

Loneliness

Shortly after Henry Tanner returned from presiding over the California Mission—the second two-year mission he had filled during his six years of married life—his wife Laura was awakened by his crying in his sleep. When she awoke him to ask what was the matter, he replied: “I just had a nightmare. I thought I had to go and leave you and the children and I

50. Dalton, “*Pretty Is as Pretty Does*,” 12.

51. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, December 26, 1883.

52. Olive Bean to Will Bean, December 24, 1882.



Laura Tanner, ca. 1897. Courtesy William W. Tanner.



Henry S. Tanner, ca. 1897. Courtesy William W. Tanner.

just can't go and leave you." Laura responded, "Oh yes you can you have left us before and you can do it again." Later recalling this incident, she noted that it was a great lesson for her as she had "sometimes wondered if it was as lonesome for him as it was for us."⁵³

Enduring loneliness is a frequent theme in the journals and letters of missionary wives. In an era before radio, phones, television, and social media, and at a time when the nearest neighbor could live a distance away, the absence of the family patriarch left a big void. Additionally, although they were the ones at home, missionary wives wrote of being homesick. Noting that she was "not very well," Dorothy Pectol concluded, "Perhaps it is homesickness."⁵⁴ For missionary wives, home truly was where the heart was—not just a place to live.⁵⁵

Soon after Will Bean left on his mission, Olive Bean wrote him: "Oh! if I could only have a good talk with you today, it would make me feel braver and better. Sometimes I get heartsick and weary when I think of the many long days ere I will have sight of your loved face."⁵⁶ A few months later she wrote: "I get lonely and dejected sometimes. . . . You cannot realize how I miss your precious company. It seems as if there is

53. Tanner, reminiscence, 43.

54. Pectol, journal, November 21, 1907.

55. In her short essay "Home," Annie E. Lancaster wrote: "Home is the residence not merely of the body but of the heart." An unattributed version of her essay was published in the *Millennial Star* 24, no. 34 (August 23, 1862): 544.

56. Olive Bean to Will Bean, July 23, 1882.



nothing to live for in your absence, and time drags with me as it never did before. If it were not for our own precious Nina, I would have no heart to keep up. . . . I thank God that I am not childless, for it seems as if the loneliness would be more than I could bear.”⁵⁷ On a later occasion she noted: “Oh! I am so homesick and lonely. No matter how many I am surrounded with, when you are absent, I am alone. And our home is not home without you.”⁵⁸

Sanie Lund wrote to Anthon: “I did not realise how much my old man was in my life untill now he is so far away.”⁵⁹ She further reported: “I find it kind of hard and lonesome but every body thinks it is nothing for me [since] I have such a nice house just as if one could not get lonesome in a good house.”⁶⁰

Since Sundays were the day that missionary wives had normally spent the most time with their husbands, these were often challenging days. Olive Bean wrote: “Oh! Will, as I sit tonight, alone in our little home and think of the pleasant Sunday evenings we have spent together in it, I lose control of my feelings and am obliged to shed tears of loneliness.”⁶¹

57. Olive Bean to Will Bean, October 22, 1882. Diana, better known as Nina, was born in February 1881, the third child born to the couple. Their two previous children had died prior to Nina’s birth.

58. Olive Bean to Will Bean, June 6, 1883.

59. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, November 25, 1883.

60. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, January 13, 1884.

61. Olive Bean to Will Bean, September 3, 1882. Six weeks earlier and two months into their mission experience, Olive, whose father, Abraham O. Smoot, was a stake president, had written Will: “I can easily imagine the temptations for wives to write for a release for their husbands, and yet, God save me from such weakness. You must constantly pray for me, that I may have the strength to stand the trial nobly as becomes the wife and daughter of two faithful men.” Olive Bean to Will Bean, August 20, 1882, 31–32.

One missionary wife who did ask for her husband’s release, but under circumstances different from Olive, was Wilhelmina Franke. In an October 1914 letter requesting his release, she noted that her husband had just completed two years as a missionary and that he had previously served a mission (1902–5), and then added: “I am out of means to further care for myself and winter [is] coming on, when it is very hard for a woman of my age (62 years) to go out washing for a living. . . . I feel, that we have done our duty to the Lord, in going to the Mission field twice in what might be called our old age, especialy as my health and also my husbands health is very poor, I hope that you will grant my request soon and pardon me for asking you, which is caused by absolute neccecety.” Wilhelmina Franke to Joseph F. Smith, October 26, 1914, First Presidency mission administration correspondence, 1877–1918, CHL. Henry Franke was released the following week.



Among her Sunday journal entries, Dorothy Pectol wrote:

[Oct.] 27 Sunday long lonesome day. . . This my darlings is the day I miss you most.

Sun. [Nov.] 3 . . . We are all pretty well, but we all know what a long lonesome day sunday is.

Sun. [Mar.] 15 . . . What a long lonesome day it has been for me, it seemed there would never be an end.⁶²

The responsibility of motherhood added to the loneliness and feelings of isolation. The month prior to John Schmutz leaving for Switzerland in January 1900, Clorinda gave birth to a baby girl. She subsequently informed her husband: "I don't go out much[.] I have been to meeting some have not been to Relief Society [which was held midweek] many times, but I cant find time to go and some times it is to[o] cold to take the baby."⁶³ Sanie Lund noted in a letter to her husband: "The Baby was very sick all night[.] The nights are very lonesome no Anthon to call when the children are sick."⁶⁴ On another occasion she wrote: "Oh Anthon how I miss you when any thing is the matter with the children. It does seem more than I can stand, sometimes."⁶⁵

Weather and winter also magnified the aloneness of missionary wives. Sanie wrote in October 1883: "To night is such a dreary night it is blowing and raining, and it all helps to make me feel bad."⁶⁶ The following month she noted: "To night it looks as if we will have snow before morning and then we can look for winter for the next six months," sarcastically adding, "thats cheering to a missionaries wife."⁶⁷

The loneliness and feelings of isolation that missionary wives experienced was magnified by the fact that they were largely trapped in the same routine while their husbands were meeting new people and seeing new places. Along these lines, Mary Bennion noted, "Did the same work over as it is the [same] old round, every day. it realy become monotonous."⁶⁸ Dorothy Pectol regularly wrote about her routine, as represented by the following entries:

62. Pectol, journal, October 27, 1907; November 2, 1907; March 15, 1908.

63. Clorinda Schmutz to John Schmutz, April 28, 1900.

64. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, [fall 1883].

65. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, October 9, 1883.

66. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, October 9, 1883.

67. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, November 1883.

68. Bennion, journal, April 16, 1901.

[Oct.] 27 [1907] Sunday . . . The most exciting thing at our house is pig feeding.

Fri [Nov.] 8 Nothing new transpires only the same old thing.

Dec 3 . . . Nothing has occurred today worth noting. Washed.

Mar 2 [1908] This day has passed as many others have and others will still.⁶⁹

Shortly after John Schmutz left for Switzerland, Clorinda noted in a letter to him, "I cant turn any way but there is something to remind me of you. So I am always thinking of you."⁷⁰ Later she wrote, "You are always seeing something new and something of intrest that will pass the time away for you, and you can look back and always [k]no[w] where we are but we cant see where you are."⁷¹ Sanie Lund wrote Anthon that time likely was passing faster for him "as you have a change. but to me it is the same thing week out and week in[,] worrying and working."⁷²

Regarding her situation as a missionary wife, Olive Bean wrote her husband, "When I feel like I do tonight, lonely and dejected, my only consolation is in the thought of our once more uniting in each others embrace, and I can assure you I will be able to appreciate your companionship more than ever before if possible."⁷³



Mary Bennion, ca. 1890. Courtesy Rex P. Bennion.

Challenges Associated with the Absence of the Adult Male

In October 1900, Mary Bennion lamented in her journal that the events of the previous few days made her "feel like I need the assistance of a man to do such work." Two days earlier, the sheep had gotten out, so she "had to fix the fence, worked at it for over two hours." The following day after doing her regular work, she had to fix the fence again because the sheep had once more gotten out. "It made me feel very tired and

69. Pectol, journal, October 27, 1907; November 8, 1907; December 3, 1907; March 2, 1908.

70. Clorinda Schmutz to John Schmutz, January 1900.

71. Clorinda Schmutz to John Schmutz, January 21, 1900.

72. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, February 25, 1884.

73. Olive Bean to Will Bean, September 26, 1882.



Marie Hansen (*left*) and her children Meda (on her lap), Williard, Christian, Eugene, and Arthur; Annie Hansen (*right*) and her daughter, Aurilla (on her lap), ca. 1886. Courtesy Church History Library.

sick,” she noted. She spent the majority of the next day working around the house before again having to fix the fence.⁷⁴ Not only was she having to do a job that her husband normally would have done, but she was having to do it during the third trimester of her seventh pregnancy and wearing an ankle-length dress.

In addition to the physical work, the wives noted another challenge brought on by the absence of a male figure. Annie Hansen informed her husband: “We have been nerly frightned to death severl times this fall one night some body throood a rock on the door and another night they stood by the gate for a long time. . . . nerly ever body knows that you ar not to home so they think they can scare us witch I think they can easy do.”⁷⁵ Matilda Hintze wrote her husband: “If you were a woman and left alone with your children . . . and so many bad men and people around as we have, you could not feel very happy. . . . Many nights I can’t sleep until morning.”⁷⁶

74. Bennion, journal, October 17–19, 1900.

75. Annie Christensen Hansen to Willard Hansen, November 15, 1887, Willard S. Hansen papers, CHL.

76. Matilda Hintze to Ferdinand Hintze, March 8, 1889.

The challenge of watching after and caring for children alone was frequently noted by missionary wives. Matilda Hintze wrote her husband: "I hope you will be home some day to see what it takes to keep your family. . . . Your children were not big when you were home and did not take but very little. But it is not so now."⁷⁷

Sanie Lund noted: "I find I have all I can do to take care of the children and look after thing[s]. . . . Some days every thing goes wrong and other days it is not so bad."⁷⁸ On another occasion she wrote: "If there is a hard mission on earth I think it is to raise a family[,] so much care and anxiety and work[.] I feel completely discouraged and tired out."⁷⁹ She further noted: "Anthon it is not all fun for me. I think you have slipped out of lots of care."⁸⁰ Later she wrote him:

I often think there can be no where you are needed worse than here. the boys are just the age to need a father to look after them they got so they dont care much for a mothers say so they want to do as they like and that is very seldom what I like. . . . they dont want to go to school. . . . and they both do to many chores and so it goes day out and day in that is all the change I get and it is enough to worry a person to death.⁸¹

She subsequently noted: "I may not write to suit you but Anthon I get so tired of being man and woman both."⁸²

Although husbands tried to be as supportive as possible, Anthon Lund's efforts to cheer Sanie elicited a response from her that most missionary wives probably could relate to:



F. F. and Augusta Matilda Hintze. Courtesy Jo Lynn Carter.

77. Matilda Hintze to Ferdinand Hintze, July 11, 1888.

78. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, October 24, 1883.

79. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, March 15, 1884.

80. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, December 16, 1883.

81. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, March 23, 1884.

82. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, June 21, 1885.



You tell me to look on the bright side of life. I try but I dont find any very bright side[.] I often wonder if you were tied at home with the children and work and sickness and had to stay with it night and day and me seven thousand miles away how bright the picture would be to you. . . . I wonder if you would feel as good as you do. I have my doubts about it. you would be looking around to find a wife to help you out. it is quite diferent with you. you can have it quiet and nice go to bed when you feel like it[.] Sleep good all night get up not a child to dress or bother with, and when you feel like doing so you can take a walk . . . no baby to carry with you. . . . it is all very well to write and say dont work, but the children must have clothes and food, and it takes work and they must be waited on in sickness, and it all wears out your Sanie.⁸³

Correspondence

For the most part, however, missionary wives looked forward to and appreciated letters. Olive Bean wrote her husband, Will: "After receiving one of your sweet letters I feel almost as if I had had a talk with you, and it strengthens and cheers me for a few days until the time when I begin to look for another, and when it does not come as soon as expected, I soon get to feeling gloomy again."⁸⁴ On another occasion, she noted: "It is nearly ten days since I had any word from you and I am waiting anxiously for more. You can not realize of how much importance your letters are to me. They seem to strengthen me morally and physically, and my work seems lighter and spirits higher."⁸⁵

Dorothy Pectol, in her journal, likewise recorded the role that letters played in her life:

[Oct.] 26 . . . lonesome oh how lonesome and still no letter from my loved one.

Thurs [Nov.] 8 [7] What a happy day, for oh joy I rec'd a conversation with my loved one for such it seemed to me.

Fri [Nov.] 15 . . . a letter from some one would be appreciated. . . . where oh where are you?

Jan 11 . . . no letter again to-day. Maybe you dont think it makes one lonesome to not get letters oftener. It is almost more than one can stand to be dissappointed so often.

83. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, April 27, 1884.

84. Olive Bean to Will Bean, August 20, 1882.

85. Olive Bean to Will Bean, December 24, 1882.



Apr 15 . . . if we could have letters a little more often the time would not seem so slow.⁸⁶

As much as wives loved getting letters, they often hated writing them. Given their circumstances, letter writing was often one of the toughest tasks missionary wives faced. Not only was it difficult to find things to write about, but while their husbands could take time from their missionary work to pen a letter, the wives had to make time.

Matilda Hintze wrote her husband, "I should have written long time ago but it seems such hard work to get at so I leave it off as long as I can."⁸⁷ She further noted, "I don't know what to write. I never get away from here, so I don't hear of any news."⁸⁸

Sanie Lund wrote Anthon: "I wish I knew what to write that would interest you[,] your letters are always so interesting . . . [but] I fear you get tired of hearing the same over and over."⁸⁹ On another occasion she penned: "I know that this is not interesting but it is from home. I will be glad when I have written the last letter it is such a job and one that I hate so bad."⁹⁰

Regarding the physical challenge of letter writing, Sanie noted, "I never write a letter with out getting up about a dosen times to look after some thing or other."⁹¹ On other occasions she reported: "I thought that I could get to write a few lines this afternoon . . . but I guess I will have to give it up as [two-year-old] Otha will be no other place than on the table and right on the paper[,] he has already tipped over the ink twice so you can see a little what dificultys I write under."⁹² The following year she wrote: "Otha is standing [and] hiting me on the back with the drumstick because I will not stop writing[,] he says Pa dont want any more letter and he may be right so I will stop and please him."⁹³

Olive Bean faced similar challenges, informing her husband, "You must excuse all blunders as I have a lot of fruit on the stove, and have written this letter by snatches."⁹⁴ On another occasion she noted, "You

86. Pectol, journal, October 26, 1907; November 7, 1907; November 15, 1907; January 11, 1908; April 15, 1908.

87. Matilda Hintze to Ferdinand Hintze, November 20, 1888.

88. Matilda Hintze to Ferdinand Hintze, July 11, 1888.

89. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, March 4, 1884.

90. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, July 29, 1884.

91. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, May 10, 1884.

92. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, March 4, 1884.

93. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, January 11, 1885.

94. Olive Bean to Will Bean, September 12, 1882.



must overlook the blotted appearance of this letter for [nineteen-month-old] Nina has helped me to write it, and I have been rocking the baby [one-month-old Virginia]; so you see I am writing under difficulties.”⁹⁵ Regarding her challenges, Clorinda Schmutz informed her husband: “I will start now [since] it always takes me a day or too to write anyway. I have to stop and tend baby.”⁹⁶

Because of the difficulty writing during the day, the wives often had to wait until after the children had gone to bed to write. Matilda Hintze reported, “In the daytime, I never get to sit and write for there is first one and then another comes in and wants something.”⁹⁷ Writing at night was not the perfect solution either, as Sanie Lund noted: “it seems every time I want to write the childr[en] all want to stay up and make all the noise they can.”⁹⁸

After struggling to faithfully write her husband, Matilda Hintze finally informed him that he “need not to look for letters from me more than once a month unless some is sick or something wrong for I never feel like writing.”⁹⁹

Setbacks and Victories

Forced to take on new tasks that were traditionally reserved for males, missionary wives regularly had to “learn on the job.” In some cases, as their confidence in their ability to take on new tasks grew, they took on projects beyond just taking over what their husband had been doing.

Dorothy Pectol proudly noted while her husband was a missionary that she “harnessed [her] first horse.”¹⁰⁰ Although she had previously had little experience with the financial matters, she proved to be so adept at dealing with the family finances that her husband concluded, “I see you have an

95. Olive Bean to Will Bean, December 4, 1882.

96. Clorinda Schmutz to John Schmutz, April 15, 1900.

97. Matilda Hintze to Ferdinand Hintze, July 11, 1888.

98. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, November 14, 1883.

99. Matilda Hintze to Ferdinand Hintze, January 4, 1889.

100. Pectol, journal, November 5, 1907. Dorothy's daughter Fontella later reported that the attitude her mother began to develop as a missionary wife learning to harness a horse lasted beyond the mission: “My mother was independent and efficient all her life. If she wanted a piano moved, she moved it; if she needed wood to keep the house warm, she chopped it; if she needed a ditch dug to water her garden, she dug it. She could take down a wall in the house, or build a new one.” Judy Busk, *The Sum of Our Past: Revisiting Pioneer Women* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), 181.



Sarah Peterson, ca. 1890. Courtesy Jennifer L. Lund.

eye for business and henceforth I will trust to you for these things.”¹⁰¹

After a horse became “tender footed,” Annie Hansen concluded that she needed to take it to the blacksmith to have it “shod.” Such new experiences prompted her to write her husband Willard, “Since you have been gon I have been jack of all traids but master of none.”¹⁰²

Because missionary wives faced new situations, naturally there were mistakes. Sanie Lund thought she had planted clover next to the house but discovered it was actually alfalfa. “That was a joke on us,” she wrote.¹⁰³ Although there were missteps, there were also great victories.

While Canute Peterson served a mission in the early 1850s, his wife, Sarah Nelson Peterson, had to raise the family’s wheat crop. Receiving no offers of help, she had to plow and plant her fields herself, only to be told after the fact that she had planted her seeds too late and too deep to raise a successful crop.

Soon all the wheat in the community was growing well except for Sarah’s, leaving her to anxiously wonder how her family would survive if there was no crop that year. During this time, however, a great tragedy struck the settlement. As had been the case with the first settlers in the Salt Lake Valley a few years earlier, “Mormon crickets” descended upon the fields. In spite of the settlers’ best efforts to fend off the invaders, most of the wheat crop was destroyed.

After the pests had moved on, Sarah’s wheat began to grow. Because her field of wheat was the only one that had not been devastated by insects, her crop took on added importance.

During one irrigation turn, the water suddenly quit flowing onto her fields. She told her five-year-old son Peter to “run up to the top of the field and see why the water has quit coming.” Soon afterward the water started flowing again. Her joy was soon tempered, however, when Peter

101. Ephraim Pectol to Dorothy Pectol, January 12, 1908, Ephraim P. Pectol correspondence, CHL.

102. Annie Hansen to Willard Hansen, July 6, 1887.

103. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, July 13, 1884.



did not return. With her baby in her arms, she frantically ran to find her son. To her relief—and concern—she found him sitting in the irrigation ditch where the dam had been, with water up to his chin.

When Peter had reached the dam, he discovered that it had broken. Unable to repair it and knowing how badly the wheat was needed, he plopped himself down in the ditch and used his body to create a dam to redirect the water to their fields. Lovingly, Sarah, who was known for her sense of humor, pulled him out of the ditch, held him close, and said to him with tears running down her cheeks, “Oh, Peter, what a good little dam boy you are.” Her attempt at humor was lost upon the five-year-old, who assumed his mother swore at him. “I was only trying to help,” he declared. To this she responded: “Oh, I know, you sweet little helper, but the water was getting so deep, you might have drowned yourself, and then what would I have done? You’re the only little man I’ve got to help me with Papa gone away on his mission. Promise me you’ll never wedge yourself in the ditch like that again.”

Sarah’s fields produced sixty bushels of wheat. Her and Peter’s efforts helped feed the settlement that winter. In spite of the fact that she gave away a portion of her wheat to others in the community, there was enough for her family. She even placed some of the wheat in a jar to serve as a reminder of what she had accomplished. That wheat became known in the family as “Salvation Wheat.”¹⁰⁴

During Clorina Schumtz’s first year overseeing the family farm near St. George, her family harvested 338 bushels of wheat and 400 bushels of oats. She proudly informed her husband that she had harvested more grain that year than “any man in Dixie.”¹⁰⁵

The mission call also meant that those left behind often had to deal with less-than-ideal physical circumstances. When Brigham Young left with other members of the Twelve for a mission to England in the fall of 1839, he had not yet been able to provide a house for his family following their expulsion from Missouri. Instead, Mary Ann Young and

104. Edith P. Christiansen, *As unto the Bow: Canute Peterson, from Norway to America. Serialized in the Improvement Era, Sept. 1952 until Feb. 1953*, 2d ed. (Provo, Utah: By the author, 1976): 57–60; Hamilton Gardner, *History of Lehi, Including a Biographical Section* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1913): 86–89, 412. Canute prized that jar of wheat and kept it as a reminder of God’s goodness and what Sarah was able to do for her family and the community and asked to be buried with it. “The Story of Canute Peterson, as Told to His Daughter Carrie,” *Instructor* 81, no. 6 (June 1946): 284.

105. Clorinda Schmutz to John Schmutz, August 3 and 5, 1900.



Ann Karren, ca. 1880. Courtesy Daughters of Utah Pioneers.

the family's children were living in a couple of rooms in a deserted army post on the Iowa side of the Mississippi River. Shortly after Brigham left, however, Mary Ann was crowded out of the military barracks, and she and her children were forced to spend the winter in a stable.

Rather than enduring a second winter under such conditions, she took matters into her own hands and built a crude log cabin at Nauvoo. Although Vilate Kimball concluded that Mary Ann's "house could hardly be called a shelter," it provided protection from the elements and became the Young family's first Nauvoo home.¹⁰⁶

During the early days of Lehi, Utah, Ann Karren made two significant improvements to her log cabin while her husband, Thomas, served a mission to Hawaii. One night, Ann was awakened by rain leaking through the family's dirt roof onto the bed where she and two of her young children were sleeping. With her dirt floor turning to mud, Ann took her children to the cabin of a fellow missionary wife, Sarah Peterson, to spend the night. In spite of Sarah's hospitality, Ann spent a sleepless night "doing some determined thinking." While she had patiently endured many challenges, that night she resolved that it was time her family had better housing. When Thomas returned from his mission, his family was "securely housed with a protective roof and an enviable floor—the first board floor in Lehi."¹⁰⁷

106. Vilate Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, September 6, 1840, Heber C. Kimball letters, CHL. After Brigham returned to Nauvoo the following year, he made needed improvements. The family lived in this log cabin until 1843 when they moved into the red brick "Brigham Young Home" that still stands in Nauvoo. See Tait and Orton, "Take Special Care of Your Family," 242–49.

107. May Belle Thurman Davis, "Ann Ratcliff Karren (My Grandmother)," in *The Thomas Karren Family: A Record of the Descendants and Ancestry of Thomas Karren and Related Families*, comp. K. Howard Lewis (Sacramento: Spilman Printing, 1976), 11–13. To pay for these improvements, Ann opened a bakery, just like she had at Garden Grove, Iowa, to support herself while Thomas served in the Mormon Battalion.



Sanie Lund oversaw the construction of a barn while Anthon Lund labored in Denmark. After watching her boys endure less-than-ideal conditions taking care of the animals the previous winter, she informed her husband: "I hardly dare tell you I am having a little barn put up[.] the Shed was not fit to Stack hay on. and we Suferd so with the cold last winter I thought it would be the best alround to have a little barn it is not a very costly one put up of logs. . . . I am doing it for the best. and hope you will think so."¹⁰⁸ Upon completion of the barn she wrote, "It seems so good to know that the animals are comfortable and it is so much easier for the boys to do chores."¹⁰⁹ After a winter using the barn she boldly told Anthon that it had "helped to save the hay" and that they "would have saved money if [they] had built one years ago." She concluded, "I expect you to make fun of our barn for it is an ugly thing but in time you can better it."¹¹⁰

When Ben Ravsten left for a mission in 1905, his wife, Clara, who was pregnant, now had a "large farm" near Clarkston, Utah, to take care of. Their daughter Sylvia later recounted what her mother told her. At the start of the mission, Ben and Clara "were in debt for land they had purchased and wondered how they would fulfill this calling." Although Clara "had to work hard" during Ben's twenty-six-month absence, she later told her children that "it was well worth the sacrifice." She not only paid the debt and provided Ben needed financial support but also put "\$800.00 in the bank."¹¹¹

Kindness of Others

In addition to their own labors, missionary wives also benefited from the kindness and assistance of family, neighbors, and ward members. During the infancy of the Church's missionary program, Joseph Smith declared "that the Lord held the Church bound to provide for the families of the absent Elders."¹¹² During the subsequent years, Church leaders tried different plans in an attempt to ensure that missionary families

108. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, August 5, 1884.

109. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, December 15, 1884.

110. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, April 5, 1885.

111. Sylvia Ravsten, "Life History of Clara Emelia Christensen Ravsten, Written August 17, 1938, by her Daughter, Sylvia, as Clara Dictated It," 4, 6, copy in author's possession.

112. Matthew C. Godfrey and others, eds., *Documents, Volume 2: July 1831–January 1833*, The Joseph Smith Papers (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2013), 85.

were taken care of. In 1860, they started a fund to help support “the families of the Missionaries who have gone on Missions.”¹¹³ Later, they encouraged each community to establish a garden for “the benefit of missionaries’ families.”¹¹⁴

In addition to these efforts, President John Taylor asked the “sisters of the Relief Society” not to let their husbands rest until missionary families were taken care of and to “not spare the Bishop if they are not provided for.”¹¹⁵ While missionary wives reported receiving assistance from their local wards while their husbands were away, they also reported that the help varied and that it never met all their needs.¹¹⁶

When ward members gave Olive Bean six bushels of apples and six bushels of potatoes, she noted, “I felt delicate about taking them, but it was done in kindness and I could not refuse without giving offense.”¹¹⁷ Sanie Lund reported that her bishop not only gave her “children a nice bunch of grapes” but, having noticed a large mud hole outside her front gate, also sent someone to fix it.¹¹⁸ Catherine Stevens recalled that local ward members were “good to cut stove wood for us” but that she also personally had “to wield the axe to get more for keeping warm.”¹¹⁹

113. Daniel H. Wells, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1854–86), 9:182 (September 29, 1861).

114. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 25:266 (May 18, 1884).

115. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 20:47 (August 4, 1878).

116. Since wards regularly had married men serving missions, taking care of missionary wives could be a burden on bishops and ward members. In 1862, Sarah Owens wrote Brigham Young, complaining that her Pleasant Grove, Utah, ward had not provided her with all the flour she needed and that when she asked her bishop to send someone to work in her garden, he had told her to do it herself. Sarah O. Owens to Brigham Young, April 13, 1862, Brigham Young Office Files, CHL. In 1881, another missionary wife at Pleasant Grove, Mine Jorgensen, wrote her husband, Hans Jorgenson, five months into their mission experience and in the midst of harvest that their bishop “most likely doesn’t think of me any more often than his night cap does.” Rather than leaving her to fend for herself, her bishop had assigned Christian Peter Larsen, known as Peter Selebak, to look after her. Mine subsequently noted that Peter was among those who provided her coal and wood to heat her home that winter and that he was among those who later helped her plant her crops, noting, “It was Peter who arranged for it to be done. He is always the one who looks out for my welfare. He is a good man.” As included in Allen, “Double Jeopardy in Pleasant Grove,” 193–95.

117. Olive Bean to Will Bean, October 29, 1882, 65.

118. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, November 14, 1883.

119. Stevens, *George William Stevens and Catherine Richards*, 11.



Dorothy Pectol received one hundred pounds of flour as a Christmas present from ward members, and then when town residents went to harvest ice, several individuals gathered ice for her. "I believe I have the most ice of any in the cellar," she reported. "I am indeed lucky."¹²⁰ Earlier in the year ward members assisted her in planting her garden and doing outside chores and helped her with her laundry. They also brought her a load of wood that "was just in time."¹²¹

Matilda Hintze's local Relief Society, knowing that she didn't get out much because of her young children, held a "picnic meeting" at her house. In addition to providing her a social experience, the event raised seventy-eight dollars, which was given to her.¹²²

Sarah Shumway, who lived in the same house with her sister-wife Agnes, recalled a time when

there was nothing in the house to eat and Brother Casper Loosle came as our ward teacher. He talked to us and asked how we were getting along and if we needed anything. We told him we were getting along all right. He told us the bishop had instructed the teachers, when they were visiting the homes of missionaries' families, that they were to lift the lid of the flour bin. So he lifted the lid of the flour box and his quick eyes looked at us and he said, "Well, I think you need something." He put on his hat and went home; soon he was back with flour and a nice piece of mutton. It didn't take long before we had something to eat. From then on Brother Loosle's name was held in remembrance in our home.

Another ward member, Emily Bassett, upon learning that Sarah and Agnes did not have a cow, brought them butter. "We thanked her and asked the Lord to bless her and make it up to her," Sarah recalled.¹²³

Miracles

Some missionary wives also reported miraculous happenings during their mission experience. After William Spendlove left the small southern Utah town of Tropic in October 1899 for his mission, his wife, Alice Isom Spendlove, moved back in with her widowed mother in her hometown of Virgin. During this time, she helped support herself and her four children by sewing.

120. Pectol, journal, December 30, 1908.

121. Pectol, journal, April 20, 1908; May 6, 1908; May 13, 1908; December 20, 1908.

122. Matilda Hintze to Ferdinand Hintze, March 8, 1889.

123. "Sketch of the Life of Sarah Jardine Shumway," 7.

Shortly before William returned in 1901, Alice moved back to Tropic. Soon, however, her supply of flour was used up. On the day she gave her children, ranging in age from two to eleven, the last of the bread, she told them that they needed to pray very sincerely that God would help them obtain more. After the children had gone to bed, Alice stayed up to finish sewing a dress, hoping she would be able to sell it the next day to obtain money to buy flour.

It was well after midnight when there came a knock on her door. She opened it to find fellow Tropic Ward member George Henry Mecham standing there. He explained to Alice that he was on his way home from the gristmill in Panguitch and noticing that her lamp was lit, decided to stop in spite of the late hour “and pay you that sack of flour I owe you.” When Alice protested that George didn’t owe her anything, he replied: “Oh, yes, I do. . . . I owe every missionary’s wife a sack of flour.” Because of George’s generosity, Alice and her children enjoyed bread every day until William returned.¹²⁴

In December 1905, twenty-year-old Clara Ravsten, who lived on a farm some distance from her nearest neighbor, was in the middle of a long night of labor when she put a lighted lamp in her window and prayed that someone would see it and recognize it as a signal for help. Marie Anderson saw the light and, knowing that Clara was due to give birth to her second child and that the town’s doctor was away, rushed to the house in time to aid with the delivery.¹²⁵

Rachel Simmons Willes recounted her own miracle:

My husband was called on a mission to England for two years [1907], leaving me with five husky children and myself to feed, clothe and keep warm on \$50.00 a month. I was thankful for this much and trusted in my Heavenly Father. I knew He would take care of us. . . .

My family were fond of potatoes and this vegetable was one of the main items of our diet in those days. I had been in the habit of laying in sixteen bushels in the fall which would just about last until spring. Well,



Alice Spendlove, ca. 1900. Courtesy Daren Heslop.

124. Ardis E. Parshall, “George Henry Meacham Pays a ‘Debt,’” *Keepapitchinin*, April 5, 2010, <http://www.keepapitchinin.org/2010/04/05/george-henry-mecham-pays-a-debt/>; William R. Palmer, “A Knock at Midnight,” *Instructor* 88, no. 7 (July 1953): 206–7.

125. “Life History of Clara Emelia Christensen Ravsten,” 6.



Joseph and Rachel Willes family, ca. 1907. Courtesy Laura F. Willes.

on \$50.00 a month I could not spare the money to purchase sixteen bushels, so I obtained three bushels, thinking they would last a month or so. But truth to tell, I went each day to the cellar where they were kept and all through the winter found enough potatoes for our dinner. The three bushels had gone just as far as the sixteen had done before. Now I know the Lord blessed me in this way just as He did the woman with the bag of meal spoken of in the Bible, and I thank Him for it.¹²⁶

The Cost of Discipleship

The mission experience, including its victories small and great, frequently came with a price for missionary wives. Regarding the toll that her mission was taking on her, Annie Hansen informed her husband: “My sholder is not much beter and I dont think it will be beter till you come home because I have got to work so hard and cut a good deal of wood and I expect I will not have to cut wood if you war home.”¹²⁷

John Schmutz did not have to be told the effect the mission was having upon his wife Clorinda—he could see it in a photograph she sent him. After receiving the photograph, he sympathetically wrote

126. “Life Story of Joseph Simmons Willes in Word and Picture,” 11, copy in author’s possession.

127. Annie Hansen to Willard Hansen, May 18, 1888.

that she looked “reather poor” and concluded that she had had “quite a harde time of it.” The reality of the situation prompted him to urge his daughters “to see that your mother hase a little easear time than she hase hade in the past, thinck, that she can not last for ever, and that she is the onley mother you will ever have.”¹²⁸

Nearly two years into a mission experience, Sanie Lund noted that her father had observed that it was wearing her “out to fast to have evey thing to look after and care about.” Regarding his observation, Sanie informed her husband, Anthon: “I feel the same. My healt[h] is not good. . . . [I] look five years older than when

you left, and I feel twenty year older.”¹²⁹ On another occasion, Sanie informed Anthon that when Peter Ovesen had returned from his mission, he found “every thing looking better than he expected” except for his wife Louisa, who “had growen so poor and old that it made him feel bad every time he looked at her. he said how he wish she had let things go and taken care of her self.” Sanie concluded that this was also “what my old man will say.”¹³⁰



Louisa Oveson, ca. 1910. Courtesy Julie Ann Larson.

Social Needs

In addition to helping meet the daily needs of missionary wives, local Church leaders tried to include these women in ward activities such as concerts and picnics.¹³¹ However, it was often difficult for missionary wives to socially gather with married couples, since these events often

128. John Schmutz to Clorinda Schmutz, September 25, 1900.

129. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, May 29, 1885.

130. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, September 27, 1884.

131. In 1884, Church leaders expressed their hope that missionary wives would “partake in common with other families of the social enjoyments, recreations and pleasures which make life agreeable in the absence of a parent and



Founding members of the Lehi Missionary Wives Society (Martha Bushman is second from left, middle row), 1897. Courtesy Church History Library.

served only to reinforce their situation. Regarding a lecture on “happiness in married life” held while she was a missionary wife, Sanie Lund noted, “I did not think I needed to go as I am not married just now.”¹³²

Recognizing that missionary wives still needed socializing and diversions from daily routines, wards and concerned individuals sponsored events specifically for them. Regarding one such social, one newspaper reported, perhaps naively, that during the event the seven wives in attendance “were made to feel happy that their husbands were thousands of miles away.”¹³³

Missionary wives, however, did find great comfort and strength in meeting with other missionary wives where they could compare experiences and commiserate together.¹³⁴ To help meet this need, missionary

husband.” First Council of Seventies, circular letter, December 1884, as cited in Hughes, “Profile of the Missionaries of the Church,” 54.

132. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, March 23, 1884.

133. “Entertained Missionaries Wives,” 1.

134. Mary Bennion found that meeting with other missionary wives made her “feel like still pressing onward through the Journey of life.” Bennion, journal, October 28, 1900.



wives in Lehi, Utah, organized a Missionary Wives Society. At the inaugural meeting, held October 22, 1897, eleven were in attendance, and the meeting lasted more than seven hours.¹³⁵ Thus began a monthly tradition that lasted for years.¹³⁶ These monthly meetings consisted of “music and conversation[,] experiences, & testimonies which all tended to make each feel more blessed and thankful to God for his kindness to us and the absent ones.”¹³⁷

End of the Mission

Eventually, the missionary experience came to an end. A long-anticipated moment in the lives of missionary wives was the return of their husbands. Dorothy Pectol wrote in her journal on January 1, 1909: “I enjoyed myself to day better than a Xmas day—Shall I say why. Just because I knew or felt I was in the year that would bring my darling Home to me.”¹³⁸ When a fellow missionary wife received word that her husband had been released, Olive Bean informed Will, “I know just how glad she feels for I know what my own feelings are when I think of your return.”¹³⁹ Upon learning of John Schmutz’s impending release, Clorinda wrote him that she was “overjoyed at the glad news of your coming home,” then added, “I am to much undone to think of any thing.”¹⁴⁰

Part of the joy of the reunion stemmed from the prevailing fear that there might not be a reunion. After her husband left on his mission in late October 1907, Dorothy Pectol wrote on the inside cover of the

135. Lehi Missionary Wives Society minutes, October 22, 1897.

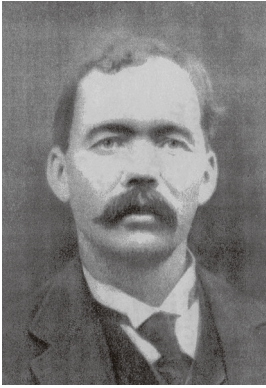
136. Over time, the Society underwent changes that reflected the changes in the missionary program. In 1903, the name of the society was changed to the Missionary Wives and Mothers Society and then later to the Missionary Mothers Society. Not only did the name change, but over time the frequency and length of the meetings also decreased.

137. Lehi Missionary Wives Society minutes, December 21, 1897.

138. A few weeks earlier she wrote, “My Darling I am so lonesome with out you, will oh will the time ever pass until we meet again.” Pectol, journal, December 6, 1908.

139. Olive Bean to Will Bean, June 6, 1883.

140. Clorinda Schmutz to John Schmutz, April 13, 1902. At her final meeting as a member of the Lehi Missionary Wives Society, Lenora Ottison shared similar sentiments when she stated that while she “very much” regretted leaving the group, she was “glad to have her husband home again.” Lehi Missionary Wives Society minutes, February 21, 1901.



William Bennion, ca. 1900.
Courtesy Rex P. Bennion.

journal: "Dedicated To My Husband. May his eyes rest on the contents."¹⁴¹ Clorinda Schmutz noted, "Every night she [Lucille] says her prayers and she always . . . wants me to say, bless my papa while he is on a mission so he can come home."¹⁴² Because of real concerns that husbands might not return home alive, when Mary Bennion received word that her husband was ill and temporarily unable to function as a missionary, she could not "help but think he [William] is much worse than they have written. I must look upon the bright side and not worry; but instead must exerceise faith in his recovery."¹⁴³ Nearly two anxious months passed before she received word

that his health had returned.¹⁴⁴ Sanie Lund declared, "I do hope Anthon you will come home alright as that seems [it] will be one of the happiest days of my life."¹⁴⁵

Not all endings to the mission experience, however, were happy ones. In many cases the anticipated reunion never happened.¹⁴⁶ Between the first and second scheduled meetings of the Lehi Missionary Wives Society, the members of the society gathered together because one of their own had experienced every missionary wife's nightmare. Twenty-five-year-old Lewis Bushman had died while laboring in the Southern States



Martha and Ruth Bushman, ca. 1910. Courtesy Ann Lewis.

141. Pectol, journal, inside cover.

142. Clorinda Schmutz to John Schmutz, June 24, 1900.

143. Bennion, journal, September 18, 1902.

144. Bennion, journal, November 11, 1902.

145. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, August 13, 1884.

146. Although death was the most common reason that a happy reunion never occurred, there were also instances of wives divorcing their husbands and infidelity on the part of the husband or the wife during the mission experience.

Mission, leaving behind twenty-one-year-old Martha Spencer Bushman and nine-month-old daughter Ruth. Society members gathered at the railroad depot to meet his remains and accompany them to the cemetery for the funeral services.¹⁴⁷

It was not just missionaries who didn't survive the experience. In February 1896, Heber Naegle was released from his mission to Germany to return to his Toquerville, Utah, home because his thirty-year-old wife, Mary Bryner Naegle, had died from complications of childbirth, leaving behind five small children.¹⁴⁸

Although James Peter Olson reunited with his wife, Anna Mary Nelson Olson, it was not a joyous reunion. Upon reaching his Ephraim, Utah, home, he found her confined to bed. She died shortly after, never having regained her strength. It was widely believed that she had "over worked her self" during his absence.¹⁴⁹ Sanie Lund poignantly observed that James "little thought that his happiest day and darkest [day]" would be "so close together."¹⁵⁰



Anna Mary Nelson Olson, ca. 1882.
Courtesy Monica Watson.

147. Lehi Missionary Wives Society minutes, November 5, 1897. Lewis died six months into his mission, one day short of the couple's third wedding anniversary. Following his death, Martha returned to her hometown of Escalante, Utah, where she lived out her life. She never remarried, and following her death her remains were returned to Lehi and buried next to her husband.

148. Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, February 28, 1896, CHL. Mary lived four days following the birth of her son, Marion, who lived less than two months. Heber married Emma Anderson in June 1897, and in August 1898 he left on a second mission to Germany, leaving Emma to take care of her own two-month-old son and the four surviving children from Heber's first marriage.

149. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, September 27, 1884.

150. Sanie Lund to Anthon Lund, October 4, 1884. While Sanie started writing this letter on October 4, she did not conclude it until after Anna's death on October 6. Near the beginning of her letter, Sanie noted that Anna was "not expected . . . to live many days it looks hard after being seperated so long and look[ing] to the time of meeting to be so pleasant to have it end so quickly."



George and Catherine Stevens, whose emotional farewell was recounted earlier, also did not enjoy an earthly reunion. Catherine recalled that before George left on his mission, he had “worked on a double time basis to get everything accomplished that needed taking care of.” Catherine concluded, “This over-exertion in hard work and strenuous preparation, along with the emotional strain he felt, wore him down in strength and health.”¹⁵¹ He died seven months into his mission.

William and Mary Bennion, however, did enjoy a happy reunion. Mary learned only hours before William reached home that he had been released



George and Catherine Stevens, ca. 1892.
Courtesy Kenneth R. Stevens.

151. Stevens, *George William Stevens and Catherine Richards*, 7. Not surprisingly, Catherine initially had trouble coping with her husband’s death: “I literally collapsed in shock [upon hearing the news]. This was one separation and death that I was not prepared to meet. George and I knew the meaning and value of prayers, and we had kept ourselves united in and through them. While he was in the mission field, I used to gather our children around me and give fervent thanks to the Lord for all that we were and had, and for such a spiritually-minded husband who would leave us for the Gospel’s sake to do the Lord’s will. But when he was taken so abruptly from us, I lost faith in prayer, and ceased praying. How could I? What did I have further to pray for? I continued to have the children say their humble and sincere prayers, and I shed tears as I listened to them; but I couldn’t bring myself to say ‘Thanks’ to the Lord. . . . Many months later and after our good Ward members held some fast meetings in my behalf, I bowed myself in humble prayer and thanked Him for what I had left in my children, home, and the capacity to work. For quite a while I didn’t even go to church meetings. When I started to go again, everyone was so kind and understanding; and it all helped to make me feel stronger in the faith.” Stevens, *George William Stevens and Catherine Richards*, 10–11. After nearly ten years as a widow, Catherine remarried in 1915.



after twenty-eight months of service. “I was so surprised that I could not believe [it],” she noted. “The children were so delighted to again meet their father, but baby did not want any thing to do with him.”¹⁵²

Missionary Wife Era in Perspective

Shortly following William’s return, Mary Bennion spoke for many missionary wives when she penned: “[I] feel to thank my Heavenly Father, that I have been able to endure the sacrifice, know it has been a hard trial, but as all is over, we have no regrets, in so much that he has returned home a better and nobler man than when he left.”¹⁵³ Later she wrote, “A person can talk about ordeals of this charcter not being a trial, but when such remarks are made, I only feel to pity, and say to myself, you know nothing concerning the matter. . . . While writing my heart is aching & the tears bedim my eyes, many silver drops have dropped upon this page, notwithstanding that My very being is stirred with emotion, I cannot help but exclaim, Father thy will be done.”¹⁵⁴

Although missionaries, their wives, and their children largely accepted the fact that sacrifice was needed to build the kingdom of God on earth and to help make them worthy of a place in a kingdom to come, it is not surprising that they would question both before and during the mission what was being asked of them. In 1902, a woman who had “boys that do not understand” wrote President Joseph F. Smith describing a young missionary wife with “four small children” to raise and a husband who needed money; she asked, “How is she to do it?” This question had been asked countless times before and after that time, but she likely was one of the few who dared ask it of the President of the Church. While his response is not extant, on her letter he penned: “It is only when

152. Bennion, journal, December 7, 1902. William died three and a half years later in a farming accident while he was helping to harvest hay for a local missionary wife whose husband was laboring in England. “Hay Derrick Causes Death,” *Deseret Evening News*, July 3, 1906, 1.

153. Bennion, journal, December 7, 1902.

Early on in her mission experience, Olive Bean wrote her husband that the “only thing that cheers me in my hours of loneliness, are thoughts of the sweet reunion, when you shall have nobly filled your mission and returned home in honor.” Olive Bean to Will Bean, July 23, 1882.

154. Bennion, journal, January 1, 1903.



people have faith to do such things that it is possible.”¹⁵⁵ What he left unsaid, but what many in the missionary wife era had learned firsthand, was that the faith he referenced required the heart, might, mind, and strength of those who were asked to exercise it. Not only did this faith need to be united with works, but it also included elements of sacrifice, patience to endure trials, and measures of hope and charity. This type of faith continues to be evident among Latter-day Saints today, a tradition passed down by generations of those who learned it firsthand—the husbands and fathers who left their families to serve missions and the wives and children they left behind.

Chad M. Orton is a curator in the Historic Sites Division of the Church History Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He is the author of two previous *BYU Studies* articles, “Francis Webster: The Unique Story of One Handcart Pioneer’s Faith and Sacrifice” and “The Martin Company at the Sweetwater: Another Look.” He is also the coauthor of *Joseph Smith’s America: His Life and Times* (2005) and *40 Ways to Look at Brigham Young: A New Approach to a Remarkable Man* (2008) and volume editor of *The Journals of George Q. Cannon, vol. 2: Hawaiian Mission, 1850–1854* (2014).

155. Mrs. E. F. Crookston to Mr. Joseph F. Smith, January 13, 1902, Joseph F. Smith Collection, CHL. Church records do not show a Crookston serving a mission during this time, so it is possible the situation that prompted her discussion with her boys and her letter to the Church president was not her own.



At least in heaven there's food.

after Ghouta

She was building bread when
the building was bombed,
a fighter jet or gasoline tank,
kneaded to a flat cake.

Her dough would never take
shape, bake to a crust, be
cut and shared and filled,
wrapped around spiced meat

and veg. Covered in dust
that might have been flour,
her dough was lost in debris,
her world burnt before the timer,

before the plate was even hot,
so her tears score the loaf
of her face, the bleeding
wound of a hungry mother.

—Jared Pearce

This poem won third place in the 2019 Clinton F.
Larson Poetry Contest, sponsored by BYU Studies.



The Use of *Gethsemane* by Church Leaders, 1859–2018

John Hilton III and Joshua P. Barringer

Many commentators have noted that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (herein referred to as “the Church”) has a distinctive focus on Gethsemane.¹ For example, Douglas J. Davies

1. Although the Church focuses more on Gethsemane than many other Christian denominations, there are some prominent Christians who have emphasized Gethsemane. For example, Adam Clarke, a British Methodist theologian who authored an influential commentary on the Bible, wrote regarding Luke 22:43–44, “How exquisite must this anguish have been, when it forced the very blood through the coats of the veins, and enlarged the pores in such a preternatural manner, as to cause them to empty it out in large successive drops! In my opinion, the principal part of the redemption price was paid in this unprecedented and indescribable agony.” Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 vols. (New York: J. Collord, Printer, 1831), 1:237. An early eighteenth-century commentator wrote of Luke 22:39–46, “We have here the awful story of Christ’s agony in the garden, just before he was betrayed. . . . He afflicted his own soul with grief for the sin he was to satisfy for, and an apprehension of the wrath of God to which man had by sin made himself obnoxious. . . . Some reckon this [was] one of the times when Christ shed his blood for us, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission.” Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible, Complete and Unabridged* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), 1903–4. Similarly, Alfred Edersheim, a nineteenth-century author whose works were frequently quoted by Elders James E. Talmage and Bruce R. McConkie, wrote, “Alone, as in His first conflict with the Evil One in the Temptation in the wilderness, must the Saviour enter on the last contest. With what agony of soul He took upon Him now and there the sins of the world, and in taking expiated them.” Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2 vols. (Grand



has written that the “LDS interpretation of Christ’s garden experience involves a most interesting relocation of the act of atonement within Christian theological accounts that have, traditionally, seen the cross as the prime site of assuming human sin”² and that “Mormonism relocates the centre of gravity of Christ’s passion in Gethsemane rather than upon the cross and Calvary.”³

Restoration scripture provides the Church with additional understanding of the significance of Gethsemane, and modern Church leaders have clearly taught about its important role in the Atonement of Jesus Christ. For example, President Thomas S. Monson declared, “Then came the Garden of Gethsemane. . . . He [Christ] wrought the great Atonement as He took upon Himself the sins of all. He did for us what we could not do for ourselves.”⁴

While it is true that the Church emphasizes Gethsemane more than other Christian denominations do, a polemic sometimes used against the Church is that it focuses primarily on Gethsemane as opposed to the cross as the site of Christ’s Atonement. These arguments point to statements such as the following from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*: “For Latter-day Saints, Gethsemane was the scene of Jesus’ greatest agony, even surpassing that which he suffered on the cross.”⁵

Does the Church teach that Christ’s agonies in Gethsemane surpassed those he experienced on the cross? Is Gethsemane crucial to Latter-day Saints? What have Church leaders taught about Gethsemane? Have these teachings evolved over time? If so, in what ways? The purpose of this study is to identify what Church leaders have taught about Gethsemane by analyzing their talks as recorded in the *Journal of Discourses* and general conference reports. Before outlining the methodology of this study, we briefly survey what the scriptures themselves teach about Gethsemane.

Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), 2:539. For insight into Alfred Edersheim’s influence on Latter-day Saint thinking, see Marianna Edwards Richardson, *Alfred Edersheim: A Jewish Scholar for the Mormon Prophets* (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 2008).

2. Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), 48.

3. Davies, *Mormon Culture of Salvation*, 49.

4. Thomas S. Monson, “The Way of the Master,” *Ensign* 26, no. 5 (May 1996): 50.

5. S. Kent Brown, “Gethsemane,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: MacMillan, 1992), 2:542.



SCRIPTURAL ACCOUNTS OF GETHSEMANE⁶

The scriptural narrative of Christ in Gethsemane appears in four passages: Matthew 26:36–56; Mark 14:32–52; Luke 22:39–53; and John 18:1–11. Both Matthew and Mark (the only two scriptural authors to use the word *Gethsemane*⁷) describe Jesus as being deeply distressed (see Matt. 26:37–38; Mark 14:33–34). They, along with Luke, record Christ praying, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39; see also Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42). Luke adds the details that an angel came and strengthened Christ and that Christ “being in an agony . . . prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44).⁸ John does not record any of Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane but rather records the intercessory prayer, offered before entering Gethsemane. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all describe Christ’s capture in Gethsemane, although they differ in specific details.

These biblical passages, taken by themselves, do not clearly indicate that the Savior’s Atonement took place—in whole or in part—in Gethsemane. This key teaching of the Church comes from Restoration scripture and, in particular, modern Church leaders. Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19 provides the clearest scriptural explanation of the importance of Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane. In this passage the Savior says, “I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not

6. This section utilizes text from John Hilton III, “Teaching the Scriptural Emphasis on the Crucifixion,” *Religious Educator* 20, no. 3 (2019): 133–53.

7. The phrase *Garden of Gethsemane* never appears in scripture, but rather it combines *Gethsemane* (Matt. 26:36; Mark 14:32) and *garden* (John 18:1).

8. This passage has a complicated textual history, with some scholars arguing it is not part of the original text of Luke. For an in-depth discussion of these verses, see Lincoln H. Blumell, “Luke 22:43–44: An Anti-Docetic Interpolation or an Apologetic Omission?” *TC: A Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* 19 (2014): 1–35. The Joseph Smith Translation changes this phrase to, “*he sweat as it were great drops of blood*,” perhaps shifting the emphasis to the blood that was shed. Robert J. Matthews commented on this JST revision as follows: “This change tends to place the emphasis upon the blood as such, instead of on the sweat that was ‘as blood.’ In one instance *sweat* is the subject; in the other it is the action brought about by the Savior’s agony. That *blood* and not *sweat* was the result of our Lord’s suffering on this occasion is substantiated by passages from the Book of Mormon (Mosiah 3:7) and the Doctrine and Covenants (19:18).” Robert J. Matthews, “A Plainier Translation”: *Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Bible, a History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 373, emphasis in original.



suffer if they would repent; But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I; Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.” Although this passage does not explicitly provide a location for these sufferings, its connections to Luke 22:44 (“his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground”) and Matthew 26:39 (“if it be possible, let this cup pass from me”) indicate that Christ is likely referring to Gethsemane.⁹

Outside of these passages, only one scripture reference can be directly connected to the events of Gethsemane with relative textual certainty. In Mosiah 3:7, King Benjamin said Christ “shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.”¹⁰ Other scriptural passages that members of the Church sometimes associate with Gethsemane (for example, Isa. 53:4–5; 2 Ne. 9:21; Alma 7:11–13; D&C 18:11) do not have an explicit connection to Gethsemane.¹¹

9. The phrases “tremble because of pain” and “suffering both body and spirit” could potentially also refer to the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Christ states that he “finished [his] preparations,” perhaps indicating that Gethsemane was a completion of preparation that would further culminate through his Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Second Coming. Elder Mark E. Petersen used Doctrine and Covenants 19:18 specifically to discuss “blood shed on the cross.” Mark E. Petersen, “O America, America,” *Ensign* 9, no. 11 (November 1979): 13. Similarly, President John Taylor (then president of the Quorum of the Twelve) connected Christ’s sweating blood with his Crucifixion, stating, “Jesus himself sweat great drops of blood, and in the agony of his suffering cried out, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’” John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 20:259 (March 2, 1879).

10. Neither Mosiah 3:7 nor Doctrine and Covenants 19:18 (a clear cross-reference) make it explicit that Christ bled from every pore in Gethsemane. However, these verses appear to connect to Luke 22:44, which describes Christ’s bleeding in Gethsemane.

11. Several scriptural passages speak of redemption through the blood of Christ (for example, Eph. 1:7; Mosiah 3:18). However, it is not clear whether such passages allude to suffering in Gethsemane that caused Christ to “bleed at every pore” (D&C 19:18) or “the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20). For a comprehensive analysis of scriptures relevant to Gethsemane and Christ’s Crucifixion, see John Hilton III, “Teaching the Scriptural Emphasis on the Crucifixion,” *Religious Educator* 20, no. 3 (2019): 133–53.



Given the paucity of explicit scriptural teachings regarding Gethsemane, the teachings of modern Church leaders have clearly played an important role in our understanding of what transpired there. Because Joseph Smith did not provide any teachings regarding Gethsemane outside of Doctrine and Covenants 19, we must turn to later Church leaders to learn more about the Savior's suffering in Gethsemane.

METHOD

To analyze how Church leaders have discussed the events connected with Gethsemane, we used the "LDS General Conference Corpus"¹² to identify every instance of their use of the word *Gethsemane*. This corpus contains more than ten thousand talks; we utilized those coming from the *Journal of Discourses*¹³ and general conference covering the years 1851–2018 (the first use of *Gethsemane* among Church leaders was in 1859¹⁴). We also utilized a similar corpus of talks hosted by WordCruncher, a program developed at Brigham Young University, to verify our results.¹⁵ After comparing the corpora and resolving minor discrepancies, as well as removing instances in which the word was used multiple times in quick succession, we had 376 total references to Gethsemane. We next searched both corpora for the word *garden* to see if there were any references to Gethsemane by that nomenclature that we had not already identified. This yielded an additional 20 references; for

12. Accessed at <https://www.lds-general-conference.org/>. The work of Gregory Schultz was invaluable in identifying and collating these references.

13. Recent scholarship has indicated that the published versions of the *Journal of Discourses* are different from the shorthand notes. See Gerrit Dirkmaat and LaJean Purcell Carruth, "The Prophets Have Spoken, but What Did They Say? Examining the Differences between George D. Watt's Original Shorthand Notes and the Sermons Published in the Journal of Discourses," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2015): 24–118. Given the very few references to Gethsemane in the *Journal of Discourses*, these differences are minimal in the context of our overall study.

14. In 1856, Brigham Young may have alluded to Gethsemane without directly referring to it by name. He said, "At the hour when the crisis came for him to offer up his life, the Father withdrew Himself, withdrew His Spirit, and cast a veil over him. That is what made him sweat blood. If he had had the power of God upon him, he would not have sweat blood; but all was withdrawn from him, and a veil was cast over him, and he then plead [*sic*] with the Father not to forsake him." Brigham Young, in *Journal of Discourses*, 3:206 (February 17, 1856). While sweating blood is likely a reference to Gethsemane, others have connected it to Christ's Crucifixion (see n. 9).

15. This program can be downloaded at <https://wordcruncher.com>. We acknowledge the invaluable assistance Monte Shelley provided us with this corpus.

simplicity we refer to these as references to Gethsemane although that specific word was not utilized in these passages.

Our primary data were the approximately ninety words spoken before and after each use of the word *Gethsemane*.¹⁶ A complete table of these references is available online.¹⁷ Once our collection of references to Gethsemane was in place, we read each statement, looking for common themes. A process of emergent coding led to ten themes that we used to code each reference. Table 1 summarizes these codes.

Table 1. Thematic Coding Structure

| Code Name | Code Description | Example Quote |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Sins | Christ atoned for our sins. | "Do we remember his intense agony . . . in the Garden of Gethsemane, as he took upon himself the sins of mankind?" ¹⁸ |
| Pains | Christ suffered for, or felt, our pains. | "There is no infirmity, affliction, or adversity that Christ did not feel in Gethsemane." ¹⁹ |
| Incidental | Used in passing, not directly related to the Atonement of Jesus Christ. | "We crossed the Brook Kedron, passed the Garden of Gethsemane, and ascended the Mount of Olives, to the spot as near as we could determine, where Christ stood when He looked at Jerusalem." ²⁰ |
| Cross—Atonement | A proximate reference to the Crucifixion that implies a union between the two with respect to the Atonement of Jesus Christ. | "The Savior . . . [suffered] indescribable pain in Gethsemane and on the cross in order to perfect His Atonement." ²¹ |

16. We also selectively searched for phrases such as "bleed . . . pore" or "sweat . . . blood." Such instances were not included in our phrase counts but did provide additional context used in the paper. In addition, we consulted selected publications by Church leaders, such as *Jesus the Christ*. Throughout this paper as we discuss dates and quantities of phrases, we are referring to the primary data as found in our corpus.

17. See "Gethsemane Quotations in Context," BYU Studies, <https://byustudies.byu.edu/content/gethsemane-quotations-context>.

18. Henry D. Taylor, "And Always Remember Him," *Ensign* 3, no. 7 (July 1973): 47.

19. Rafael E. Pino, "Faith in Adversity," *Ensign* 39, no. 5 (May 2009): 41–42.

20. David O. McKay, in *The Ninety-Second Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1922), 69.

21. Quentin L. Cook, "The Eternal Everyday," *Ensign* 47, no. 11 (November 2017): 52.



| | | |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Cross— in passing | The Crucifixion and Gethsemane are mentioned jointly, but somewhat vaguely in connection with salvation. | "Obedience in Gethsemane prepared the Savior to obey and endure to the end on Golgotha." ²² |
| Blood | Explicit mention of Christ sweating blood, or bleeding from every pore. | "Luke reported Jesus' sweating in Gethsemane 'as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.'" ²³ |
| Thy will | Focuses on Christ's submissive obedience in Gethsemane. | "Jesus provides the ultimate example of righteous responsiveness and willing submission as He suffered intense agony in Gethsemane." ²⁴ |
| Love | Christ suffered because of His or God's love for us. | "The angel told King Benjamin that the suffering of our Lord as experienced in Gethsemane was due to the wickedness and abominations of the people. This was because he loved them so, his love being perfect." ²⁵ |
| Prayer | Christ's prayers in Gethsemane used to teach how we should pray. | "In his perfect life he set the pattern. He prayed . . . at the beginning of his public ministry; he prayed in the wilderness; . . . he prayed for strength in Gethsemane." ²⁶ |
| Our Gethsemane | We will have our own trying experiences. | "Like the Savior, we will all have our Gethsemane." ²⁷ |

Each reference received at least one code; however, a quote could receive more than one code, depending on its content. For example, the following excerpt from a talk by President Ezra Taft Benson received two codes, Sins and Blood: "To possess a testimony of Jesus is to know

22. Robert D. Hales, "If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments," *Ensign* 44, no. 5 (May 2014): 38.

23. Neal A. Maxwell, "Overcome . . . Even as I Also Overcame," *Ensign* 17, no. 5 (May 1987): 72.

24. David A. Bednar, "Meek and Lowly of Heart," *Ensign* 48, no. 5 (May 2018): 32.

25. George F. Richards, in *The One Hundred Seventh Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1937), 109.

26. Marion G. Romney, in *The One Hundred Twenty-Second Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1952), 90.

27. Henry D. Taylor, "A Time of Testing," *Ensign* 1, no. 12 (December 1971): 44.



that *He voluntarily took upon Himself the sins of all mankind in the Garden of Gethsemane*, which caused Him to suffer in both body and spirit and to *bleed from every pore*.²⁸

Two independent raters read each reference in the data set and assigned codes based on the above descriptions. Their codes were compared, and in cases of disagreement, a third rater reviewed their work and made a final determination of the codes assigned.²⁹

THE USE OF GETHSEMANE OVER TIME

Within our corpus, a total of 139 speakers have collectively referred to the word *Gethsemane* 396 times between 1859 and 2018. Just over one-third of all uses (134) came from the nine speakers who used the word ten or more times. These speakers include President Thomas S. Monson (24), Elder Neal A. Maxwell (20), Elder Robert D. Hales (19), President Marion G. Romney (15), President James E. Faust (13), President Spencer W. Kimball (12), Elder Bruce R. McConkie (11), President J. Reuben Clark (10), and Elder David B. Haight (10).

As illustrated in figure 1, the use of *Gethsemane* has risen dramatically in the past few decades. The median point for the usage of *Gethsemane* between 1859 and 2018 is 1987.

Prior to 1900, the word *Gethsemane* was used in the *Journal of Discourses* and general conference addresses only five times. It was not until the 1940s that the word appeared on average more than once per year. Significant increases in the use of *Gethsemane* occurred in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. During these three decades, the individuals who most frequently emphasized the importance of Gethsemane were Presidents Spencer W. Kimball (11) and Marion G. Romney (8).

The largest numerical jump from one decade to the next was from the 1970s to the 1980s, in which the use of *Gethsemane* nearly doubled. In the 1980s, twenty-four different speakers used the word *Gethsemane*; 29 percent of the occurrences came from either Elder Neal A. Maxwell (11) or Elder Bruce R. McConkie (8). In the 1990s and 2000s, *Gethsemane* was used an average of fifty times per decade, with a jump up to seventy-seven times between 2010 and 2018. In addition to the overall numerical differences across decades, it is interesting to note the shift in how the ten themes described in the Methods section occur across

28. Ezra Taft Benson. "Valiant in the Testimony of Jesus," *Ensign* 12, no. 5 (May 1982): 62, emphasis added.

29. Anne Robinson Driggs and Joshua P. Barringer did the initial coding; John Hilton III oversaw the coding process and resolved discrepancies in the codes.



FIGURE 1. Church Leaders' Use of *Gethsemane* by Decade

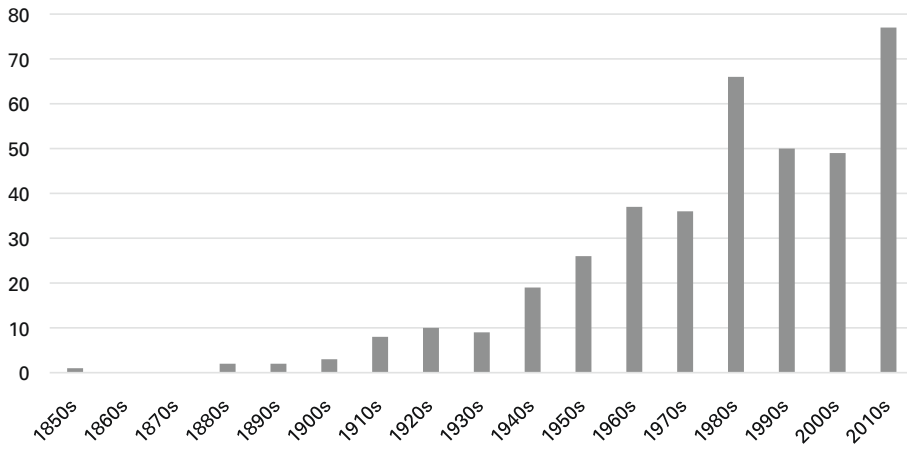


FIGURE 2.1. Primary Thematic Usages of *Gethsemane* across Decades

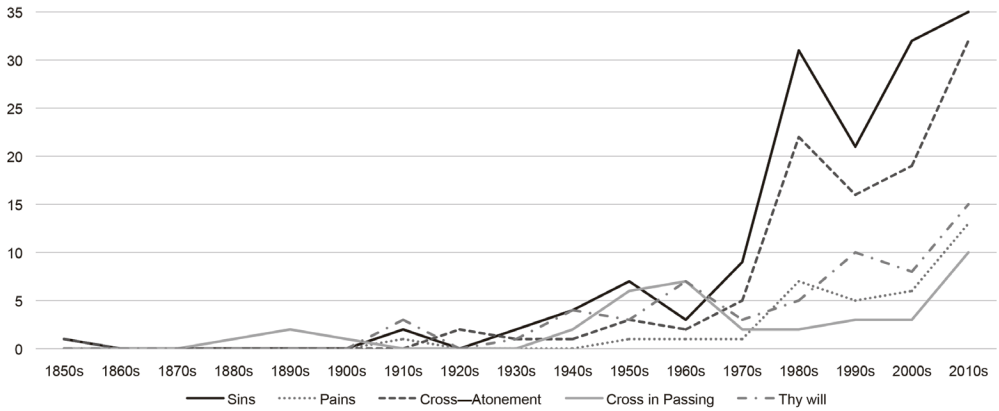
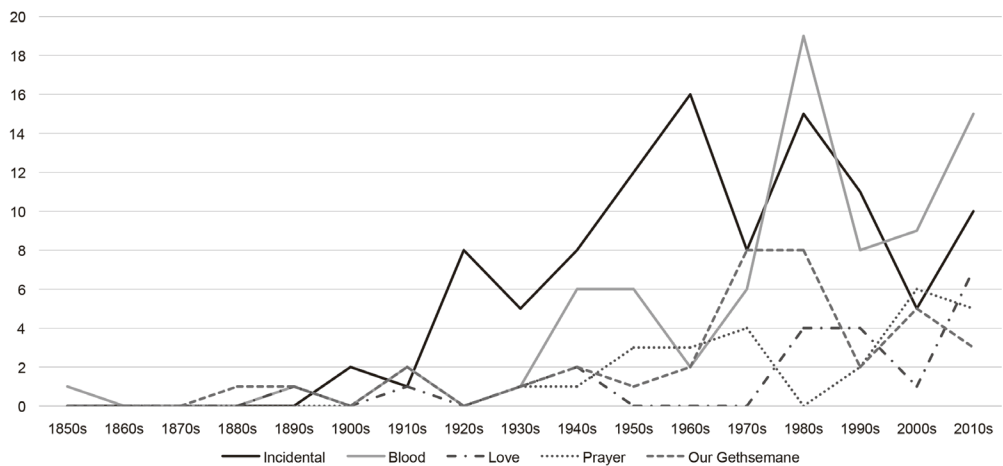


FIGURE 2.2. Secondary Thematic Usages of *Gethsemane* across Decades





decades. Though the use of each theme experienced marked change over time, our significant findings center primarily on the themes relating to Christ suffering our sins and pains, connections to his Crucifixion, and his statement about doing the will of his Father. These shifts are illustrated in figure 2.1. The development of the remaining themes is represented in figure 2.2.

One evident trend is the growth in the usage of most themes over time, often connected with the overall increasing use of *Gethsemane*. It is, however, interesting to note that from the 1920s to the 1960s, the most frequent reason for using *Gethsemane* was to mention it in passing. This has become a much less common usage since the 1980s, an indication that Gethsemane has become an increasingly theological topic in conference addresses in recent decades—for example, Church leaders more frequently focus on Jesus's submission to his Father's will.

One key insight provided by these data is a remarkable increase in statements regarding Christ atoning for our sins in Gethsemane, beginning in the 1980s. Another significant insight is that for the past forty years, the second most prevalent theme regarding the use of the word *Gethsemane* in general conference addresses emphasizes the atoning power of Christ's suffering in Gethsemane in direct connection to his Crucifixion. We also see a large increase, beginning in the 1980s, in the number of times the use of *Gethsemane* relates to Christ's suffering our pains.

GETHSEMANE THEMES EMPHASIZED BY CHURCH LEADERS

Across the decades, Church leaders have emphasized several key themes in connection with the events in Gethsemane. In this section, we examine their teachings with respect to Christ's submission to his Father, Christ's suffering for our sins, Christ's suffering our pains, and the importance of the events that took place in Gethsemane relative to the Savior's Crucifixion.

Christ's Submission to the Will of the Father

Beginning in 1910, thirty-eight different speakers made a total of fifty-nine statements concerning the Savior's submitting his will to his Father's with specific references to Gethsemane. In the 1910s, this was the most prevalent way in which *Gethsemane* was utilized in general conference. For example, in 1914, President Anthon H. Lund taught, "When Jesus was suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane, he asked the Lord, if it were possible, to take that bitter cup away from Him. Can you wonder at it when you remember that He was in such agony that the sweat fell like



drops of blood upon the ground? But He added, ‘Not my will, but thy will be done,’ giving us a pattern to follow in our prayers, that although we ardently desire certain things; and believe that they would be for our best good still we should be submissive to the Father’s will.”³⁰

A notable increase in these types of statements began in the 1990s. In 1995, Elder Richard G. Scott said, “The Master is our perfect example. . . . How grateful I am personally that our Savior taught we should conclude our most urgent, deeply felt prayers when we ask for that which is of utmost importance to us, with ‘Thy will be done.’”³¹ Similarly, in 2012, Sister Ann M. Dibb stated, “In Christ’s prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, He expressed to the Father, ‘Not my will, but thine, be done.’ This should be our prayer as well.”³²

In 2018, Elder David A. Bednar taught, “Jesus provides the ultimate example of righteous responsiveness and willing submission as He suffered intense agony in Gethsemane. . . . The Savior’s meekness in this eternally essential and excruciating experience demonstrates for each of us the importance of putting the wisdom of God above our own wisdom.”³³ One lesson from Gethsemane that has been frequently taught by Church leaders is the importance of following the Savior’s example in submitting our wills to the Father’s.

Christ’s Suffering for Our Sins in Gethsemane

A key theme, emphasized primarily between 1982 and the present, is that in Gethsemane Jesus Christ vicariously paid the penalty for our sins. Although two significant scriptural passages link the Savior’s suffering in Gethsemane with his paying the price for our sins, in the early years of the Church, few Church leaders invoked Gethsemane to discuss the expiatory aspect of Christ’s Atonement.

As far as we were able to identify, President John Taylor, as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, was the only Church leader within our corpus prior to 1892 to explicitly connect Gethsemane with Christ’s

30. Anthon H. Lund, in *The Eighty-Fifth Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1914), 12.

31. Richard G. Scott, “Trust in the Lord,” *Ensign* 25, no. 11 (November 1995): 17.

32. Ann M. Dibb, “I Know It. I Live It. I Love It,” *Ensign* 42, no. 11 (November 2012): 11.

33. David A. Bednar, “Meek and Lowly of Heart,” *Ensign* 48, no. 5 (May 2018): 32–33.

suffering for our sins.³⁴ He did so in 1859 when he taught that Jesus “came to atone for the transgressions of men. . . . Then again, in Gethsemane, he was left alone, and so great was the struggle that, we are told, he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood.”³⁵ In 1883 he similarly stated, “When [Christ] found the accumulated weight of the sins of the world rolling upon His head, his feelings were so intense that He sweat great drops of blood. Could I tell it, or could you? No. Suffice it to say that He bore the sins of the world, and, when laboring under the pressure of those intense agonies, He exclaimed, ‘Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass.’”³⁶

From 1883 to 1982, connections between Gethsemane and our sins occurred only twenty-seven total times, or on average once every three and a half years. Many of these instances linked Christ’s actions in Gethsemane to humanity’s sins but did so without explicitly defining the anguish borne in the garden as Jesus’s literal vicarious bearing of sins.

34. The only earlier documented expression we have discovered that Christ suffered for our sins in Gethsemane potentially comes from a letter written by Orson Hyde in 1842 while traveling in the Holy Land. Describing his experience of looking out at Jerusalem, he states, “The fact that I entered the garden and plucked a branch from an olive, and now have that branch to look upon, demonstrates that all was real. There, there is the place where the Son of the Virgin bore our sins and carried our sorrows.” Context makes it likely that Hyde is referring to Gethsemane, but it is possible he is referring to the Savior’s Crucifixion. See Orson Hyde, “A Sketch of the Travels and Ministry of Elder Orson Hyde,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 18 (July 15, 1842): 851.

35. “Discourse by Elder John Taylor, Tabernacle, Nov. 13, 1859,” *Deseret News-Salt Lake Telegram*, April 11, 1860, 1. In the very next sentence, President Taylor states, “In the great day when he was about to sacrifice his life, he said, ‘My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?’” and it is possible that the reference to Christ atoning for the transgressions of men has reference to this latter event. However, President Taylor was specific about the atoning efficacy of Gethsemane in *Mediation and Atonement of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*, writing that Christ “obeyed the requirements of His Heavenly Father, although laboring under the weight of the sins of the world, and the terrible expiation which He had to make, when, sweating great drops of blood, He cried: ‘Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not my will but thine be done,’ and when expiring in agony upon the cross He cried, ‘It is finished,’ and gave up the ghost.” John Taylor, *Mediation and Atonement of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1882), 127, see 149–51; see also John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 24:34 (January 21, 1883), in which President Taylor makes a similar statement without explicit references to Gethsemane.

36. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 24:34 (January 21, 1883).



For example, in 1910, Elder Melvin J. Ballard taught that in Gethsemane, Jesus was “weeping over the sins of the world.”³⁷

In the 1980s, there were thirty-one instances of speakers connecting Gethsemane with suffering for our sins, more than a 300 percent increase from any previous decade. This spike was not merely the result of the rising number of overall mentions of Gethsemane; rather, references tying the events in Gethsemane to suffering for sin made up nearly one-half of the decade’s total mentions of the garden. Prior to the 1980s, this teaching constituted about 18 percent of mentions of the word *Gethsemane*. Since the 1980s, the principle of Christ’s suffering for our sins in Gethsemane has been taught in conference approximately thirty times per decade and accounts for roughly 50 percent of all references to Gethsemane.

Christ’s Suffering Our Pains in Gethsemane

Another important theme, similarly emphasized in recent years, is that in Gethsemane Jesus Christ vicariously experienced each of the pains, infirmities, and sorrows suffered by all humanity. The scriptures are specific that Jesus Christ would take upon him the infirmities of his people (see Alma 7:11–13) and “[suffer] . . . the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children” (2 Ne. 9:21; see also Isa. 53:3–5 [compare Mosiah 14:3–5]; D&C 18:11). However, the scriptures do not specify where this suffering took place, although some of the passages speak of the Savior suffering our pains in connection with his death.³⁸

37. Melvin J. Ballard, in *The Eighty-First Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1910), 82.

38. As pointed out in Hilton, “Teaching the Scriptural Emphasis on the Crucifixion,” the scriptures speak of death in connection with Christ suffering our pains. Doctrine and Covenants 18:11 states, “The Lord your Redeemer suffered *death in the flesh*; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men” (emphasis added). Jacob taught, “He suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam. *And he suffereth this that the resurrection might pass* upon all men, that all might stand before him at the great and judgment day” (2 Ne. 9:21–22, emphasis added). In this verse, Jacob connects Christ’s suffering the pains of all people with suffering that allows the resurrection to take place—perhaps an allusion to the death of Christ. Alma 7:11–12 speaks of Christ taking upon him the infirmities of his people in connection with the phrase “and he will *take upon him death*” (Alma 7:12, emphasis added). Isaiah 53:3–5 is often cited in



In the nineteenth century and into the mid-twentieth century, Church leaders occasionally referenced Christ's suffering our pains, but it was not a frequently emphasized theme. When mentioned, typically no location was associated with the suffering.³⁹ Prior to 1961, within our corpus, Church leaders explicitly spoke of Christ's suffering for our pains in Gethsemane on only two occasions. In each instance, the speaker specifically referenced both Gethsemane and the cross when speaking of the Savior suffering our sorrows.⁴⁰ It was not until 1961 that Gethsemane was identified in a conference talk as the specific location of Christ's suffering our pains.⁴¹ Elder Marion G. Romney (then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve) taught, "I think of him in Gethsemane, when he suffered the pain of all men, that we might be forgiven of our sins on conditions of repentance."⁴² The next reference to this aspect of the Savior's Atonement came in 1978, again from President Romney (then a member

association with Gethsemane; however, the verses themselves do not explicitly state that Christ's suffering took place at that location. In fact, the author of the Gospel of Matthew references this passage from Isaiah in connection with Christ's healing the sick (see Matt. 8:16–17).

39. For example, President George Q. Cannon taught, "When you are afflicted and bowed down in sorrow and pain, let the reflection enter into your hearts to comfort you, that our Father and God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, trod the path we are now treading, that there is no affliction and sorrow that we are acquainted with, or can be, that the Lord has not already had an experience in." George Q. Cannon, in *Journal of Discourses*, 11:174 (October 8, 1865). Additional examples of such statements (among others) come from Orson Hyde, in *Journal of Discourses*, 1:123 (October 6, 1853); and Erastus Snow, in *Journal of Discourses*, 21:26 (October 1879).

40. Lorenzo N. Stohl, in *The Eighty-Second Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1912), 122; Milton R. Hunter, in *The One Hundred Twenty-Third Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1952), 39.

41. President John Taylor, in *Mediation and Atonement*, quotes Isaiah 53:4 in connection with Gethsemane and the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ but appears to focus on suffering for sins rather than pain. John Taylor, *Mediation and Atonement*, 151. Elder James E. Talmage does not discuss Christ's suffering our pains in *Jesus the Christ*, nor does Elder Bruce R. McConkie in the 1958 edition of *Mormon Doctrine*.

42. Marion G. Romney, in *The One Hundred Thirty-First Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1961), 119. Elder Romney references Doctrine and Covenants 18:11 and places Christ's suffering in Gethsemane.



of the First Presidency), who made a statement similar to the one he made in 1961.⁴³ In 1982, President Romney again returned to the topic, stating that Christ did “suffer the pains of all men . . . in Gethsemane.”⁴⁴ Thus, in our corpus, President Marion G. Romney was the only general conference speaker prior to 1983 to identify Gethsemane as the principal location where Christ suffered our pains.

Between 1983 and 2018 the emphasis on Christ’s vicarious suffering of our pains specifically in Gethsemane became much more common, appearing thirty-one times, a more than 1,000 percent increase from 1859 to 1982.⁴⁵ Speakers used these statements to help Church members understand that the Savior deeply empathizes with and can strengthen them. For example, Elder Neal A. Maxwell (the only speaker to speak on this topic more than twice between 1983–2018⁴⁶) said, “We can confidently cast our cares upon the Lord because, through the agonizing events of Gethsemane, . . . Jesus is already familiar with our sins, sicknesses, and sorrows. . . . He can carry them now because He has successfully carried them before!”⁴⁷

A unique aspect of Christ’s suffering our pains was taught by Elder Merrill G. Bateman of the Seventy in 2005. He focused on Christ’s personal connection with each of us, stating,

For many years I thought of the Savior’s experience in the garden and on the cross as places where a large mass of sin was heaped upon Him. Through the words of Alma, Abinadi, Isaiah, and other prophets, however, my view has changed. Instead of an impersonal mass of sin, there was a long line of people, as Jesus felt “our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15), “[bore] our griefs, . . . carried our sorrows . . . [and] was bruised for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:4–5).

The Atonement was an intimate, personal experience in which Jesus came to know how to help each of us.⁴⁸

43. Marion G. Romney, “The Worth of Souls,” *Ensign* 8, no. 11 (November 1978): 13.

44. Marion G. Romney, “The Resurrection of Jesus,” *Ensign* 12, no. 5 (May 1982): 6.

45. Approximately half of these occurrences also mention the Savior’s Crucifixion as a place of his suffering our pains.

46. Elder Neal A. Maxwell spoke of Christ’s suffering our pains in Gethsemane on five occasions.

47. Neal A. Maxwell, “Yet Thou Art There,” *Ensign* 17, no. 11 (November 1987): 32.

48. Merrill J. Bateman, “A Pattern for All,” *Ensign* 35, no. 11 (November 2005): 75–76.



Emphasizing the same idea, Sister Carole M. Stephens taught, “The Savior . . . understood their [the early Saints’] personal adversity because He suffered it for them in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross,”⁴⁹ and President Boyd K. Packer said, “We worship and recognize Him for the pain He suffered for us collectively and for the pain He endured for each of us individually, both in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross.”⁵⁰

These powerful teachings help us see that while we may not fully understand how or what the Savior suffered, there is a personal connection between what he experienced in Gethsemane and each of us individually.

The Relative Importance of Gethsemane and the Crucifixion

A significant finding from our analysis of references by Church leaders to Gethsemane comes in identifying three basic phases of discourse with respect to the relationship of Gethsemane to the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. While there is some fluidity in these phases and they cannot be concretely specified, in general terms, we categorize these phases as follows:

- Phase 1 (1850s–1930s): Teachings about Gethsemane are rare and ambiguous, often leading up to statements that indicate a greater relative importance of Calvary.
- Phase 2 (1940s–1970s): Gethsemane is more commonly identified as a key location of Jesus’s Atonement and is at times elevated above the cross.
- Phase 3 (1980s–2010s): Leaders most frequently present Gethsemane and Calvary as joint locations of Jesus’s grand sacrifice.

Phase 1 (1850s–1930s). In the first ninety years of addresses found in the *Journal of Discourses* and general conference talks, the Garden of Gethsemane was referenced only thirty-six times—an average of four times per decade. Only five of these instances identify Gethsemane as a physical location of Jesus’s suffering of our sins or pains. Even in these five

49. Carole M. Stephens, “Wide Awake to Our Duties,” *Ensign* 42, no. 11 (November 2012): 116.

50. Boyd K. Packer, “The Reason for Our Hope,” *Ensign* 44, no. 11 (November 2014): 6.



instances, the tendency is to speak of Christ as feeling sorrow for our sins in Gethsemane rather than explicitly stating that he atoned for them there. During these same years, it was much more common for speakers to reference “the great atonement that was wrought out on Mount Calvary”⁵¹ than to refer to Gethsemane in connection with that atonement.

An example of the nature of references to Gethsemane during this phase occurs in teachings regarding the cup that Jesus asked to pass from him. During phase 1, four of the seven references to the cup in our corpus refer to the future suffering on the cross rather than to any expiation in the garden, suggesting that some or most of the agony in Gethsemane came from contemplating the future Crucifixion. For example, Lorenzo Snow taught, “In the Garden of Gethsemane, . . . the time approached that He was to pass through the severest affliction that any mortal ever did pass through. He undoubtedly had seen persons nailed to the cross, because that method of execution was common at that time, and He understood the torture that such persons experienced for hours. He went by Himself in the garden and prayed to His Father, if it were possible, that *that cup* [the Crucifixion] might pass from Him; and His feelings were such that He sweat great drops of blood.”⁵²

51. Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 14:327 (February 11, 1872). By way of rough comparison, the corpus at <https://www.lds-general-conference.org> for these decades shows 242 instances of the word *crucifixion*, and 96 instances of the word *crucify*. Additional relevant words such as *Golgotha*, *Calvary*, *cross*, and *die* in conjunction with *sins* would significantly add to these numbers. For a more in-depth analysis of Church leaders’ treatment of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, see John Hilton III, Emily Hyde, and McKenna Trussel, “The Use of *Crucifixion* by Church Leaders: 1848–2018,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* (forthcoming).

52. Lorenzo Snow, “Discourse by President Lorenzo Snow [October 6, 1893],” *Millennial Star* 56, no. 4 (January 22, 1894): 50, emphasis added. Similarly, in 1899 Lorenzo Snow wrote, “When He knelt there in the garden of Gethsemane, what agony He must have experienced in *contemplating His sufferings on the cross!*” Lorenzo Snow, “Discourse by President Lorenzo Snow [May 8, 1899],” *Millennial Star* 61, no. 34 (August 24, 1899): 531, emphasis added. This appears to be an echo of the common Protestant view of the day (and of many still today) that the pain Christ experienced in Gethsemane was primarily in anticipation of the suffering he knew he would experience on the cross. A similar viewpoint was expressed by Joseph L. Wirthlin, in *The One Hundred Eighteenth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1948), 143.



In one of the seven instances, the cup likely refers to Gethsemane, and two of the seven references are ambiguous. Thus, more than half of the statements regarding the cup in phase 1 identify it as the agony associated with the Savior's Crucifixion. This trend contrasts with the later characterization of the cup in phase 2.

Although the overall trend in phase 1 was to emphasize the redemptive power of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, some speakers highlighted Gethsemane in ways that foreshadowed its rise in doctrinal importance. As stated previously, John Taylor taught that Christ suffered for our sins in Gethsemane.⁵³ In 1929, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith (then of the Quorum of the Twelve) spoke of "the Savior of men suffering in the garden and upon the cross,"⁵⁴ and in 1937, Elder Rulon S. Wells taught, "The crucifixion represents death, and suffering, or punishment for sin. We cannot appreciate the enormity of that suffering—that punishment for sin, which Christ endured in the garden of Gethsemane and upon the cross."⁵⁵ Although not part of our corpus, Elder James E. Talmage, in *Jesus the Christ*, also emphasized the importance of Gethsemane.⁵⁶

Perhaps the most influential general conference teaching regarding Gethsemane during this period came from an 1889 address by Bishop Orson F. Whitney, who recounted a dream in which he saw Christ in Gethsemane. Although Bishop Whitney never refers to Christ's atoning for our sins in Gethsemane, he states that after seeing Christ pray that the "bitter cup" (which he does not define) would pass from him, the circumstances of the dream changed. Although still in Gethsemane, Whitney understood that the Crucifixion had already taken place and that Christ was about to leave the earth with Peter, James, and John. Whitney recounted:

53. John Taylor, in *Journal of Discourses*, 24:34 (January 21, 1883).

54. Joseph Fielding Smith, in *One Hundredth Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1929), 63.

55. Rulon S. Wells, in *The One Hundred Seventh Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 68.

56. Talmage wrote that in Gethsemane, "in some manner, actual and terribly real though to man incomprehensible, the Savior took upon Himself the burden of the sins of mankind from Adam to the end of the world." James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1915), 613. His strong wording regarding Gethsemane may have influenced how later generations of Latter-day Saints came to emphasize Gethsemane more than their predecessors.



I ran out from behind the tree where I had stood gazing upon the picture, and fell down at His feet, clasped His knees, and asked Him to take me with Him.

I shall never forget the look of indescribable tenderness, affection, and compassion with which He gazed down upon me as I knelt before Him. He lifted me up and embraced me. I could feel the very warmth of His bosom, against which I rested; and as He took me in His arms with all the tenderness of a father or an elder brother, He shook His head and said: "No, my son, your work is not finished; you must remain and perform your mission. These (pointing to His Apostles) have finished their work; they can go with Me; but you must remain."

I was so anxious, I felt such a love for Him and a desire to be with Him, that I clung to Him and pleaded with Him to let me go. But He continued to shake His head. I then said: "Promise me that when I have finished my life I will come to You at last."

Again he gazed with tenderness and compassion, and uttered these words in tones which pierced my very soul, "That, my son, will depend entirely upon yourself."⁵⁷

Phase 2 (1940s–1970s). Phase 2 is characterized by more clear and frequent identification of Gethsemane as a location of Jesus's vicarious suffering for sin, differing from the lack of specificity regarding Gethsemane during phase 1. As such teachings became more common, the number of explicit mentions of Gethsemane increased dramatically. From 1940 to 1979, Church leaders referenced Gethsemane 118 times, averaging 30 times per decade, which represents a 750 percent increase from phase 1.⁵⁸

In 1945, Elder Marion G. Romney (then an Assistant to the Twelve) provided a clear example of the emphasis on Gethsemane, stating, "Jesus held true to this course, even through Gethsemane where he bore the sins of all men through suffering which caused him 'to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit.' As he came to the climax of that suffering, he cried out in agony: . . . Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will,

57. Orson F. Whitney, "Bishop O. F. Whitney," *Millennial Star* 51, no. 47 (November 25, 1889): 739–40.

58. We do note that some of this increase came from incidental references to Gethsemane rather than from references that had a strong theological focus.



but thine, be done.”⁵⁹ Elder Romney specifies the nature and purpose of Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane as an expiation for our sins. He also places the “climax of that suffering” in the garden and does not mention the crucifixion in this address. Finally, his words identify the cup as the Savior’s current suffering in the garden, rather than the cross. Though not without exception, this characterization of Gethsemane became the dominant trend throughout phase 2.

In some instances, this new focus on the garden rose to the level of emphasizing the role of Gethsemane above Calvary. So far as can be determined, in 1944, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, then of the Quorum of the Twelve, became the first Church leader to explicitly attribute greater salvific importance to Gethsemane than to the cross.⁶⁰ He stated,

I think it is understood by many that the great suffering of Jesus Christ came through the driving of nails in His hands and in His feet, and in being suspended upon a cross, until death mercifully released Him. That is not the case. As excruciating, as severe as was that punishment, coming from the driving of nails through His hands and through His feet, and being suspended, until relieved by death, yet still greater was the suffering which He endured in carrying the burden of the sins of the world—my sins, and your sins, and the sins of every living creature. This suffering came before He ever got to the cross, and it caused the blood to come forth from the pores of his body, so great was that anguish of His soul, the torment of His spirit that He was called upon to undergo.⁶¹

59. Marion G. Romney, in *The One Hundred Fifteenth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1945), 88.

60. Although James E. Talmage did not directly compare the salvific value of Gethsemane and Calvary, he did write that what Christ experienced in Gethsemane would not be exceeded on the cross: “From the terrible conflict in Gethsemane, Christ emerged a victor. . . . The further tragedy of the night, and the cruel inflictions that awaited Him on the morrow, to culminate in the frightful tortures of the cross, could not exceed the bitter anguish through which He had successfully passed.” Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 614.

61. Joseph Fielding Smith, in *The One Hundred Fourteenth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1944), 50. Elder Smith made similar comments in *The One Hundred Eighteenth Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1947), 147–48; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954), 1:130;



In 1953, Elder Marion G. Romney also clearly stated that Gethsemane was the location of the greatest suffering. He taught, “Jesus then went into the Garden of Gethsemane. There he suffered most. He suffered greatly on the cross, of course, but other men had died by crucifixion; in fact, a man hung on either side of him as he died on the cross.”⁶² Elder Romney made two other explicit comparisons in 1982 between Gethsemane and Christ’s Crucifixion, both emphasizing Gethsemane. Thus, across our entire corpus we found five statements made in general conference that regard Gethsemane as the place where Christ’s greatest suffering occurred. Although Elder Bruce R. McConkie did not make such statements in general conference, some of his writings reflected this sentiment.⁶³ In each of these statements, the individuals appear to perhaps discount the possibility that Christ suffered pains beyond the physical torture of crucifixion while on the cross, a position not congruent with statements from other Church leaders.

In at least six instances between 1940 and 1983, a speaker’s focus on Gethsemane was reflected implicitly by the omission of the cross when discussing salvific events or by stating that Christ suffered his “greatest anguish” in Gethsemane without explicitly comparing it to the cross. For example, note the emphasis on Gethsemane and the omission of the Savior’s Crucifixion in the following 1982 statement by Elder Ezra Taft Benson: “A testimony of Jesus is to know that the laws which He prescribed as His doctrine are true and then to abide by these laws and ordinances. To possess a testimony of Jesus is to know that He voluntarily took upon Himself the sins of all mankind in the Garden of Gethsemane, which caused Him to suffer in both body and spirit and

and Joseph Fielding Smith, *Seek Ye Earnestly* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1970), 119–21.

62. Marion G. Romney, in *The One Hundred Twenty-Fourth Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1953), 35.

63. For example, Elder McConkie wrote, “It is to the Cross of Christ that most Christians look when centering their attention upon the infinite and eternal atonement. And certainly the sacrifice of our Lord was completed when he was lifted up by men. . . . But in reality the pain and suffering, the triumph and grandeur, of the atonement took place primarily in Gethsemane.” Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1973), 1:774; see also Bruce R. McConkie, *The Mortal Messiah*, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981), 4:127–28.



to bleed from every pore. All this He did so that we would not have to suffer if we would repent. To possess a testimony of Jesus is to know that He came forth triumphantly from the grave with a physical, resurrected body.”⁶⁴

Although this emphasis on Gethsemane over the cross is evident during phase 2 and continues into the first few years of phase 3, some speakers had different insights regarding the relative importance of Gethsemane and the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. For example, in 1960, President J. Reuben Clark identified the cup as the upcoming crucifixion, as was prevalent in phase 1: “Have you ever been struck with the thought that here [in Gethsemane] was the Son praying to the Father to let the cup of crucifixion pass by?”⁶⁵ Even those who seemed to at times downplay Christ’s suffering for our sins on the cross did not always do so. In 1948, Elder Marion G. Romney taught, “I believe that in Gethsemane *and on the cross* Jesus suffered for the sins of all men”;⁶⁶ President Joseph Fielding Smith said in 1967, “He had power to lay down his life, and *on the cross he paid the price for our sins* and at the same time for Adam’s transgression”;⁶⁷ and Elder Bruce R. McConkie emphasized the Crucifixion and omitted any reference to Gethsemane when he wrote, “A testimony in our day consists of three things: . . . the knowledge that Jesus is the Lord, that he is the Son of the living God who was *crucified for the sins of the world*; . . . the fact that Joseph Smith was a prophet . . . ;

64. Ezra Taft Benson, “Valiant in the Testimony of Jesus,” *Ensign* 12, no. 5 (May 1982): 62.

65. J. Reuben Clark, in *The One Hundred Thirtieth Semi-annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1960), 90. In 1963, Elder Henry D. Taylor similarly attributed Jesus’s discomfort in the garden to the contemplation of future events. “The Savior had his dark and dreary days, and in Gethsemane’s garden he suffered untold agony as he contemplated the events that confronted him while fulfilling his exalted mission.” Henry D. Taylor, in *The One Hundred Thirty-Third Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1963), 121.

66. Marion G. Romney, in *The One Hundred Eighteenth Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 77, emphasis added.

67. Joseph Fielding Smith, in *The One Hundred Thirty-Seventh Annual Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1967), 122, emphasis added.



and . . . knowing that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true and living Church.”⁶⁸

Phase 3 (1980s–2010s). Phase 3 is characterized by clear and frequent teachings about Gethsemane being a location where Christ suffered our sins and pains. Another hallmark of this phase is including statements about the cross when speaking of Gethsemane in connection with Christ’s Atonement. During this period, total mentions of Gethsemane continued to rise, averaging sixty-one per decade, a 200 percent increase from phase 2 and an astonishing 1,500 percent increase from phase 1.

Although teachings acknowledging the unity of Gethsemane and the cross in the Atonement had occurred nine times prior to 1980, the union of the two events became much more prominent in the early 1980s. In 1982, Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught, “In the garden and on the cross [Christ] paid the ransom and finished his atoning work.”⁶⁹ He made similar statements in 1984⁷⁰ and 1985.⁷¹

In the 1982 and 1985 talks just cited, Elder McConkie introduced a unique principle related to Gethsemane and Christ’s Crucifixion that, so far as we can ascertain, had not explicitly been stated before in general conference. In 1982, Elder McConkie stated that “the sufferings of Gethsemane returned [on the cross].”⁷² In 1985, he said, “While [Christ] was hanging on the cross for another three hours, . . . all the infinite agonies and merciless pains of Gethsemane recurred.”⁷³ These statements echo a cautious suggestion from Elder James E. Talmadge in *Jesus the Christ*: “It seems, that in addition to the fearful suffering incident to crucifixion, the agony of Gethsemane had recurred, intensified beyond

68. Bruce R. McConkie, “Gaining a Testimony of Jesus Christ,” *Ensign* 10, no. 12 (December 1980): 15, emphasis added.

69. Bruce R. McConkie, “The Seven Christs,” *Ensign* 12, no. 11 (November 1982): 33. In the early years of phase 3, there were varying perspectives about where Christ suffered for our sins. In 1982, President Marion G. Romney taught that Jesus suffered the pains of all men “principally in Gethsemane,” which, while acknowledging that a portion of Jesus’s vicarious suffering may have occurred on the cross, still emphasized Gethsemane. Marion G. Romney, “The Resurrection of Jesus,” *Ensign* 12, no. 5 (May 1982): 6.

70. Bruce R. McConkie, “Patterns of Prayer” *Ensign* 14, no. 5 (May 1984): 33.

71. Bruce R. McConkie, “The Purifying Power of Gethsemane,” *Ensign* 15, no. 5 (May 1985): 9.

72. McConkie, “Seven Christs,” 33.

73. McConkie, “Purifying Power of Gethsemane,” 10.



human power to endure.”⁷⁴ Where Elder Talmage was tentative, Elder McConkie was direct.⁷⁵

So far as we can determine, nobody since Elder McConkie has unambiguously stated in general conference that the specific agonies of Gethsemane returned on the cross. However, statements have been made that support this idea. For example, Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin taught, “Jesus Christ suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane more than you can comprehend. Willingly and lovingly, He took upon Himself not only our sins but the pains, sicknesses, and sufferings of all mankind. *He suffered similarly on the cross.*”⁷⁶ President Russell M. Nelson declared, “In the Garden of Gethsemane, our Savior took upon Himself . . . all of the anguish and suffering ever experienced. . . . Under the weight of that excruciating burden, He bled from every pore. *All of this suffering was intensified as He was cruelly crucified on Calvary’s cross.*”⁷⁷

It is possible that Elder McConkie’s statements regarding Gethsemane’s suffering reoccurring on the cross were part of the reason for the dramatic increase, beginning in the 1980s, in the number of general conference addresses that connect Christ’s Crucifixion to Gethsemane. As illustrated in figure 3, instances in which Gethsemane and the Savior’s Crucifixion are jointly linked as elements of the Atonement of Jesus Christ has dramatically increased in the past forty years, with a notable increase in the 2010s.

This increase is not simply a byproduct of increased overall mentions of Gethsemane during general conference, but rather it represents a shift in the way that the Savior’s Atonement was discussed. In the 1970s, for example, there were ten references in our corpus to Jesus’s

74. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1915), 661, emphasis added.

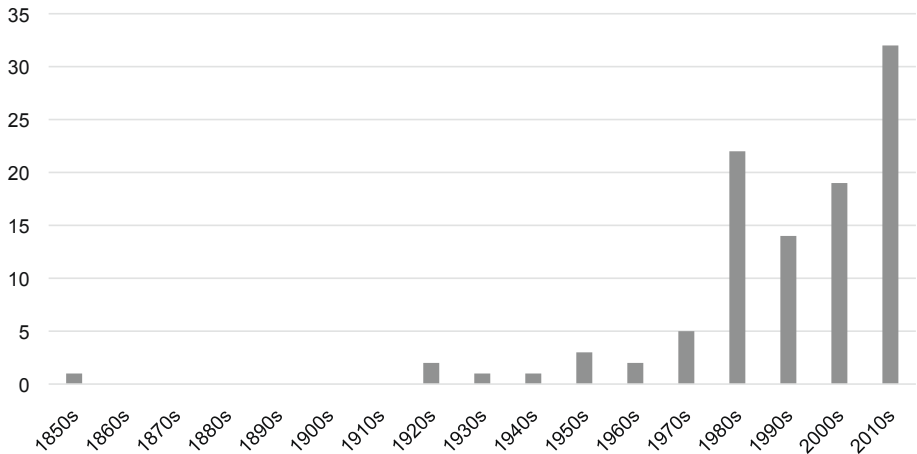
75. It is interesting to note that Elder McConkie in previous writings *had* been more tentative, writing, “If we interpret the holy word aright, . . . all of the anguish, all of the sorrow, and all of the suffering of Gethsemane recurred during the final three hours on the cross, the hours when darkness covered the land. Truly there was no sorrow like unto his sorrow, and no anguish and pain like unto that which bore in with such intensity upon him.” McConkie, *Mortal Messiah*, 4:232 n. 22, emphasis added.

76. Joseph B. Wirthlin, “Growing into the Priesthood,” *Ensign* 29, no. 11 (November 1999): 40, emphasis added.

77. Russell M. Nelson, “The Correct Name of the Church,” *Ensign* 48, no. 11 (November 2018): 88, emphasis added.



FIGURE 3. Gethsemane and the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ Jointly Linked in the Savior's Atonement, by Decade



suffering for our sins or pains in Gethsemane. Nine of these attribute Christ's experiences to Gethsemane alone, while one also mentions the cross. Compare that nine-to-one ratio with that of the 1980s. Seventeen references in the 1980s mentions Gethsemane alone in terms of redemptive agony, while another seventeen refer to the cross and Gethsemane together under those same terms, resulting in a one-to-one ratio. In the 2010s, twelve references mention Gethsemane's role in the Atonement of Jesus Christ without including Calvary, while twenty-three speak to the unity of the two locations, nearly a one-to-two ratio.

Speakers during these later years used phrases such as "in Gethsemane and on the cross" or "at Gethsemane and Calvary" to describe the Savior's Atonement.⁷⁸ For example, Sister Jean B. Bingham, Relief

78. Despite most general conference speakers referring to Gethsemane and Calvary in tandem as equals during phase 3, occasional references may implicitly put Gethsemane above the cross in importance, although those implications might be unintended. For example, Elder Neal A. Maxwell stated, "Our willingness to do so, here and now, is consistent with Christ's kneeling alone, there and then, in Gethsemane. In the final atoning process, 'none were with [Him]'" (D&C 133:50; see also Matt. 26:38–45)." Neal A. Maxwell, "The Seventh Commandment: A Shield," *Ensign* 31, no. 11 (November 2001): 80. This talk focused on chastity, and it does not appear that Elder Maxwell



Society General President, declared, “In the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross of Calvary, He felt all of our pains, afflictions, temptations, sicknesses, and infirmities.”⁷⁹ President Henry B. Eyring similarly stated, “Jesus Christ bore in Gethsemane and on the cross the weight of all our sins. He experienced all the sorrows, the pains, and the effects of our sins so that He could comfort and strengthen us through every test in life.”⁸⁰

CONCLUSION

The immutable and eternal Atonement of Jesus Christ stands as the greatest and most transcendent act in human history. Through the events of Gethsemane, Calvary, and his Resurrection, Jesus Christ suffered our pains and sins, and conquered death for all humanity. It is precisely due to the unfathomable significance of this great event that Latter-day Saints strive to understand as much as possible about each component of the Savior’s great sacrifice.

Throughout the history of the Church, discourse surrounding the Savior’s Atonement has shifted, as different aspects of the Atonement have been variously emphasized. In recent years, Gethsemane’s role within the plan of happiness has grown from almost an afterthought in the discourse of early Church leaders into a doctrinal focal point. These teachings help us understand Christ’s submission to his Father and his suffering for our sins and experiencing our pains. The increased focus on Gethsemane over the past forty years is a manifestation of a growing emphasis by Church leaders on the centrality of the Savior’s Atonement.

While the collective teachings of Church leaders emphasize the importance of Gethsemane, they do not justify polemics that the Church elevates Christ’s suffering in Gethsemane above the suffering experienced on the cross. It is true that a handful of statements by Church leaders explicitly compared the Savior’s sufferings in Gethsemane and on the cross and identified Gethsemane as the more important location in terms of redemption. However, as demonstrated in this article, the

was trying to make a theological statement about the relative importance of Gethsemane and Christ’s Crucifixion. Such is typically the case with similar statements during phase 3.

79. Jean B. Bingham, “That Your Joy Might Be Full,” *Ensign* 47, no. 11 (November 2017): 86.

80. Henry B. Eyring, “Try, Try, Try,” *Ensign* 48, no. 11 (November 2018): 90.



three individuals who explicitly taught the supremacy of Gethsemane (Presidents Joseph Fielding Smith and Marion G. Romney and Elder Bruce R. McConkie) also focused on the importance of the Crucifixion and the unity of Gethsemane and the cross in our salvation. Literally hundreds of statements by Church leaders emphasize that Jesus Christ died for our sins on the cross.⁸¹

Why was there a brief period in which Gethsemane appeared to be given a preeminent place in discussions of the Savior's atoning sacrifice? These words from Robert L. Millet may explain why some have emphasized Gethsemane relative to Calvary: "It is inevitable that over time individuals and whole faith communities begin to define themselves, at least to some extent, over against what others believe and thus to emphasize most strongly those doctrinal distinctives that make them who they are. And so it was with the hours of atonement. Because we had come to know, through the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, concerning the purposes for the Master's pains in the Garden, we seem to have begun to place a greater stress upon Gethsemane than upon the cross."⁸²

Although the Church emphasizes Gethsemane differently than most of Christianity does, a holistic examination of the teachings of Church leaders on Gethsemane does not support the notion that Church leaders de-emphasize the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. In fact, recent decades have shown an increasing tendency for Church leaders to speak of Christ's Crucifixion when discussing Gethsemane.

Speaking of our quest to understand the Savior's sacrifice, President Boyd K. Packer taught, "We do not know exactly how the Lord accomplished the Atonement. But we do know that the cruel torture of crucifixion was only part of the horrific pain which began in Gethsemane—that sacred site of suffering—and was completed on Golgotha."⁸³ Just as President Packer suggests, though we do not understand everything, it is clear from the teachings of modern Church leaders that the events that transpired in the Garden of Gethsemane were a vital part of the Savior's Atonement.

81. See Hilton, Hyde, and Trussel, "Use of *Crucifixion* by Church Leaders."

82. Robert L. Millet, *What Happened to the Cross? Distinctive LDS Teachings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2007), 107.

83. Boyd K. Packer, "The Atonement," *Ensign* 32, no. 11 (November 2012): 77.



John Hilton III is Associate Professor of Ancient Scripture at Brigham Young University and is the author of over seventy-five peer-reviewed articles. His interest in researching the topic of this article began while teaching at the BYU Jerusalem Center, prompted by a thoughtful question from his friend and colleague Matthew Grey. John has published in several journals, including *Educational Researcher*, *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*, *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, *Religious Education*, and *The Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*. John and his wife, Lani, have six children.

Joshua P. Barringer will graduate from Brigham Young University in December 2019 with a major in history and minors in Spanish and sociology. He plans to attend law school in the fall of 2020. He and his wife, Grace, love to travel and plan on teaching English in Vietnam prior to his law school matriculation.



A Preparatory Redemption: Reading Alma 12–13
Edited by Matthew Bowman and Rosemary Demos

Provo, Utah: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2018

Reviewed by Charles Harrell

A Preparatory Redemption: Reading Alma 12–13 is a collection of essays written by eight scholars as part of the summer 2016 Mormon Theology Seminar, hosted by the Maxwell Institute, to explore the theological significance of Alma's sermon to the people of Ammonihah, in Alma 12:19–13:20. Few passages of scripture have intrigued me over the years as much as these, so I personally looked forward with great anticipation for this volume to be released.

In this sermon, Alma essentially calls the wicked people of Ammonihah to repentance. After warning them of the consequences of sin and laying out the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, he relates that God ordained priests to teach this plan to Adam's posterity. Further, Alma explains how the ordination of these priests was typological of the way the people were to look to Christ for redemption. He touches on several key doctrinal concepts in his sermon, many in novel and profound ways, including the Fall, the Atonement, revelation, moral agency, repentance, obedience, sanctification, God's rest, and the order of God.

The back cover describes Alma 12–13 as “a theologically rich and often misunderstood text.” Indeed, the abstruse language of the text tends to obscure as much as the language clarifies. It seems apropos, therefore, that the introduction cautions readers to take these essays “as theological and speculative, rather than as definitive” (viii). The essays are clearly exploratory and experimental, and some interpretations are more persuasive than others.

As accomplished scholars from a range of disciplines, the contributors bring a diversity of perspectives to the essays, which cover a range of topics, including revelation, free will, foreordination, priesthood, pre-existence, the Atonement, and the plan of salvation. Overall, the essays



are thoughtful, balanced, and creative, and evoke new and insightful ways of thinking about the text.

General Criticisms

In this collection of essays, occasionally, the intertextual meaning of a word or phrase is adopted instead of the meaning apparent from the immediate text. For example, a few essays analyze the “first provocation,” found in Alma 12:36, which echoes the language of Psalm 95, Hebrews 3, and Jacob 1, which all describe the Israelites’ “provocation” of God during the Exodus. The interpretation of the “first provocation” as the disobedience of the children of Israel during the Exodus appears in the summary report (xviii) and is reaffirmed by contributors Matthew Bowman (10) and Rosemary Demos (33). But Alma 12 makes no mention of the Exodus in reference to the “first provocation”; the chapter speaks only of the disobedience of Adam and Eve in the Garden, which is thus the most straightforward allusion of the “first provocation.” Another contributor, Sheila Taylor, while acknowledging that the phrase may have reference to the Exodus, at least accedes that, based on the immediate context, “one might also make the case that ‘first provocation’ here refers to the fall” (62). This latter interpretation is essentially made at the end of verse 36: “therefore, according to his word, unto the last death, as well as the first” (Alma 12:36)—that is, just as Adam and Eve provoked God, resulting in a first or physical death, so shall those of their posterity who provoke God suffer a last, or spiritual, death.

This particular instance of predilection toward intertextuality may have been the result of the contributors’ influence on one another. Meeting together as group to consider such difficult chapters undoubtedly helped stimulate and refine individual thinking about the text, but some interpretations made by dominant voices may have led to interpretive conformity. In this instance, three essays interpret the “first provocation” as a reference to the disobedience of the children of Israel during the Exodus rather than the transgression of Adam and Eve in the Garden, which is the more internally consistent and generally accepted reading.

Several of the essays evince a lack of familiarity with early nineteenth-century literature that might have a bearing on the text of Alma 12–13. In some cases, the writers seem to be unfamiliar with word usage contemporaneous with the advent of the Book of Mormon. To give one example, Adam Miller takes a pivotal verse in Alma’s sermon that states, “Now these ordinances were given after this manner” (Alma 13:16), and assumes that the word *ordinances* refers to “laws or rituals” (88). As



used in Alma 13, however, the term *ordinance* refers specifically to the ordination of priests.¹ This usage is apparent in other passages of the Book of Mormon as well² but is most apparent in early Church literature in which one's divine appointment or ordination is referred to as an *ordinance*, at least until 1832, when it began to be supplanted by the now familiar term *ordination*.³

Another intertextual issue found in several essays is the appeal to ancient Hebrew and Greek word forms to illuminate terms and phrases in Alma's sermon. David Gore, for example, spends over a page presenting

1. Grant Hardy makes a convincing argument, based simply on context, that *ordinances* in Alma 13:16 is essentially synonymous with priesthood *ordinations*. Grant Hardy, "The Book of Mormon as a Written (Literary) Artifact," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 2 (2003): 107–9. Interpreting *ordinance* as *ordination* means that verse 16 reprises verse 3, providing matching bookends to Alma's description of the manner in which priests were ordained. This *inclusio* seems to signal where the explanation of the type starts and where it ends in order to help the reader decipher the typology of which it is a part.

2. The term *ordinance* is used in the Bible to refer to rules and regulations under the law of Moses, which is also its general usage in the Book of Mormon. An exception to this is Alma 13:8, 16 and Alma 50:39, where *ordinance* is used to denote a divine appointment or ordination.

3. Doctrine and Covenants 21:11 speaks of Oliver Cowdery's priesthood calling as an "ordinance unto" him. In summer 1832, Joseph Smith listed among the spiritual blessings Cowdery received from on high "a confirmation and reception of the high Priesthood after the holy order of the son of the living God power and ordinance [*sic*] from on high to preach the Gospel in the administration and demonstration of the spirit." "Letterbook 1," 1 (ca. summer 1832), The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed September 17, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letterbook-1/7>. The revelation found in Doctrine and Covenants 68:1, received November 1, 1831, originally read that Orson Hyde "was called by his ordinance to proclaim the everlasting Gospel." A note in the Joseph Smith Papers reads, "'Ordinance' likely refers to Hyde's ordination to the high priesthood. 'Ordinance'—which, according to Webster's 1828 dictionary, could mean 'appointment'—was changed to 'ordination' in the 1921 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants." "Revelation, 1 November 1831-A [D&C 68]," 113, Joseph Smith Papers, accessed September 17, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-1-november-1831-a-dc-68/1>. Doctrine and Covenants 53:3 similarly instructed Sidney Gilbert in June 1831 to "take upon you mine ordinances [later changed to 'ordinance'] even that of an Elder." "Revelation, 8 June 1831 [D&C 53]," Joseph Smith Papers, accessed October 13, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/doctrine-and-covenants-1835/203>. This was also later changed to "ordination." For other examples in the Doctrine and Covenants, see 77:14; and 124:134.

ancient Hebrew and Greek equivalents (or near equivalents) to the word *converse* in order to lay out the full semantic range of possible meanings to consider for its use in Alma 12:29–30 (21–22). Such an exercise has its merits, but given that the only extant source document available for the Book of Mormon is modern English, the utility of such an effort is questionable. The relevance of appealing to ancient Hebrew and Greek to illuminate the Book of Mormon could have been better clarified.⁴

Despite these concerns, I applaud the acknowledgement of terms and phrases in Alma's sermon that have an actual correspondence to verbiage in the English King James Version, and I praise the effort made to comparatively analyze their meanings in each context. I would have personally liked to see a similar effort made for the phraseology in Alma's sermon that isn't found in the King James Version but is native to the religious discourse of Joseph Smith's day (for example, *probationary state*, *holy order*, *from eternity to all eternity*, and so on).

Only so many topics in Alma's sermon could be addressed given the constraints of the seminar. However, the relationship between foreknowledge and foreordination could have been explored in more depth, especially given that this is a teaching rather unique to Alma 13. Though a few essays touch on the topic, several questions remain unexplored. What does one's ordination "according to the foreknowledge of God" mean? Does God have provisional or absolute foreknowledge of one's choices in mortality? And what does that imply for moral agency? Is foreordination conditional or unconditional?

Given these few qualms that admittedly reflect my own personal biases, what follows is a brief review of each individual contribution to the volume. Since some essays are more narrowly focused than others, my treatment of the former tends to be shorter.

4. The penchant to search for Hebrew terminology in the Book of Mormon seems to be based on the assumptions that (1) the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, (2) the language of the source text was Hebrew, and (3) New World Hebrew at the time of Alma was the same as or close to Old World Hebrew. We can't be certain of any of these assumptions, and the Book of Mormon itself claims to have been written in the "language of the Egyptians" (1 Ne. 1:2). Book of Mormon studies need to come to terms with the issues surrounding these assumptions and establish appropriate guidelines accordingly. Relying on Greek equivalents to Book of Mormon terms to establish meanings seems even more questionable, since Book of Mormon people didn't speak or write in Greek. For further discussion of the Book of Mormon source language problem, see Brant A. Gardner, *The Gift and Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford, 2011), 165–76.



Introduction (Matthew Bowman)

Bowman introduces Alma's sermon and briefly summarizes each of the contributed essays. He cautions that Alma's sermon should not be taken "in abstraction as a universal discourse on priesthood applicable in all times and places" but as "a specific response to the specific problem of Ammonihah," which, according to Bowman, revolves around "the practical question of order" (vii–viii)—that is "social" order. This rather specific and practical framing does not prevent him from waxing more philosophical, stating that Alma "spins" the story of Adam and Eve into "broader lessons about the nature of reality itself." "In its fullest measure," he summarizes, "his sermon is a description of the ways in which the order God has built into reality is made manifest" (viii).

According to Bowman, the people of Ammonihah were languishing in "religious and social decay," which he attributes to their social and theological disorder. They "are in social disorder," he explains, "because they are in theological disorder; they do not understand God's message, so they do not know how to run their society" (vii). Bowman seems to suggest that the people of Ammonihah's fundamental problem is a lack of theological understanding, not a lack of moral or spiritual rectitude, but I'm not entirely persuaded by this assessment, particularly since the record states that "Satan had gotten great hold on their hearts" (Alma 8:9), and they had become increasingly "gross in their iniquities" (Alma 8:28).

Overall, the introduction provides coherence to an otherwise diverse set of essays.

Summary Report (Collaboratively Written)

The summary report is best described in a prior Mormon Theology Seminar volume: "a collaborative document designed to orient the reader to the overarching questions, themes, and conclusions that emerged from the seminar's discussions."⁵ Though the Summary Report is a collaborative document, not all contributors and essays seem to agree with the conclusions that are reported.

The six questions raised in the summary are (1) What was the social, political, and ideological climate in Ammonihah? (2) What role does scripture play in Alma's sermon? (3) What does it mean to be called and prepared from the foundation of the world, and does this imply human preexistence? (4) How does God communicate with humans? (5) How

5. Joseph M. Spencer and Jenny Webb, eds., *Reading Nephi Reading Isaiah: Reading 2 Nephi 26–27* (Salem, Ore.: Salt Press, 2011), 3–4.

does agency figure into death and judgment? (6) How is priesthood or “holy order” understood in Alma 13?

The responses to these questions are often insightful and even provocative, challenging traditional readings of Alma 12–13. For instance, the summary report calls into question the common assumption that the calling of priests “from the foundation of the world” (Alma 13:3) implies preexistence.⁶ Alternatively, their calling could be viewed as “anticipatory” and understood “in terms of God’s foreknowledge, rather than in terms of human premortal existence” (xix). Along these same lines, a full page is devoted to arguing that the phrase “in the first place” (Alma 13:3) most likely refers to logical sequence (that is, “firstly”) rather than temporal sequence (that is, “in the preexistence”). However, the summary doesn’t completely rule out premortal existence in Alma’s sermon, noting that “the contemporary Mormon doctrine of human premortal life is partially mirrored in [Alma’s sermon]” (xxiii), conceding at least an indirect reference to preexistence.

The summary also clarifies, I think correctly, that the “high priesthood” or “holy order” in Alma 13 is different from the “Melchizedek” or “high priesthood” as understood in the Church today. Rather, the summary states, “it seems to be something largely local within the Book of Mormon,” some sort of “quasi-monastic” order “that took as its sole responsibility to teach [God’s] commandments” (xxxii). This is a good example of refraining from reading more into the text than what it allows. The summary’s inference, however, that individuals were ordained to the holy order “by being baptized” (xxxi) is not warranted by the text or context of these verses (see Alma 49:30 and Moro. 6:1). This interpretation is also controverted by other descriptions of ordination in the Book of Mormon, where it occurs as a ritual separate from and subsequent to baptism (see Mosiah 18:18; Alma 6:1; and Moro. 3:1–4). In the case of the ordination of priests described by Alma, it seems unlikely that he would have failed to mention baptism, since he seemed to take great care in setting forth “the manner after which they were ordained” (Alma 13:3).

The authors describe references in Alma 13 to “the foundation of the world” and “entering into God’s rest,” among other phrases, as

6. The assumption of preexistence in Alma 13:3 appears in many commentaries, *Ensign* articles, and Church lesson manuals. The passage is also referenced in “Man, Antemortal Existence of,” Topical Guide, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, accessed September 22, 2019, <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/scriptures/tg/man-antemortal-existence-of?lang=eng>.



“appropriation[s] . . . of formulas native to the book of Hebrews” (xxi). The summary provides an insightful analysis of the intertextuality between Alma 12–13 and Hebrews 3–4, 7, noting that both use similar language but sometimes with different meanings and unrelated ends. For one example, “where Hebrews reads ‘foundation of the world’ as a reference to God’s past tense and completed act of creation, Alma takes up this language of creating the world, declares this foundation to be the holy order after the Son of God, and then reads this holy order as being always already ‘prepared from eternity to all eternity’ (Alma 13:7)” (xxii).

What is arguably the most salient question regarding Alma’s sermon surprisingly wasn’t among the six central questions in the summary. In Alma 13:2–16, Alma describes at length a typology between the manner in which priests were ordained (the type) and the manner in which people were to look forward to Christ for redemption (the antitype). The question begging to be answered, of course, is how the type informs the antitype. What, exactly, does the ordination of priests teach us about looking to Christ for redemption? This exclusion is particularly puzzling given that the summary acknowledges that “the entire sermon turns on an elaboration of this ‘manner’ of looking forward” (xxii). The summary touches on this typology under question three (about being called from the foundation of the world) but seems to unnecessarily complicate the typology by suggesting that there are actually *three* types: (1) “the holy order,” (2) “the ordinances proper to that order” (see Alma 13:16), and (3) the way “priests were ordained” (Alma 13:2) (xxii). On my reading of Alma, however, only one type is explicitly identified, which is the way priests were ordained (see Alma 13:2, 16).

In contrast to reading more types into Alma’s typology than the text expressly warrants, the summary seems to shortchange the parallels Alma intends to draw between these types and the antitype, or manner in which one should look forward to Christ for redemption. Specifically, the summary states only that “people are . . . to relate to their redemption typologically as already prepared and accomplished from the foundation of the world” (xxii). Drawing this one parallel is a beginning to unpacking Alma’s typology, but Alma’s care to lay out multiple aspects of the priests’ ordination seems intended to evoke more than just a single parallel. Consider Alma’s elaboration that the ordination or calling of these priests was (1) from the foundation of the world, (2) based on God’s foreknowledge of their faith and good works, (3) predicated on the exercise of their own free will, (4) according to a preparatory redemption, and (5) instrumental to their being admitted into God’s



rest. Though not all the parallels in Alma's typology are perfectly clear, a little more investigative inquiry into the typology would have been more appreciated than the curtailed explanation put forth in this volume.⁷

The discussion of Alma's explanation of the nature and purpose of humankind's preparatory state in mortality is clear and precise, except concerning Alma's remark in 12:36 that in the Judgment the wicked will suffer "the everlasting destruction of [their] souls." Alma's pronouncement sounds like annihilationism and, therefore, begs clarification. The summary, however, offers little help, explaining only that, just like the first death is the end of one's mortality, "this second, spiritual death can also be seen as an end" (xxviii). But an end to what—the human soul? Life with God? The summary further falls short, stating that, "like temporal death, it [spiritual death] can also be overcome by the plan of redemption" (xxviii)—but, on Alma's account, spiritual death is death to righteousness pronounced on the wicked at judgment and is permanent; therefore, it *can't* be "overcome," at least not in the same sense that physical death is overcome. Spiritual death can only be *prevented* or *avoided* by repenting and keeping God's laws while in mortality (see 12:18). A little more clarity, precision of language, and fidelity to the text would spare the reader from drawing unintended conclusions.

**"The Profession of Nehor and the Holy Order of God:
Theology and Society in Ammonihah" (Matthew Bowman)**

Order and *disorder* are the operative terms in Bowman's assessment of Alma's sermon, and Bowman brings his expertise in American history and government to bear on his analysis. Drawing on material extending back into Mosiah and on through to later chapters in Alma, Bowman paints a detailed picture of the spiritually impoverished state of the Ammonihahites, which helps explain why Alma delivered this particular sermon.

7. The typology is by no means simple and straightforward. Alma leaves the connection between the type and antitype vague. I have personally read at least eight different explanations of this typology in various commentaries. These include (1) the ordination of priests symbolizes obtaining salvation, (2) the foreordination of priests symbolizes the foreordination of Christ, (3) priests themselves symbolize Christ, (4) ordination of priests symbolizes ordination opportunity for Ammonihahites, (5) priests before Christ preached symbolically of his coming as though he had already come, (6) the holy order symbolizes the plan of redemption, (7) the holy order symbolizes Christ, and (8) gospel ordinances symbolize Christ and his Atonement.



Bowman repudiates the traditional labeling of the Ammonihahites as sophists, countering that such a label fails to recognize “the complex belief and social order” that had developed within the movement. A more accurate label, he suggests, would be a “Nephite dissenting movement” (2). Nehor, who preached universal redemption, stating that “the Lord had . . . redeemed all men; and, in the end, all men should have eternal life” (Alma 1:4), was effectively the founder of this movement, and thus disciples of Nehor, such as the Ammonihahites, are often assumed to also be universalists. Bowman, however, points the reader to passages showing that some of these followers didn’t believe in a redeemer at all and some didn’t even believe in an afterlife. Thus, he dispels any notion that these Nephite dissenters were monolithic in their doctrinal beliefs.

He devotes much of his essay to addressing Alma’s use of *holy order*, which, Bowman states, should be understood as having broad reference to “a righteous society” in contrast to the corrupt “disordered society” of the people of Ammonihah (12). This “social organization,” as he calls it, consists of “priests and people, organized ‘after’ something called a ‘holy order’” (9). His substitution of the word “organized” for “ordained” nicely accommodates his treatment of the holy order as an organization to which one belongs rather than a ministry to which one is ordained.

Bowman’s take on *holy order* is considerably broader than what most Latter-day Saint commentators would allow and what can be confidently gleaned from the text. Indeed, in almost every occurrence of *holy order* in the Book of Mormon, the term is tied to a ministerial calling, which many Latter-day Saint commentators anachronistically equate with the Melchizedek Priesthood.⁸ Though perhaps atypical, Bowman’s more expansive interpretation of *holy order* brings out a potentially significant nuance of the term, which could open up a more comprehensive

8. Bowman inaccurately characterizes Robert Millet as asserting that “the holy order is a reference to ordinance work” (9). Along the lines of most other Latter-day Saint commentators, Millet’s actual claim is that the term refers to the Melchizedek Priesthood, which one receives by the laying on of hands and, in its fulness, through the endowment and sealing blessings of the temple. See Robert L. Millet, “The Holy Order of God,” in *The Book of Mormon: Alma, The Testimony of the Word*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992), 61–88. This claim, however, is anachronistic and reflects a later (post-1834) theology. The notion of Melchizedek Priesthood, its reception by the laying on of hands, or the reception of the fulness of the priesthood in the temple is nowhere attested in the Book of Mormon.



understanding of the Book of Mormon in general and Alma's sermon in particular. This nuance is entirely legitimate given the absence of the contemporary notion of priesthood and any clear delineation of *holy order* in the Book of Mormon.⁹

"Conversion and Calling in Alma 12 and 13" (David Charles Gore)

Gore, whose specialty is rhetoric, examines what he calls "communication theology" in Alma's sermon, including "conversing, calling, and sharing gifts" (14). Most intriguing was the different implications Gore saw in the three different prepositions—*with*, *to*, and *by*—used to describe callings in Alma 13. Priests were called "with" a holy calling (v. 8), "to" a holy calling (v. 4), and "by" a holy calling (v. 6). Each preposition, according to Gore, expresses a different aspect about the calling of priests, which he elaborates.

Gore's explication of Alma's doctrine of a preparatory or probationary state of mortality, in which one prepares for the endless state that follows, is faithful to the text, and he refrains from extending Alma's probationary state into the spirit world as many Latter-day Saint commentators have been prone to do. In the Book of Mormon, there is no concept of repentance in the spirit world; there is "this day of life [that is, mortality]," followed by "the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed" (Alma 34:33).

Gore's appeal to ancient Hebrew and Greek to illuminate the meaning of *converse* in Alma 12:29–30 is problematic, as already described, but he also delves too deeply into the philosophical and psychological aspects of communication that seem to be only tangentially relevant to Alma's sermon. Overall, however, I found his essay thought provoking, and I appreciated the way he expanded my thinking about the text.

"Angels and a Theology of Grace" (Rosemary Demos)

Demos, whose background is in comparative literature, takes a somewhat enigmatic allusion in Alma 12:28–30 (God "sent angels to converse

9. In the Book of Mormon, no one "holds" the priesthood, but rather offices and commissions are given after God's order or system of offices and callings. The word *priesthood* appears in the Book of Mormon only in reference to the "office of the high priesthood" (Alma 13:18), which refers to non-Levitical high priests living before the time of Moses. There is no mention of priesthood as an abstract principle of authority, like the terms *Aaronic* and *Melchizedek Priesthood* suggest.



with them, who caused men to behold of his glory”) and attempts to identify the scriptural event or narrative that this allusion references. She identifies “four distinct narrative possibilities” and evaluates how well each one aligns with key terms from the verses in Alma (32). These possible narrative scenarios are summarized in the following table.

| Scenario | Reference | angels | converse | them | glory |
|----------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1 | Genesis 3:24 | cherubim | confront | our first parents | the flaming sword |
| 2 | Exodus 13–14 | God’s miraculous power | guide, defend | Moses and the Israelites | God’s miraculous power |
| 3 | Mosiah 27; Alma 36 | literal angel | speak with voice of thunder | Alma and his companions | visible power and prescience of judgment |
| 4 | Alma 12 | Alma | preach | people of Ammon | God’s power |

Demos justifies these particular scenarios, two of which are found in the Bible and two in the Book of Mormon, because Alma 12 is “densely intertextual, rich with allusions to both Old and New World scriptural traditions” (31).

She is resourceful in assembling this list of possible candidates, and her assessment of each one is well reasoned. While all of the candidates can be made to fit the text, an unmentioned candidate is the most promising fit but is one without a narrative precedent in either the Bible or Book of Mormon: it is a new scenario spelled out in the immediate text itself—namely, that soon after the Fall, God sent angels to Adam and Eve and their posterity to reveal to them the plan of salvation so they could repent and behold God’s glory (Alma 12:28–30).¹⁰

10. This event seems to be reiterated in Moses 5:58 (“And thus the Gospel began to be preached, from the beginning, being declared by holy angels sent forth from the presence of God”) and *Lectures on Faith* (“God continued [after man’s transgression] to manifest himself to him and his posterity. . . . Which laid the foundation for the exercise of their faith, through which they could obtain a knowledge of his character and also of his glory”). “Lecture 2,” in *The Lectures on Faith in Historical Perspective*, ed. Larry E. Dahl and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University), 30–31.



The primary significance of Demos's contribution is the awareness she provides of angelic ministry and the role of angels in revealing and bringing humankind to God's grace and glory. She characterizes angelic ministry as ongoing and personal, concluding that "within the holy order of God, angels are among us, and glory is continually made manifest" (43).

"The Heart in Alma 12 and 13" (Robert A. Rees)

Rees has a background in literature and humanities and is a seasoned scholar in Book of Mormon studies. His topic is the symbolism of the heart in Alma 12 and 13, which takes him into a rather comprehensive treatment of how the heart is used in the Book of Mormon and explained in Bible commentary, psychology, philosophy, physiology, and neurocardiology. Though I found the survey fascinating, I question the extent to which it informs Alma 12 and 13.

Aside from echoing Hebrews 4:12, which refers to "the thoughts and intents of the heart," all of the references to *heart* in Alma's sermon concern hardening or softening one's heart. Those with hard hearts reject God's word; those with soft hearts embrace it. This concept seems fairly simple and straightforward.

Rees also makes the tenuous case that *remembering* in the Book of Mormon is an operation of the heart, but his justification is one of inference only. He does not cite any specific passages that explicitly make this connection. Nonetheless, he is effective in elevating the reader's understanding and appreciation of "heart" theology in scripture.

"Obtaining Divine Mercy" (Sheila Taylor)

Taylor's background in systematic theology is clearly reflected in her essay, which was the most exegetically satisfying of all the contributions. She addresses two key concepts in Alma's sermon: God's mercy and God's wrath. In Alma 12, she astutely points out that the opposite of *mercy* is not *justice*, but *wrath*. Essentially, one either receives mercy through embracing the Atonement or suffers God's wrath through rejecting the Atonement; in both cases, justice is satisfied.

Taylor, like Demos, explores the meaning of Alma 12:29–30, especially the quandary of how God made known the plan of redemption to humans only "according to their faith and repentance and their holy works" (Alma 12:30). How is it, she asks, that one can exercise faith and repentance without first having a knowledge of the plan of redemption?



Taylor theorizes that perhaps humans knew *about* the plan, but it could only be “made known” in the sense of being either personally revealed to them, or, alternatively, experientially manifested in their lives, after exercising faith.

Taylor wrestles to reconcile Alma’s Pelagian-like, free-will expressions with the preponderant Augustinian (moral depravity) teachings of the Book of Mormon. Alma declares that after the Fall, Adam and Eve could “act according to their wills and pleasures, whether to do evil or to do good” (Alma 12:31). Yet, a few verses earlier we find Alma explaining that because of Adam and Eve’s transgression, “all mankind became a lost and a fallen people” (v. 22). How can Adam and Eve have unfettered free will after the Fall if their inclination is to do evil? Taylor reconciles this seeming contradiction by suggesting that “Alma’s description [in v. 31] does not preclude the possibility that the will is oriented in a particular direction” (58). That is, even if Adam and Eve are *inclined* to do evil over good, no one is forcing them to do evil.

Taylor’s ability to identify and constructively address seemingly illogical or inconsistent statements in Alma’s sermon is a good model of how to productively engage scripture.

“Seams, Cracks, and Fragments: Notes on the Human Condition” (Joseph M. Spencer)

Joseph Spencer leads the reader into two narrow and deep crevices: one tracing what he calls Alma’s *anthropotheology* (a theology of human nature) and another examining Alma’s *cosmotheology* (a theology of time and eternity). Spencer introduces his topic by drawing on the metaphor of Christ’s death and attendant rock fragmentation (see 3 Ne. 8:18) to extrapolate the concept that “Christ’s virtual death” (before the foundation of the world) fractured eternity into time. This *cosmotheology*, he suggests, set up a particular *anthropotheology*, which sees humans as being caught in this time fragmentation. This, he contends, is the real essence of the human condition.

His verbal dexterity and ability to mine profound meanings from a single word or phrase is most impressive. Spencer is eminently analytical in his approach to scripture, raising second- and third-order questions that most readers would never think to ask of the text. But he is also a tenacious semantic sleuth who pushes the text to its limits and is able to wring out meaning beyond the *prima facie* meaning. Alma 12–13, with its inherent ambiguity and elasticity, provides the perfect grist for grinding out Spencer’s theology.



Processing the philosophically oriented theological writings of Joseph Spencer is mentally taxing. I had to read his essay in a quiet place, free from distraction, in order to digest it. His rarefied, cosmotheological reading of Alma's sermon can easily dizzy the intellect. Consider his summation of Alma's cosmotheology: "Perhaps time is a kind of detotalization of eternity that then organizes a movement—through so much preparation—toward retotalization or renewed wholeness" (81). This abstract, philosophical reframing of Alma's sermon is both novel and mind bending.

Spencer takes the first two and a half pages to roundaboutly introduce his essay topic, which is Alma's view of the human condition as described in Alma 12:31. Here Alma explains that the Fall resulted in Adam and Eve "becoming as gods, knowing good from evil, placing themselves in a state to act, or being placed in a state to act according to their wills and pleasures, whether to do evil or to do good." Spencer highlights this pericope's ambiguity, which he attributes to the original unpunctuated manuscript, noting that the passage's meaning "turns on the scope and function of the *or* that appears more or less at the center of the text" (67). He then proceeds over the next eleven pages to give four possible interpretations of Alma 12:31 depending on the scope of the word *or* (that is, whether it connects only the immediate phrases surrounding it or the extended phrases) and the word's function (that is, whether it is inclusive or exclusive).

Spencer covers much of the same ground as Taylor with respect to the Pelagian vs. Augustinian tension in Alma 12:31. Interestingly, Taylor makes nothing of the ambiguity of the word *or* in Alma 12:31 over which Spencer obsesses. For her, the human condition is simple: Adam and Eve transgressed, so they ended up "in a state where they could 'act according to their wills and pleasures, whether to do evil or to do good' (Alma 12:31)" (57). Spencer, however, wants to get to the bottom of *how* Adam and Eve arrived at that state. Did they place themselves in that state? Did God place them in that state? Was it the combined effect of both God and Adam and Eve? Did Adam and Eve paradoxically both place themselves and *not* place themselves in that state?

Spencer also muses at length over a subtle irony in the human condition, noting that when we know God's will, we are powerless to act on it; and when we *do* have power to act, we can't really know if we are doing God's will. Thus, we go back and forth between being either "knowingly impotent or ignorantly active" (76). He corroborates his take on human



nature in Alma's sermon by invoking his own experience as well as that of Paul, Nephi, and Lehi.

Although not explicitly, Spencer seems to assume an *actual* rather than an *ideal* human preexistence in his reading of Alma 13—that is, he assumes a real preexistence rather than one that exists only in the mind of God. One's preparatory state, according to Spencer, reaches back to the preexistence and, for some, extends into the coming eternity. Though ponderous thoughts to consider, both of these ideas lie outside of Alma's sermon. This mortal life is the only state Alma expressly designates as a preparatory state, which is followed by death, the beginning of one's endless state (Alma 12:24).

Spencer engages in a bit of philosophical musing on humankind's fallen condition that, although thought provoking, appears on the surface to be contrary to Alma's core message. "Generally speaking," Spencer states, "we prepare so that we do not have to be redeemed" or "so that we can ignore the fact that we have already been redeemed" (77). Such an assertion, perhaps given for effect, is perplexing in light of Alma's plea that we prepare precisely so that we can be redeemed (Alma 12:24).

In an appendix to his essay, which is essentially another (smaller) essay, Spencer presents his *cosmotheological* reading of Alma, noting an intentional distinction between (1) things "prepared from the foundation of the world" (namely, the plan of redemption, priests, and the holy calling), which Spencer takes to mean that they had their beginning at the time the world was created, and (2) the holy order, which was "prepared from eternity to all eternity" and, therefore, existed *before* the foundation of the world (Alma 13:3, 5, 7). "Clearly," Spencer states, "Alma wishes his hearers . . . to understand that the holy order is in some fundamental way distinct from the other things he discusses" (80).

In making this distinction, Spencer may be holding the text to a higher level of grammatical precision than what the text warrants. For example, one could interpret "from the foundation of the world" as simply a figurative way of saying "from all eternity to all eternity." After all, Alma himself seems to equate the two when he says that the holy order was "from the foundation of the world; *or in other words* . . . from eternity to all eternity" (Alma 13:7, emphasis added). Adam Miller concurs, noting in his essay that this "explicit explanation" in Alma 13:7 makes the two expressions equivalent (86). From a purely exegetical standpoint, I believe Spencer is correct to hold the text to a high standard of precision, but only until or unless common sense dictates otherwise, as when a contradiction, absurdity, or other untenable implication occurs.

Spencer's essay is an excellent example of how to approach a text with analytical rigor and attention to detail. He methodically takes readers through a highly disciplined thought process, enabling them to see the text as he does. The real payoff from Spencer's essay is the way he seeks to uncover the theological subtext of Alma's sermon to a level that I would have never considered otherwise.

"A Preparatory Redemption" (Adam S. Miller)

Like Spencer, Miller takes a philosophical approach to Alma's sermon, and I found his essay to be the most mind expanding of the bunch. Those familiar with his prior works will recognize many of the phrases he uses here, like "grace is not a backup plan" and "early onset postmortality."¹¹ Incorporating these evocative phrases into his exegesis of Alma's sermon challenges readers to think in new ways about the text.

Miller starts by turning Alma's sermon on its head. On a normal reading, Alma seems to be advocating that this life is specifically granted to humans as a time to repent in preparation for the day of judgment (Alma 12:24). (David Gore is careful to emphasize this point in his essay.) Miller, however, inveighs against living our lives preparing for death and judgment, contending that doing so brings only alienation and premature spiritual death. Always preparing for the Judgment, humankind never really lives, so "even before we die our first death, we experience a second death" (83). Alma urges the people of Ammonihah to follow the example of those priests who became sanctified and cleansed from sin "on account of their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish" (Alma 13:10). Miller, however, asserts that redemption is not "something that comes *after* we have exercised our agency and demonstrated obedience" (83, emphasis added). Miller's freewheeling commentary is not bound by convention, nor evidently by the text. He is, nevertheless, relentless in fortifying his thesis and making it imminently applicable, which are important and useful exegetical skills to possess.

I was intrigued by the way Miller takes all of the events that Alma places at either the beginning or the end of the world, and collapses

11. See, for example, Adam S. Miller, *Grace Is Not God's Backup Plan: An Urgent Paraphrase of Paul's Letters to the Romans* (self-pub., Amazon Digital Services, 2015); and Adam S. Miller, "Early Onset Postmortality," chap. 4 in *Future Mormon: Essays in Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2016).



them to an ever-present now, if not in a literal sense, at least in a way that provides a useful perspective. Miller even asserts that “the foundation [the creation] of the world is *now*” and that God is “founding the world right now, from moment to moment” (88, emphasis in original). These ideas are nowhere explicit in Alma’s sermon, but they form the basis of what Miller perceives to be at the very core of it.

Though Miller evinces a rather idiosyncratic reading of Alma, I am actually quite sympathetic to his ideas, and precedents for many of his assertions can be found in other Book of Mormon passages,¹² just not, at least overtly, in Alma 12–13.

Miller is one of only two contributors who attempt to explicate Alma’s unique and evocative phrase, and inspiration for the volume’s title, “preparatory redemption” (Alma 13:3). Miller matter-of-factly asserts that this term refers to “a redemption that, in Christ, has already been prepared” (84). This interpretation has some merit given Alma’s earlier discussion of the plan of redemption that was prepared (Alma 12:30), but why should “preparatory redemption” denote a redemption that *has been prepared* rather than, as contributor Bridget Jeffries and other Book of Mormon commentators contend, a redemption *that prepares*?¹³ Webster defines *preparatory* as “serving to prepare for something,”¹⁴ which is the meaning of *preparatory* a few verses earlier when referring to a “preparatory state” (12:26), presumably signifying a state that prepares one for something future. Thus, a *preparatory redemption* would be a redemption that prepares one for something future, in this case, presumably the calling of the high priesthood. Indeed, Alma 13:5 explains that one can only receive “this holy calling . . . in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son.” Even so, it is entirely possible that Miller’s interpretation of the phrase is correct, in spite of the standard lexical definition. Perhaps both meanings were intended, or maybe there is some other reasonable interpretation. The lack of precision in the language of Alma’s sermon sometimes opens itself to multiple defensible interpretations, any one of which should be advanced with some caution and qualification.

12. Moroni 7:3 asserts that we can enter God’s rest in the here and now; Ether 3:13 shows that we can become redeemed from the Fall while in this life.

13. See, for example, Hardy, “Book of Mormon as a Written (Literary) Artifact,” 107.

14. *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. “preparatory,” accessed September 25, 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/preparatory>.

Miller's treatment of the primacy of the plan of redemption, though effective in centralizing the role of the Atonement, also raises some questions. Miller is emphatic in extolling the primacy of the plan of redemption, placing it above and before everything else, including the Fall. He asserts, as in his prior writings, that the plan of redemption was "not a backup plan," but "is what comes *first*. . . being lost and fallen always and only comes second" (84–85, emphasis in original). I feel like I am missing something vital in this distinction. That the plan of redemption was prepared before the Fall seems clear enough from Alma's sermon, but what does this have to do with it not being a backup plan? I can see one saying that the plan of redemption was God's *intended* plan, rather than a plan put in place just in case of an unexpected Fall. But if it is God's intended plan from the beginning, and not just a backup plan, then isn't the Fall essential to that plan and therefore not at all a secondary consideration or event? I feel like I am missing a subtlety here.

In one instance, Miller switches subject midstream. He states, "On Alma's account, redemption is not what comes after commandments and obedience. *Redemption* is not what comes after death. Rather, as Alma repeatedly insists, the *plan of redemption* was, instead, prepared 'from the foundation of the world'" (84, emphasis added). Notice that Miller begins by talking about "redemption" but then suddenly switches to the "plan of redemption" as though the two are equivalent. Could he be suggesting that *redemption* comes before one's obedience and death simply because the *plan of redemption* came before one's obedience and death? On my reading, what Alma repeatedly insists is that redemption from spiritual death comes only after repentance and obedience, and redemption from physical death comes only after one actually dies, even though the *plan* of redemption was laid from the foundation of the world.

Miller also notes that the plan of redemption and the holy order of God were both prepared from the foundation of the world, and that, therefore, "the plan of redemption is, in some crucial way, synonymous with the holy order of God" (86). He seems to be assuming an equivalency in meaning based on sharing a common property. If this is the case, his logic is questionable.

After exploring the concept of redemption, Miller attempts to ascertain the meaning of the word *manner* in Alma 13:2, 16. Miller spends seven paragraphs giving the Latin etymology and exploring Hebrew and Greek forms found in several Old and New Testament passages.



Strangely, however, he completely ignores examples of how the word is used in the Book of Mormon itself, which has twenty-two more occurrences than the entire KJV Bible. For a definition of *manner* that would have been familiar to people contemporaneous with the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, he turns with good effect to Webster's 1828 dictionary, which essentially states that *manner* is a method, way, or mode of doing something (89). Unless shown to be nonsensical in the text or inconsistent with other uses in the Book of Mormon at large, this seems like a reasonably good starting point for understanding the word *manner* in Alma's sermon.

Though Alma 13:2–16 is touched on in the summary report, Adam Miller and Bridget Jeffries are the only contributors to specifically address at length this passage, which lays out a typology between the manner in which priests were ordained and the manner in which people were to look forward to Christ for redemption. Miller notes that there is “something crucial” about this particular typology but does not define what that something is. As noted earlier, he misconstrues *ordinances* in 13:16 to mean “laws or rituals” (88), which leads him in a different direction than Alma seems to be heading, and Miller winds up explaining how tithing and baptism are typological of looking forward to Christ, though neither of these linkages are made in the text. Ultimately, Miller appeals to Paul to substantiate the assertion that baptism is “the typological ordinance par excellence” of Christ. Though baptism may be a strong typology of Christ, it is a typology explicit in Paul's teachings but not Alma's.

While Miller's perspective of Alma's sermon is problematic on multiple counts, Miller succeeds in doing what he does best, which is taking a sermon that is set in a remote time and place and making it both timeless and imminently relevant to the modern reader. His essay reaffirms Richard Bushman's characterization of Miller as “the most original and provocative Latter-day Saint theologian practicing today.”¹⁵

“Called and Ordained: A Priesthood of All Believers in Alma 13” (Bridget Jack Jeffries)

Bridget Jeffries, whose specialty is American religious history, asks how Alma 13 might be understood when read with an evangelical assumption of the *priesthood of all believers*, rather than the Latter-day Saint

15. Richard L. Bushman, preface to *Rube Goldberg Machines: Essays in Mormon Theology* by Adam S. Miller (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2012), xi.



assumption of a male-only, ceremonially ordained priesthood. She succeeds in showing that such a reading is not only defensible but in some ways results in a better reading of the text.¹⁶ Her task is facilitated by the vagueness of Alma's language, which allows for considerable latitude of interpretation. She contends, for example, that "others" in 13:4 could mean *all* other humans (regardless of race or gender), and "brethren" in 13:4–5 could be gender inclusive.

She observes that "in Alma 13, the function of the priests is more evangelistic than sacerdotal" (95)—that is, Alma explains the priests' calling in terms of teaching saving principles, with no mention of administering saving ordinances. Jeffries is the only contributor who addresses the identity of the mysterious "priests" alluded to by Alma, explaining that they could not have been of the Levitical order like those described in the Old Testament. She is also the only one who notably addresses the role of foreknowledge in these ministerial callings.

Unlike Adam Miller, Jeffries interprets the "preparatory redemption" in Alma 13:3 as a redemption that prepares or empowers priests to be able to choose good from evil. In this regard, she sees the redemption as "a nod to the Arminian concept of 'prevenient grace,' where God preemptively liberated humanity from the 'total depravity' of original sin and enabled humankind to choose his salvation" (96–97).

Jeffries is the only contributor who attempts to break down Alma's description of "the manner after which they [ancient priests] were ordained" (Alma 13:3), which seems crucial to understanding Alma's typology. Reading the sermon as an evangelical, she recognizes that the language related to the calling of priests echoes the Wesley Arminian doctrine of the calling of the elect, a concept with which Joseph Smith and early converts were likely familiar. In both doctrines, God calls individuals from the foundation of the world according to his foreknowledge of their faith and good works in this life. That is to say, those who use their agency in this life to repent and work righteousness are sanctified by the Spirit and become priests (as per Alma) or God's elect

16. In arguing for a priesthood of all believers in Alma 13, Jeffries follows in the footsteps of Kathryn H. Shirts, "Priesthood and Salvation: Is D&C 84 a Revelation for Women Too?" *Sunstone* 15 (September 1991): 20–27; and Margaret and Paul Toscano, *Strangers in Paradox: Explorations in Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 160. A similar argument is made in Kristeen L. Black, "A Capacious Priesthood," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 50, no. 3 (2017): 73–87.



(as per Arminianism), all just as God had foreseen. Hence Jeffries states, “In my view, Alma 13 might best be read as an Arminian soteriology that has then been creatively fused with a doctrine of priesthood” (98).

I would add that Alma’s language is also reminiscent of the New Testament’s description of how the elect are “afore prepared” (Rom. 9:23) and “chosen . . . before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4), “according to the foreknowledge of God” (1 Pet. 1:2). The Arminian doctrine of election actually adopts this New Testament language in its formulation. Whether or not Arminianism influenced the shaping of Alma 13, Jeffries should be given credit for substantively engaging with early nineteenth-century religious discourse that intersects with Alma’s sermon. In fact, she engages with early eighteenth-to-nineteenth-century literature and religious discourse more than the other essayists, which helps open a window to the way the earliest Saints might have read the text. And her essay helps modern Latter-day Saint readers see beyond what tradition has conditioned them to see.

Though Jeffries acknowledges that Alma doesn’t explicitly advance the idea of a priesthood of all believers, she makes a good argument for it based on inference. Alma 13 gives no definitive description of the race or gender of those who became priests nor of the “others” who could have become priests. So, Jeffries argues, one has to allow for the possibility in Alma’s sermon that everyone had equal opportunity to be a priest, “regardless of their lineage, race, or even gender” (98). She acknowledges that the overall narrative of the Book of Mormon is dominated by patriarchal privilege and a male-dominated ministry, but, in principle, the Book of Mormon teaches that “all are alike unto God” (2 Ne. 26:33).

Observing that Alma 13 makes no mention of any ceremonial ordination, like the laying on of hands, she suggests that ancient priests might have been ordained through baptism (102). This is also noted in the summary report (xxxi), which was addressed earlier. Of course, if this conjecture is correct, it plays directly into the notion of a priesthood of all believers.

Jeffries demonstrates a sound grasp of the particular theological concerns of Joseph Smith’s day that she believes may have had a bearing on the phraseology, if not the shaping, of Alma 13. In the end, she acknowledges that Alma’s sermon has aspects that resemble the traditional Latter-day Saint model of the priesthood and also some that are suggestive of the Protestant notion of the priesthood of all believers. She makes a case that would be difficult to repudiate based solely on the loose language of Alma 13.



Conclusion

This volume, despite a few shortcomings, is an important contribution to Book of Mormon scholarship. These essays are intended to be viewed as exploratory and, in some instances, even speculative, which is precisely what makes them so intriguing and thought provoking. One could argue that serious theological inquiry often requires this type of free exploration of ideas, especially if real theological breakthrough is to occur. The value of the volume isn't that it provides a definitive exposition or approved Latter-day Saint interpretation of scripture, but rather this volume shows the reader how to approach a Book of Mormon text with analytical rigor and open theological inquiry. A book devoted entirely to this theologically rich text is a most welcome addition to Book of Mormon studies.

Charles Harrell is a retired BYU associate professor of engineering and technology. He is also the founder and director of ProModel Corporation, a manufacturing, healthcare, and military simulation company. As a Latter-day Saint studies enthusiast, he has published articles in *BYU Studies Quarterly*, *The Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, and *Studies in the Scriptures*. He also wrote *"This Is My Doctrine": The Development of Mormon Theology* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011). He and his wife, Yvonne, live in Orem, Utah.



Into Arabia: Lehi and Sariah's Escape from Jerusalem

Perspectives Suggested by New Fieldwork

Warren P. Aston

In his exhaustively reasoned paper “Dating the Departure of Lehi from Jerusalem,”¹ Jeffrey Chadwick moved the discussion of the timing of the Lehi departure significantly further. Those like myself, who have long assumed that the Book of Mormon’s dating for the departure (about six hundred years before Christ’s birth) is simply a round, approximate number, now have additional reasons to see that the dating may, in fact, be literal and that a definitive year for the event might be within reach.

While I cannot add to the material on the dating of Lehi and Sariah’s departure from Jerusalem, I would like to offer some observations and suggestions on two aspects of their passage into Arabia that Chadwick’s paper deals with: first, the routing taken from Jerusalem; second, the valley of Lemuel, its possible location, and the timing of the family’s arrival there.

NEPHI’S DIRECTIONAL PROMISE TO THE READER

Over the years, my appreciation for Nephi’s accuracy in his record has continued to grow. In particular, I have marveled at how succinctly he incorporated into the text so many vital facts regarding the dimensions of the Lehi journey. Nowhere is Nephi’s sense of history and record-keeping more evident than in his attention to geographical matters that situate an essentially spiritual account in the physical world.

1. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, “Dating the Departure of Lehi from Jerusalem,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (2018): 6–51.



In the introduction to his first book, Nephi states that his record includes “the course of their travels” (1 Ne., book heading). Careful reading reveals that, as promised, Nephi’s account gives directional statements for every stage of the land journey.² But as important as directions and periods of travel are, Nephi also incorporated a range of other clues in his record that are now possible to investigate.

Over recent years, this embedded detail has been the primary means of identifying plausible locations along the Lehiite journey that are now generally accepted within the Latter-day Saint scholarly community. Foremost, of course, is Ishmael’s burial place, Nahom (1 Ne. 16:34), which has not only firm archaeological support—dateable inscriptions—but also a long history preserving the name and location in Yemen from before Nephi’s day down to the modern day.³ There is also the land Bountiful (1 Ne. 17:5), plausibly identified as the inlet of Khor Kharfot in southern Oman based on its match with Nephi’s extensive description of the place⁴ and the Latter-day Saint ground exploration of the entire eastern Arabian coast (Yemen and Oman) made from 1988 to 1992.⁵

The unfolding of Nephi’s detailed travel account in recent decades, showing that plausible real-world locations exist for the journey he recorded, should engender confidence as we consider the other events and settings he describes.

2. For Nephi’s directional promises and their fulfillment, see Warren P. Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia: The Old World Setting of the Book of Mormon* (Bloomington, Ind.: Xlibris, 2015), 36.

3. See Warren P. Aston, “A History of NaHoM,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2012), 78–98, which summarizes the history of Latter-day Saint awareness of the modern location and contains all relevant sources.

4. Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 104–6, lists Nephi’s twelve descriptors of Bountiful, and page 126 shows the eight potential candidates in Yemen and Oman. Of these, Khor Kharfot is now accepted by most researchers (including those who had previously proposed other locations) as the most plausible location. One exception that currently remains is Khor Rori in the Salalah Bay, which is championed by some scholars, including George Potter and Richard Wellington. A factual comparison between Khor Rori and Khor Kharfot can be found in Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 147–48; see also 120–24, 149 n. 16, 153 nn. 29–30. Another possible location for the land Bountiful is Khor Mughsayl, as suggested in Wm. Revell Phillips, “Mughsayl: Another Candidate for Land Bountiful,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* (hereafter *JBMS*) 16, no. 2 (2007): 48–59.

5. Aston, *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia*, 110–11.



The Matter of Tents

Before discussing these other locations, however, a too-often overlooked statement in Nephi's account deserves our attention. He tells us that Lehi "took nothing with him, save it were his family, and provisions," likely comprising such things as basic food stuffs, utensils, bedding, and hunting weapons, "and tents, and departed into the wilderness" (1 Ne. 2:4). The mention of *tents* here is significant. First, the possibility that a city dweller had multiple tents on hand tells us something of his occupation and abilities. Over the years, a theory has emerged among many researchers that Lehi may have been a smith, working and trading in precious metals, skills he passed onto his son Nephi.⁶ What is more relevant here, though, is that this virtually assures us that the departure from Jerusalem used camels, not mules or donkeys, as the primary means of carrying their belongings. Whether the individuals in the group themselves rode camels, or whether they used mules or walked, remains unclear from the text; in any case, opportunities to acquire additional camels would have come throughout their time in Arabia.

Tents in Lehi's time were made of coarse goat hair and are still used today by the Bedouin. Even a single panel of a desert tent is a heavy and awkward item, weighing hundreds of pounds, beyond the capacity of a mule to transport. Why is that important? The use of camels unavoidably enters the equation when we discuss the route that Lehi and Sariah's family most likely took when they left Jerusalem.

THE ROUTE TO THE RED SEA

Over the years, commentators have discussed possible routes that Lehi's small group (totaling just six persons according to the account given

6. The significance of Lehi having tents on hand at his Jerusalem home is often noted in discussions of his likely occupation: as a metal smith, most fully proposed by Jeffrey Chadwick in the chapter "Lehi's House at Jerusalem and the Land of His Inheritance," in *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem*, ed. John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jo Ann H. Seely (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2004), 81–130. The chapter also highlights the numerous instances throughout the text where Nephi's expertise with metals is on display.

The beautiful painting used to illustrate Jeffrey R. Chadwick's article, "Dating the Departure of Lehi from Jerusalem" (p. 6), probably shows fewer camels than they would have needed to carry multiple tents, in addition to depicting an unlikely, unnecessary nighttime departure.



in 1 Ne. 2:5)⁷ might have taken when fleeing Jerusalem. The idea that the party might have simply gone down from Jerusalem in an easterly direction, descending until they reached the Dead Sea near Qumran, then turning southward⁸ is easily ruled out by the terrain. Travel along the western side of the northern Dead Sea has always been completely blocked by the mountains that come directly down into the water; only in the late 1960s was the modern coastal road created, made possible by the declining levels of the salt sea over the past century.

Even in my own visits to the Dead Sea since 1976, I have seen the landscape change quite dramatically along its shores on both the Israeli and Jordanian sides. Areas under water just decades ago are now exposed, dry land; large sink holes are appearing on higher ground as the water table continues to drop.

7. The later (actually third) departure from Jerusalem, led by Nephi, Laman, Lemuel, and Sam, bringing Ishmael's family with them, easily exceeded the size of the original group led by Lehi; 1 Nephi 7:6 lists at least fifteen persons in total. See the summary in "How Many Others Traveled with Lehi to the Promised Land?" Book of Mormon Central, September 6, 2018, <https://knowhy.bookofmormoncentral.org/content/how-many-others-traveled-with-lehi-to-the-promised-land>, which cites John L. Sorenson's seminal study, "The Composition of Lehi's Family," in *By Study and Also by Faith*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks, vol. 2 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1990), 174–96. In 2 Nephi 5:6, when Nephi and his followers are fleeing from Laman and Lemuel, Nephi mentions his "sisters" accompanying him. The Nephite record does not explain how these sisters joined the group or whether they came in the original departure from Jerusalem (making the group at least eight instead of six), but according to Erastus Snow, Joseph Smith claimed that the lost 116 pages containing the record of Lehi indicated that these sisters were married to Ishmael's sons, which may explain the family connection between Lehi and Ishmael and may also explain at least partially why Ishmael was persuaded to join Lehi's family in the wilderness. Snow's account does not specify, however, whether Lehi's daughters married Ishmael's sons before they all departed Jerusalem or afterward. Because the account mentions only the marriages of Lehi's sons to Ishmael's daughters, these other marriages may have occurred previous to the departure of Lehi. See Erastus Snow, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 23:184 (May 6, 1882).

8. In 1976, Lynn and Hope Hilton considered a southerly route via Hebron and Beersheba but concluded that a route southward beside the Dead Sea was more likely. See Lynn M. Hilton and Hope Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 36–41. Twenty years later, their updated book, *Discovering Lehi: New Evidence of Lehi and Nephi in Arabia* (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 1996), 44–46, repeats this view.

Two other proposals have been made in recent years that are variations on the first. Both assume that the Lehites continued further east, passing Jericho and crossing the Jordan River. In the first scenario, they then turned southward along the gentler terrain known as the “Kings Highway” on the eastern, Jordanian side of the Dead Sea. Eventually this routing would bring them to the Red Sea.⁹ The second suggestion avoids travel beside the Dead Sea altogether. In this scenario, the Lehite group went still further eastward past Ammon (the modern Jordanian capital, Amman), then used the “Way of the Wilderness” highway, as its proponents term it, southward to the Red Sea. These two models can probably also be dismissed, as Chadwick’s paper notes. They are simply not viable because they place the Lehite group in territory controlled by the enemy states of Ammon and Moab.¹⁰

Instead, in a scenario jointly developed with D. Kelly Ogden,¹¹ Chadwick postulates that from Jerusalem the family first traveled southward, passing Bethlehem and Tekoa, then eastward to intersect with Nahal [river or wadi] Arugot in the Ein Gedi rift, and descending to the shore of the Dead Sea. From there they resumed their southward journey toward the Red Sea (fig. 1).

This setting, together with an alternative possibility, was succinctly presented in 2011 by Ogden, often regarded as the most experienced Latter-day Saint geographer of the Holy Land: “We believe that a more likely course for Lehi’s journey is southeast out of Jerusalem toward Tekoa and then along an ancient road to En Gedi (called the cliff or ascent of Ziz in 2 Chronicles 20:16), and thence southward through the Rift Valley and Arabah. An alternate route could have been from Tekoa southward, passing between the villages of Juttah and Carmel, down into and across the eastern Negev eastward to the Arabah.”¹²

9. George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness: 81 New Documented Evidences That the Book of Mormon Is a True History* (Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 2003), 14, 19–26.

10. Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 14, 19–26. See also Jeffrey R. Chadwick, “An Archaeologist’s View,” *JBMS* 15, no. 2 (2006): 70–71, which offers a fuller discussion of the possible routes from Jerusalem. See all of *JBMS* 15, no. 2 (2006), for a foundational commentary on all aspects of the Lehite journey.

11. See the joint attribution in Chadwick, “Archaeologist’s View,” 124 n. 12, referencing D. Kelly Ogden, “Answering the Lord’s Call (1 Nephi 1–7),” in *Studies in Scripture, Volume Seven: 1 Nephi to Alma* 29, ed. Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1987), 23 n. 8.

12. D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, *Verse by Verse: The Book of Mormon, Volume 1: 1 Nephi through Alma* 29 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book,

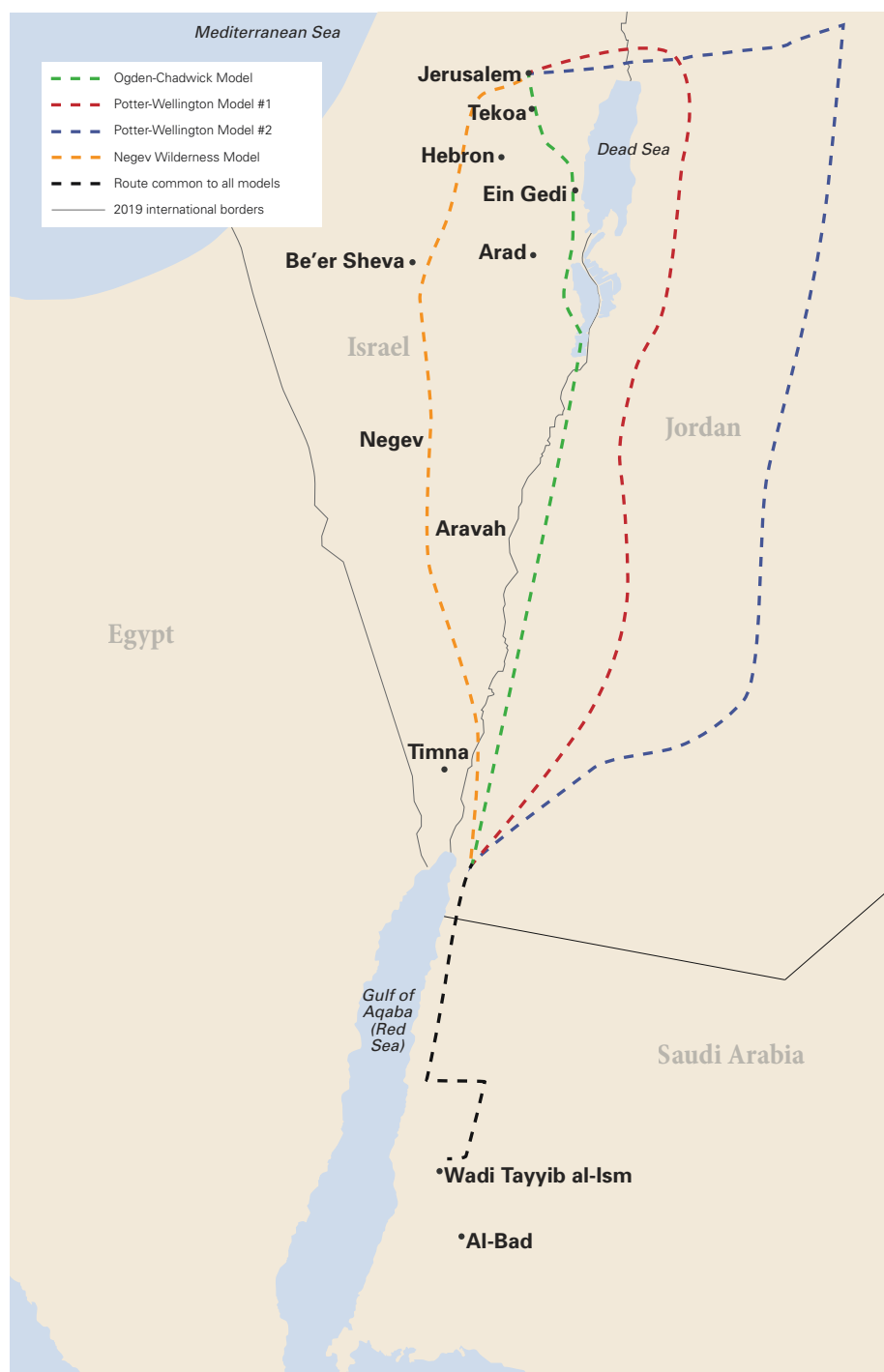


FIGURE 1. Map of the area from Jerusalem to the Red Sea, showing locations mentioned in this article and the various proposals for the Lehite route from Jerusalem to the valley of Lemuel. Courtesy Derek Gurr.

On the face of it, the route via Ein Gedi may seem to have much to commend it. Leaving Jerusalem and getting down quickly into the difficult terrain of Ein Gedi's picturesque wadis could be viewed as an attractive option. After all, much earlier, David did just that when escaping Saul (see 1 Sam. 24:1–22). However, in David's case, the terrain above Ein Gedi, inhospitable and full of caves suitable for hiding, was the destination, not simply a possible route to the Red Sea, as it would have been for the Lehites.

Although the Dead Sea levels have dropped considerably since 600 BC, the desert terrain surrounding it has changed little. The same ancient landforms remain, enabling us to see scenes that Lehi, Nephi, and others must have been familiar with. Revisiting recently the areas south and southeast of Jerusalem, including Ein Gedi, Arad, and Be'er Sheva, I asked myself what route I would choose if I were in Lehi's situation. I turned again to the text and asked myself, which environment would Lehi have known best? Which offered the family the best chance for safety? Which allowed the group to remove themselves from Jerusalem quickly? Ultimately, which route seems to be reflected in Nephi's account?

Having traveled on each of these routes, I have concluded that the two most realistic and efficient possibilities open to Lehi and his family were, first, the route via Ein Gedi proposed by Ogden and Chadwick and, second, another route that has been mentioned in discussions over the years but, in my view, often too hastily passed over.¹³ Both paths begin by escaping immediately in a southeast direction from Jerusalem; both eventually arrive at the Red Sea via the same wadi, the Aravah. Both require at least ten or twelve days of travel. But now consider the differences between the two alternatives:

The Ogden-Chadwick Model—Travel via Ein Gedi

This is where the earlier discussion of camels comes into play. First of all, a descent from the Judean wilderness to Ein Gedi with loaded camels

2011), 20. That this still represents his position was confirmed in an April 26, 2018, email from Ogden to the author.

13. In addition to the reference cited in the previous note, in 1967, Sidney B. Sperry suggested that the Lehites had "two choices: they could go either directly south of Jerusalem by the road through Hebron and Beersheba and thence through the great wilderness to the northern tip of what is now the Gulf of Aqaba, or they could go directly east across the Jordan until they struck the ancient 'King's Highway' and then proceed south." Sidney B. Sperry, *Book of Mormon Compendium* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968), 97–98.



was, at a minimum, difficult and treacherous. From Ein Gedi, one can inspect the five modern hiking trails connecting with the Judean Desert above, although probably only two are realistic possibilities—today known as the “Ein Gedi” (fig. 2) and the “Yishay” ascents.

Nephi’s text indicates that leaving Jerusalem was a pre-emptive move following the unambiguous warning given by the Lord to Lehi. But while the account gives no indication that the group was actively pursued at any stage, the seriousness of the situation should not be underestimated. Jeremiah 26 relates that in that same period Jeremiah was detained, undergoing trial for prophesying the same unpopular message that Lehi had: that Jerusalem would be destroyed unless its people repented. And, in somewhat different circumstances, the prophet Urijah, who repeated Jeremiah’s warning, escaped to Egypt but was captured, returned to Jerusalem, and executed (Jer. 26:20–23).

It is worth noting, therefore, that traces of a Judean military guard post remain on the summit above Ein Gedi (fig. 3). Established about 630 BC in King Josiah’s time, its primary purpose was to observe threats approaching from the south and east, including guarding the track ascending from the oasis below. The guard post thus sits next to one of the possible descent routes, the “Ein Gedi Ascent” on the south side of Wadi David (fig. 4). Officials would certainly have noted the passage of Lehi and his family, who were not a typical company since the group included at least one woman—women did not ordinarily travel—and multiple bulky tents (Nephi uses the plural “tents” in 1 Ne. 2:4).

The other possibility for descending to Ein Gedi, and the option favored by Ogden and Chadwick, is via Nahal Arugot, the larger and more southerly of the two wadis leading down to Ein Gedi (fig. 5). While possible, taking either of these trails would have restricted the group to a narrow and difficult descent. Then, after reaching the Ein Gedi oasis—Israel’s second largest oasis and a populated place long before Lehi’s time—the only available direction of travel would have been southward along the Aravah Valley on the mostly quite narrow strip of land bordering the Dead Sea. This would have left no room to maneuver had they needed to evade or hide from pursuers or avoid other travelers whose reports to Jerusalem may have still placed them in jeopardy for the remaining seven to ten days of travel to the Red Sea.

The Alternative Route—Travel via the Negev Wilderness

In contrast to the first option (descending to Ein Gedi), the second route offers an undeniably more direct escape for as long as pursuit



FIGURE 2. The “Ein Gedi ascent” climbs the central massif on the left in this image. Photograph by the author.



FIGURE 3. The terrain above Ein Gedi showing the military guard post and one of the possible descent routes used by the Lehites. Photograph courtesy Todd Bolen/BiblePlaces.com.



FIGURE 4. A view looking westward up Nahal David to the Judean Desert above. Photograph by the author.



FIGURE 5. A rare aerial view of Ein Gedi beside the Dead Sea, facing west. Nahal Arugot is the wadi on the left; Nahal David is the wadi on the right. Photograph courtesy Todd Bolen/BiblePlaces.com.

and capture remained a possibility. No slowing diversions or difficult descents would have been necessary at any stage. This route begins, as does the first route, with an immediate southerly exit from Jerusalem. But rather than diverting eastward across the Judean Desert to Ein Gedi, it remains in the Judean hill country, continuing southward into the wilderness—thus offering multiple route options and opportunities for secure rest points (see fig. 1).

Logically, the fact that settlements such as Hebron, Arad, and Be'er Sheva can be found in the vast expanse of country south of Jerusalem is not at all a disadvantage—these populated centers could easily have been avoided had they wished. And these inhabited pockets may have actually been resources for the Lehites, providing shelter for the small group—Lehi and Nephi might have developed contacts along the way if they had traveled to and from Timna near the Red Sea.¹⁴ Indeed, of the two routes,

14. If Lehi was a metal smith, the Timna mines almost certainly would have been the source of copper for smithing and for trading with others, including Egyptian traders known to frequent the same area.



the Negev option is arguably the one that would have been best known to Lehi and Nephi.

The southern Negev desert is known also as the “Wilderness of Zin,” sometimes termed the “Wilderness of Kadesh.”¹⁵ From here, several routes, including the main western trade route, led southeast across the southern Aravah Valley and then on to the Red Sea. To this observer, after repeated and wide-ranging travel in the areas south of Jerusalem, this option seems substantially more direct and less problematic. It is hard to see what benefit traveling via Ein Gedi would achieve. Thus, while both options remain possible, the Negev route seems to offer a more direct and less complicated passageway from Jerusalem.

BASE CAMP AT THE RIVER OF LAMAN IN THE VALLEY OF LEMUEL

Having arrived at the northern end of the Red Sea, or Gulf of Aqaba as it is more usually termed today, and safely distant from Jerusalem, Nephi describes three days of travel further into Arabia (1 Ne. 2:5–6) (fig. 1). This was likely—but not certainly—a region that Lehi was unfamiliar with. The text states that the family set up camp “in a valley by the side of a river of water” (1 Ne. 2:6), more specifically, we later learn, on the north side of the river.¹⁶ Had their camp been at the seashore, beside the Red Sea, rather than inland, Nephi would surely have noted the fact as he later does, twice, when the group arrived at Bountiful (1 Ne. 17:6). Instead, Nephi carefully records the location of the camp as being “in the borders *near* the mouth [of the river]” (1 Ne. 2:8, emphasis added), and thus inland.

This was the base camp where the final preparations were to be made for the one-way journey to the other side of the Arabian Peninsula. As they regrouped, the camp offered safety, a ready source of fresh water, and, we later learn, a surprising variety of food items.

Commentators from Hugh Nibley onward have noted that the sequence of events in Nephi’s account makes it rather clear that Lehi was unaware initially that their encampment actually sat at the beginning of

15. See C. Leonard Woolley and T. E. Lawrence, *The Wilderness of Zin* (London: Stacey International, 2003), for an account of travel in the area.

16. Since the group departed the valley of Lemuel “*across* the river Laman,” traveling toward Shazer in “nearly a south-southeast direction” (1 Ne. 16:12–13, emphasis added), their camp therefore lay on the north side of the river, the direction they had arrived from. It also implies that the river, at least where the campsite sat, ran in approximately an east-west direction.

a wadi that descended some distance until it reached the Red Sea.¹⁷ When Lehi became aware of that fact, he named the primary features of the place as first, the river of Laman, and then, the valley of Lemuel, in his heartfelt exhortations to his eldest sons (1 Ne. 2:9–10).

For Lehi, the valley was a place where he received revelation, foundational outpourings that he then taught his family. Here he had the time to read, assimilate, and then present the teachings and genealogy on the brass plates to the group. Here he viewed the vision of the tree of life and coming of the Messiah. Nephi also received revelations here relevant to his own future role and its part in the great purposes of God down to our own day.

From here, Lehi and Sariah's four sons twice journeyed back to Jerusalem; first, to secure the records held by Laban containing their genealogy, and, second, to bring Ishmael and his family with them to join the group (1 Ne. 3–4, 7). In the valley, Nephi, his three brothers, and Zoram (the former servant of Laban who had also joined the group) paired off with Ishmael's daughters and were married (1 Ne. 16:7). It remains possible that Nephi's sisters married Ishmael's sons at this time, although those marriages may have taken place earlier, before the family left Jerusalem.¹⁸

The Significance of Seeds

Concluding the account of the second and final return to Jerusalem by himself and his brothers, Nephi interrupts the flow of his narrative with a brief aside that may serve to emphasize the resources of the valley. While we can be sure that date palms at least grew near the river, there may have also been other fruits and grains present: "And it came to pass that we

17. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert; The World of the Jaredites; There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book; Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1988), 85; Hilton and Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 67–68; Paul Hedengren, *The Land of Lehi: Further Evidence for the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah: Tepran, 1999), 19; Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 32; S. Kent Brown, *Voices from the Dust* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2004), 6.

18. If the ancient Israelite custom of "cousin marriages" was being observed here, it is possible that Ishmael's daughters were already betrothed to Lehi's sons, while Ishmael's two sons may have already been married to Nephi's sisters. If correct, this scenario highlights the providence of the Lord in providing Zoram as a husband to Ishmael's eldest daughter. It may also account for the apparent readiness of Ishmael's family, who may not have known of Lehi's departure, to join the venture into the wilderness.



had gathered together all manner of seeds of every kind, both of grain of every kind, and also of the seeds of fruit of every kind” (1 Ne. 8:1).¹⁹

Later, as they prepared to leave, Nephi recorded that in the valley they had received the “remainder” of their provisions, again noting that “seed of every kind” was taken on the journey deep into Arabia: “And it came to pass that we did gather together whatsoever things we should carry into the wilderness, and all the remainder of our provisions which the Lord had given unto us; and we did take seed of every kind that we might carry into the wilderness” (1 Ne. 16:11).

Grains known in Nephi’s world were wheat, barley, and rye; “fruits” most likely meant the ubiquitous date, but also probably staples such as figs, olives, grapes, and pomegranates. If all these seeds were indeed gathered in the valley of Lemuel, this was no barren, sand-filled, wadi with a seasonal stream, but a place of some agricultural variety. What may first seem a minor point could be, in fact, a revealing insight into the valley of Lemuel that allows us to better visualize this stage of the journey and also helps us locate it.

Locating the Valley

Over the years, several locations for the valley of Lemuel have been suggested by Latter-day Saint commentators. Recently, I re-examined the top of the Red Sea, stretching from the Israeli city of Eilat across to its neighbor, the Jordanian city of Aqaba, sitting on either side of the Arava valley’s southern end. This allowed a re-examination of the quite narrow coastal strip on the Jordanian side that allows travel southward into the ancient land of Midian. Most of the ancient trade routes passed through this piece of land, which was effectively a bridge linking Arabia to the Levant and Mediterranean area. There is no question that the Lehite group entered Arabia proper through this gateway; no one argues otherwise.

In 1995, Wadi Nuwaybi in the southern part of this strip was proposed as a possible valley of Lemuel (fig. 6).²⁰ Re-examination confirmed the findings of a previous visit: Nuwaybi is a flat, broad, dry wadi bed running westward across the plain (which is about 4 to 5 kilometers or 2.5 to

19. While this verse may be referring to fruits and grains that grew in the valley, the text is ambiguous enough to allow for these seeds to have been gathered in Jerusalem, since Nephi elsewhere claims that the seeds they planted in the promised land had been brought “from the land of Jerusalem” (1 Ne. 18:24).

20. Paul Hedengren, *The Land of Lehi: A Book of Mormon Geography* (Provo, Utah: Bradford and Willson, 1995), 4–6.



FIGURE 6. A view of Wadi Nuwaybi, looking inland near the southern border of Jordan. Photograph by the author.

3 miles wide in this area) with nothing—no water source, no walls of rock, no evident human traces—to distinguish it from dozens of other wadis. Furthermore, it is only about one day's travel, not three, from the head of the Red Sea, a fact that in itself virtually disqualifies it as a candidate.

The narrow coastal strip beside the Red Sea continues southward from Wadi Nuwaybi near the border of southern Jordan into Arabia proper. It then doubles in width, forming a large delta of converging roads and wadis. Here, near the settlement of al Humaydah, both the ancient trade route's main branch and modern highways veer inland.

Continuing southward along the coast, however, the coastal strip narrows again until a compact block of mountains, the rugged Mazhafah ranges, rises up abruptly from the desert. Just past the small promontory Ra's Suwayil al Saghir, the Mazhafah peaks reach directly down into the waters of the Red Sea, blocking further travel southward.²¹ The coastal strip resumes several kilometers further on, continuing the

21. In recent years, a narrow track for military use only, raised just above sea level, has been blasted out along this coastal stretch; otherwise, the entire length of the Red Sea's eastern coast can now be accessed by road.

entire length of the Red Sea's eastern coast, now accessible by road as far as Yemen.

The Mazhafah ranges assume the highest importance in any discussion about locating the valley of Lemuel. Based on the simple parameters of three days' travel from the head of the Red Sea at the speed at which loaded camels can travel (about 32–40 kilometers or 20–25 miles per day), the valley of Lemuel must lie somewhere in, or at least very close to, these mountains.

Also in 1995, a new possibility for the valley emerged, this time with the quite accidental discovery of Wadi Tayyib al-Isim (approximately "Valley of the Good Name") in the southern end of the Mazhafah ranges and thus plausibly three days' travel from the top of the Red Sea (fig. 1). This candidate was not reported until 1999,²² and based on the reports and images published, it was immediately seen by most researchers as a promising, even probable, candidate.²³

But while some Church members working in the region have visited Wadi Tayyib al-Isim over recent years to see it for themselves, no one—including the original discoverers—had completed the systematic exploration of the area needed to determine if viable alternatives existed.²⁴ The mountainous terrain here is such that satellite imaging has proved inadequate in providing definitive answers. This remained the situation until 2018 when I undertook a new exploratory effort.

This new effort allowed me to spend a month in the area south of the Jordanian border, much of it exploring the Mazhafah and adjoining mountains on all sides—the general area where the valley of Lemuel must have been. Of course, before exploring other potential Lehiite locations such as Shazer, four days' travel further away, my prime objective

22. George D. Potter, "A New Candidate in Arabia for the 'Valley of Lemuel,'" *JBMS* 8, no. 1 (1999): 54–63.

23. S. Kent Brown, "The Hunt for the Valley of Lemuel," *JBMS* 16, no. 1 (2007): 64–73, offers a good outline of the issues around the various candidates suggested for the valley of Lemuel. While concluding that Wadi Tayyib al-Isim was indeed the "most secure" candidate (73), Brown's only expressed concern was about how the wadi could be accessed from the Aqaba area, a subject addressed in the current article.

24. As documented in their writings, the original investigators of the northwest corner of Arabia, George Potter and Richard Wellington traveled there on multiple occasions, contributing an invaluable baseline of field studies in connection with the valley of Lemuel and Shazer. See Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 31–52. My explorations in the same area in 2018 and 2019 have built upon this foundation.

was to explore other possibilities for the valley of Lemuel and to closely examine Wadi Tayyib al-Ism itself. At all times, the question of access for a caravan heading deep into Arabia was paramount.

As part of the exploration, I spent several days examining a third location proposed in 1976 for the valley, the expansive Wadi Ifal, in which the town of Al-Bad is located (fig. 7).²⁵ Al-Bad (or Al-Bad'a) sits amid its broad plain southeast of the Mazhafah peaks. Another range of mountains sits as a distant backdrop in the east, and some ancient wells and ruins are situated at Wadi Ifal's center. But these wells are not the running river that Nephi describes, nor are the mountains in any direction especially noteworthy. And, at some 170 kilometers (105 miles) or more from Aqaba, the distance is realistically too far to be reached in three days.

Access to the Valley

Eventually, I returned to the Red Sea coast for a closer look. At Bir Marsha, just before the precipitous Mazhafah terrain encroaches onto the beach, all the pieces seemed to fall into place. Along this coastline, several dry wadis lead up into the mountainous interior. Most of them run inland into the interior folds of rock before ending. All receive only occasional brief rainfall before drying up, leaving little or no vegetation.

However, near Ra's Suwayil al Saghir promontory, two of these wadis, Wadi Hasha and, about 7 kilometers (4.5 miles) further south, Wadi al-Hulayb stretch eastward up into the mountains to intersect with other interior wadis that then offer straightforward, perfectly feasible access to Wadi Tayyib al-Ism. Eventually, I assessed the more defined and southerly of the two, Wadi al-Hulayb, beginning almost directly opposite the modern coastguard station, as the more likely. It leads into the mountains to meet a broad dry valley, Wadi al-Sharma, which runs almost southward until it intersects Wadi Tayyib al-Ism.²⁶

Surrounded on all sides by mountain terrain and near the junction of these two wadis, al-Sharma and Tayyib al-Ism, sits a small but fertile oasis about 2.5 square kilometers (1 square mile) in area. Despite being home to several wells and acres of date palms, the oasis is bypassed by the main flow of traffic and is uninhabited today. No research by

25. The Al-Bad proposal was first made by Lynn M. and Hope Hilton in *In Search of Lehi's Trail* and was later repeated in their *Discovering Lehi*, 51–66. S. Kent Brown reports that as of 2007, this position has been maintained by Lynn Hilton. Brown, "Hunt for the Valley of Lemuel," 86 n. 10.

26. Images of Wadis Hulayb and Sharma can be seen in Potter, "New Candidate," 54–55, 60.



FIGURE 7. The town of Al-Bad with its ancient ruins and wells lies within the wide Wadi Ifal. Photograph by the author.

archaeologists or anthropologists has yet been published about the oasis where the river begins or about the valley itself and, while the Red Sea end of the valley is now a popular tourist attraction, the oasis is a place of only occasional visits by locals.²⁷

While it remains possible that the Lehite group turned inland earlier along the more traveled route and accessed this same spot from the eastern side of the mountains before reaching Al-Bad—over 170 kilometers (104 miles) total from Aqaba²⁸—the lack of any hint in the text for this suggests that they instead simply traveled along the coast, then turned inland when they could go no further. The wadis mentioned earlier would have allowed ready access to the site of their base camp. This would have been the shorter route, about 118 kilometers (73 miles) total,²⁹ thus fitting neatly into the three days' travel distance recorded by Nephi. In both cases, however, these routes place the traveler squarely in Wadi Tayyib al-Ism.

27. The specific encampment proposed for the Lehiters in the upper part of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism is pictured in Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 32–33, and in Brown, “Hunt for the Valley of Lemuel,” 68.

28. Correspondence from George Potter to S. Kent Brown, cited in “Hunt for the Valley of Lemuel,” 86 n. 8, states the distance is “104 miles.” Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 27, states the distance is “over 122 miles.”

29. On the road distance from Aqaba to the head of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, see the account in Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 27–28, which appears to present the distance as a total of about 73 miles.



FIGURE 8. A view of the deeply incised Wadi Tayyib al-Ism where it now reaches the Red Sea coast. Photograph by the author.

A “Valley, Firm and Steadfast, and Immovable” (1 Ne. 2:10)

As I examined Wadi Tayyib al-Ism alongside the other possibilities proposed over the years, the differences were very evident. In particular, no other location has a flow of water running continually anywhere, much less into the Red Sea. No other place evokes Lehi’s emotive language in wishing that his two eldest sons had the qualities of character suggested by the granite mountains, over two thousand feet high, towering over both sides of the wadi near the coast, and the constantly flowing stream within it (fig. 8). The wadi is not only fully accessible but also sits within the correct three days’ travel distance from the head of the Red Sea. It would have provided Lehi and Sariah’s group what it still does today: a sheltered haven with all the resources of a fertile oasis. The easy, unforced convergence of the details outlined here established it firmly for me as the place described by Nephi.

A “River, Continually Running” (1 Ne. 2:9)

Unsurprisingly, the novelty (and apparent anomaly) of a river in Arabia being claimed in the Book of Mormon account has been given much attention by commentators. Many Latter-day Saint researchers have



FIGURE 9. Inland of Bir Marsha on the coast, the dry wadis in the distance offer access to the interior of the Mazhafah mountains. Photograph by the author.

accepted the scholarly consensus that Arabia contains no perennial rivers, therefore assuming that Nephi's reference must refer only to a seasonal flow of water. In asserting this, it has become common to minimize the text's plain wording by describing the river as a mere "stream" (a term that nowhere appears in the Book of Mormon, except in a quote from Isaiah, recorded in 2 Ne. 21:15).³⁰

In making this assumption, of necessity these commentators go on to question whether the existing flow of water at Wadi Tayyib al-Ism runs year-round and highlight the fact that the water now moves underground for several hundred meters before reaching the ocean, as if this somehow disqualifies the location. Chadwick is among those who have taken this position. He has raised the idea that one of the dry wadis reaching the coast near Bir Marsha, pictured in figure 9, could have been the valley itself and that Nephi's terminology of a "river, continually running" (1 Ne. 2:9) to the Red Sea might be referring not to *water*, but to the *streambed* in the wadi instead.³¹ As a result, Chadwick is able to pinpoint a brief departure window from Jerusalem (in the middle of the month corresponding to November) to have the Lehites arrive in the valley when winter rains might briefly provide enough water to flow as a seasonal stream.³²

30. Examples of this position include Nibley, *Lehi in the Desert*, 76–81; Hilton and Hilton, *In Search of Lehi's Trail*, 64–65; and Chadwick, "Dating the Departure of Lehi," 42–44.

31. Chadwick, "Archaeologist's View," 72–73.

32. Chadwick, "Dating the Departure of Lehi," 42–44.

Chadwick, who has not traveled in the region south of the Jordanian border, gives two primary reasons why he does not believe that the river of Laman was a permanent fixture in the valley.³³ I will now contrast these assumptions with the reality one can find on the ground, as it were.

First, he states, “There are very few perennial streams that run into the Red Sea’s Gulf of Aqaba from the desert *wadis* on its eastern coast.”³⁴ In fact, after examining, on the ground, the entire eastern coast of the Red Sea (over 1,800 kilometers, or 1,130 miles) from Aqaba south to the Yemen border, I can state with certainty that there is only one such perennial stream reaching the Red Sea today, not “very few.” It is the stream at Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, now reaching above ground to within a short distance of the Red Sea (figs. 10 and 11).

We also have the statements of Latter-day Saint observers and non-Latter-day Saint scientists, made over several years, in all seasons, that this stream indeed runs permanently without halting or drying up. This fact is noted in various studies that discuss the valley. One report, for example, published in 2017, was an extensive geological study of the natural springs in northwest Saudi Arabia; it describes the flow of water within Wadi Tayyib al-Ism as emerging from a gravity-fed spring some 1,600 meters, or about one mile, inland, flowing “continuously as a small stream” toward the Gulf of Aqaba. That this flow of water is year-round is confirmed in the paper.³⁵

As a side note, there are some little-known perennial streams of surprising beauty in the interior of that vast region of Arabia;³⁶ however,

33. Chadwick, “Dating the Departure of Lehi,” 42. Chadwick has also previously noted in other writings that he has not traveled south of the Jordan border.

34. Chadwick, “Dating the Departure of Lehi,” 42, italics in original.

35. See Potter and Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness*, 37–39. Technical detail can be located in Mohammed Abdullah Alsaleh, “Natural Springs in Northwest Saudi Arabia,” *Arabian Journal of Geosciences* 10, no. 15 (August 2017), <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2Fs12517-017-3126-6.pdf>, which shows images of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism (fig. 8) and contains interesting statistics about its geography, water flow, and water quality.

36. See the impressive images of Wadi Qaraqir (also known as Wadi Dissah), inland and south of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism, in Florent Egal, “Wadi Qaraqir—Dissah,” *The Saudi Arabia Tourism Guide*, updated August 24, 2016, <http://www.saudiarabiatourismguide.com/wadi-qaraqir/>. This stream and the more distant Wadi al-Bardani (Mohammed al-Harbi, “PHOTOS: Wadi al-Bardani, Saudi Arabia’s Most Beautiful Valley,” *Al Arabiya*, updated January 18, 2018, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/life-style/travel-and-tourism/2018/01/18/PHOTOS-Wadi-al-Bardani-Saudi-Arabia-s-most-beautiful-valley.html>) hint at how Tayyib al-Ism may have appeared before the water flow was reduced.



FIGURE 10. Wadi Tayyib al-Ism's above-ground stream today cascades over well-worn rocks. The smaller image shows the enlarged stream following winter rains. Photographs by the author.



FIGURE 11. Just as described by Nephi, the modern stream of water in Wadi Tayyibb al-Ism still reaches literally to the water's edge at the Red Sea just inches below the surface permanently and sometimes also above ground. In this image, taken in November 2019 near the end of the dry season, the surface flow extends to within forty-two meters of sea level. Photograph by the author.

none empty into the Red Sea as Nephi describes. They hint at how Wadi Tayyib al-Ism may have appeared in Lehi's time. Still, millennia ago the situation may have been somewhat different. As John Tvedtnes noted, early historians such as Herodotus (writing about 440 BC), Agatharchides, and Strabo described other rivers from that period, some of them located in the same area as Wadi Tayyib al-Ism.³⁷ It seems certain that the river in Wadi Tayyib al-Ism is one of those described.

The second objection given in Chadwick's article is that in such a dry region as Arabia any perennial stream would have been "well settled, long prior to Lehi's arrival."³⁸ As a general rule, of course this is true; wells on the trade routes, for example, always have claimants. But, as I will note in my conclusion, there are at least two exceptions that prove the rule. Both are Book of Mormon related: locations I believe are the

37. John A. Tvedtnes, "More on the River Laman," *Insights: A Window on the Ancient World* 25, no. 3 (2005): 2–3.

38. Chadwick, "Dating the Departure of Lehi," 42.



most plausible candidates for the valley of Lemuel and the land Bountiful. Despite both locations having perennial fresh water, today, at least, both are uninhabited. This, of course, does not mean that the oasis of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism had no owners or that Lehi's group was not obliged to seek permission from whoever controlled the river and wells.

Quite unique geographical circumstances shelter these two locations from general access, which may have preserved them for the Lehiite group. These factors result in both locations having no resident population today, twenty-six centuries later. I have concluded that the Lord intended this migratory group to be set apart, isolated, from their fellows on at least two occasions—at the beginning of the Arabian journey, when so many preparations needed to be made, and at its end, when a concentrated effort was needed to build the vessel that would carry them two-thirds of the way around the globe.

As noted earlier, in preparing to leave the valley, Nephi recorded that the Lord had provided for them there, including possibly multiple “provisions” and “seed of every kind” for the group (1 Ne. 16:11), just as he later acknowledged that Bountiful was a place “prepared of the Lord” for them (1 Ne. 17:5).

In my reading of Nephi's first book, it is quite clear that he says the river ran continually to the Red Sea; it would obviously follow that the water channel and the wadi enclosing it would do so more-or-less likewise. But I believe we are splitting hairs to suggest that the size and extent of the current stream might disqualify the location as the valley of Lemuel. Even if this was all that existed in Lehi's day, I would not fault the accuracy of Nephi's text or his father's choice of a descriptive name. But there is more evidence that a river, not merely the modern stream, ran here.

Other Indications of a River, Not a Stream, in the Past

While the present stream goes underground just before reaching the Red Sea, the base and the sides of the wadi, including just before it reaches the shore, preserve the unmistakable signs of long-term erosion in its hard granite (figs. 12, 13). A scientist who specializes in the erosion of rock surfaces described the erosion in Wadi Tayyib al-Ism as follows: “Granite breaks down by weathering to a mixture of clay, sand and gravel; when carried by water this sediment is abrasive and smooths the floor of the wadi and there is much evidence of sand and gravel in the valley floor . . . derived from the bedrock. The smoothing of the rock surface along the lower sides of the valley indicates that there have been higher volumes of water flowing through the valley probably in the past but also,



FIGURE 12. Even to a lay person, the effects of substantial long-term water erosion are evident on the rounded sides and smoothed base of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism. Photograph by the author.



FIGURE 13. Long-term water erosion evident in Wadi Tayyib al-Ism. Photograph by the author.

perhaps, associated with flash floods in the present day.”³⁹ The erosion is broad in places and up to about one meter or about three feet high on the sides of the wadi. A very substantial flow of water—a river—once ran through this valley over a very long period.

Chadwick’s third and major objection to the site is that “the stream has no mouth into the Red Sea.”⁴⁰ In other words, the modern water flow no longer reaches the present Red Sea shore. This perceived deficiency is quite easily explained by the reduced flow of water over the last century due to expansions in farming and industrial usage, something the place has in common with all other water resources in the region. This would also explain why the alluvial fan of debris normally found at the mouth of any river is not found at the present shoreline.

But other factors come into play. As was noted over a decade ago, it is probable that the coastline here 2,600 years ago was different than what

39. Email correspondence, April 24, 2018, between the author and Dr. Cherith Moses, professor of geomorphology, University of Sussex.

40. Jeffrey R. Chadwick, “The Wrong Place for Lehi’s Trail and the Valley of Lemuel,” *FARMS Review* 17, no. 2 (2005): 212; see also 209, 213–14.

it is today.⁴¹ While the sea levels in the Gulf of Aqaba may have changed little since Lehi's day, there are multiple evidences for some degree of geological uplift on the Red Sea coast, although the extent of this remains unclear.⁴² Importantly, the height of the lower reaches of Wadi Tayyib al-Ism may only require an uplift in the order of tens of feet, not the hundreds of feet variation mentioned in some commentary on the extent of tectonic uplift.

CONCLUSIONS

With regard to the route taken out of Jerusalem by Lehi and his family, room exists for either of the possibilities discussed. In either scenario, we can note, with some satisfaction, still more vindication of Nephi's accuracy in recording his history. Had the family escaped via Ein Gedi as Ogden and Chadwick suggest, they were in the Judean wilderness until reaching the Aravah valley, a name that itself means "wilderness," and then until they reached the head of the Red Sea.

Alternatively, had they used the Negev route suggested here, from Jerusalem they would likewise have entered the Judean wilderness, the Negev, allowing travel further southward until the Wilderness of Zin was reached. Finally, the turn eastward—for which there are multiple possibilities—would see them enter the third wilderness, the Aravah valley, before the Red Sea was reached. In either case, what first appears as a simple statement by Nephi that his family had departed "into the wilderness" turns out to have significantly more descriptive depth and accuracy behind it than anyone could have supposed.

As for the valley of Lemuel and the river of Laman, there no longer remain any issues regarding Wadi Tayyib al-Ism lacking simple, ready solutions. The valley has a permanent year-round flow of water to the Red Sea with geological evidence indicating that the flow was much larger over a very long period in times past. The question of how the sheltered fertile pocket in its interior can be accessed in a way that matches Nephi's account has been answered, as presented earlier.

41. Brown, "Hunt for the Valley of Lemuel," 71.

42. Michael Lloyd Ingraham and others, "Saudi Arabian Comprehensive Survey Program: C. Preliminary Report on a Reconnaissance Survey of the Northwestern Province (with a Note on a Brief Survey of the Northern Province)," *Atāl: The Journal of Saudi Arabian Archaeology (ATLAL)* 5 (AH 1401, AD 1981), 59–84, notes multiple indications of uplift in the area under discussion in this article.



The truly stark contrast between it and any other possibilities means that the time has come, I believe, for Wadi Tayyib al Ism to move from being judged the “most secure candidate for the Valley of Lemuel”⁴³ to at least being accepted as the candidate that most plausibly matches Nephi’s account.

It cannot be mere coincidence that the Arabian segment of the Lehiite journey began and ended precisely at remarkable locations that provided for the group’s specific needs at the time. The most plausible candidates for both locations—for the valley of Lemuel at the beginning and the land Bountiful at its end—were, and still are, sources of that rarest of commodities in Arabia, year-round fresh water, and remain uninhabited, even today.

Warren P. Aston is an independent researcher. In addition to papers and articles published primarily by the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship at BYU, available at <http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu>, his research is reported in his book *Lehi and Sariah in Arabia: The Old World Setting of the Book of Mormon*. BYU Studies published his article “A History of NaHoM” in vol. 51, no. 2.

43. Brown, “Hunt for the Valley of Lemuel,” 73.



Forerunner

*As Isaiah foretold,
you will be the voice of one
crying in the wilderness:
Clear a path for the Lord!
Level a highway through this wasteland!*

That is what the angel said to me
as I lay by my sheep in the field.

I had gazed long into heaven
absorbed by God's operations,
scarcely noticing as stars began to gather
and join in one brilliant blaze
like frozen lightning.

Don't be afraid.
Father had often told how he fell by the altar,
but I never understood
till my own heart leapt
like a goat at a sudden roar.
The messenger spoke his piece untroubled,
told me who I would become.

But who am I?
Not one anointed,
not great like Isaiah or Elijah,
not a worker of miracles.
I have not so much as raised a single lamb
from death.

I am only a boy of the desert
who throws loud shouts across the emptiness
like stones from David's sling,
warning of snakes and wolves,
looming storms,
wildfires in the underbrush.

—Merrijane Rice

This poem won honorable mention in the 2019
Clinton F. Larson Poetry Contest, sponsored by
BYU Studies.



FIGURE 1. Final painting: *Mary Whitmer and Moroni, Earliest of the June 1829 Witnesses, Love's Labors Blessed*, by Robert T. Pack (2017), oil on copper ACM panel, 32" × 26".



Mary Whitmer and Moroni

Experiences of an Artist in Creating a Historical Painting

Robert T. Pack

In June 1829, the Peter Whitmer family welcomed Joseph and Emma Smith and Oliver Cowdery to board at their home in Fayette, New York. They had been brought up from Pennsylvania so that Joseph and Oliver could continue the translation and dictation of the Book of Mormon from the golden plates without persecution. The Whitmer family was then living in a small rural log home bursting at the seams with their large family. These three new visitors placed an additional burden upon the mother, Mary Whitmer, who was responsible for their care. Shortly after their arrival, a “strange person” visited her in her garden, showed her a bundle of plates, after which he told her to be patient and faithful in bearing her burdens a little longer—promising that she should be blessed. I will first relate the details of this story as told by Mary Whitmer to her family members over the years, and then share my experiences in creating a historical painting documenting the event.

In August 2017, Kirk Magleby of Book of Mormon Central commissioned me to paint a picture of the moment Mary Whitmer witnessed the golden plates at the Whitmer farm in Fayette, New York, in 1829. He offered to send me to New York and Pennsylvania to document places and circumstances associated with the story. The painting would eventually be unveiled at the FAIRMormon conference in 2018 in honor of the literary achievements of Lynne Hilton Wilson. This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create a historical painting gave me virtually all the resources available that an artist could conceivably want. The result is a painting entitled *Mary Whitmer and Moroni, Earliest of the June 1829 Witnesses, Love’s Labors Blessed*, featured on the cover of *BYU Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 4 (fig. 1).



A Compelling Story

Besides Joseph Smith, twelve people viewed the golden plates directly:¹ the Three Witnesses, the Eight Witnesses, and Mary Musselman Whitmer. Of these twelve, five were Mary's sons and two were her sons-in-law.² Others were men of the Smith family and Martin Harris. As far as we know, Mary was the first person besides Joseph and was the only woman to see the plates. She was also one of only five people who were shown the plates by Moroni (Joseph and the Three Witnesses being the others).

Our knowledge of Mary Whitmer's experience comes mainly from an interview with her son David, recorded forty-nine years following the event. In 1878, Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith were called on a history fact-finding mission to Church historical sites in the Midwest and New England.³ On their way, they visited Richmond, Missouri, to interview David. By that time, he had been separated from the Church for many years. Joseph F. Smith described David as "a good-sized man, 73 years of age last January, and well preserved. . . . He has a large head and a very pleasant manly countenance that one would readily perceive to be an index to a conscientious, honest heart."⁴ David told the story of what happened during the first week of June 1829:

Joseph sent for me (D. W.) to come to Harmony to get him and Oliver and bring them to my father's house. I did not know what to do, I was pressed with my work. I had some 20 acres to plow, so I concluded I would finish plowing and then go, I got up one morning to go to work as usual, and on going to the field, found between 5 and 7 acres of my ground had been plowed during the night.

I don't know who did it; but it was done just as I would have done it myself, and the plow was left standing in the furrow.

This enabled me to start sooner. . . . When I was returning to Fayette with Joseph and Oliver all of us riding in the wagon, Oliver and I on an oldfashioned wooden spring seat and Joseph behind us, while traveling along in a clear open place, a very pleasant, nice-looking old

1. Others, including Emma Smith, Lucy Mack Smith, and Katharine Smith, saw the plates indirectly, with the plates wrapped in cloth, for instance.

2. Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Whitmers: A Family That Nourished the Church," *Ensign* 9 (August 1979): 35–36.

3. Reid L. Neilson and Mitchell K. Schaefer, "Excavating Early Mormon History: The 1878 History Fact-Finding Mission of Apostles Joseph F. Smith and Orson Pratt," in *Joseph F. Smith: Reflection on the Man and His Times*, ed. Craig K. Manscill and others (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2013), 364–67.

4. "Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith," *Deseret News*, November 27, 1878, 2.



man suddenly appeared by the side of our wagon who saluted us with, “good morning, it is very warm,” at the same time wiping his face or forehead with his hand. We returned the salutation, and by a sign from Joseph I invited him to ride if he was going our way. But he said very pleasantly, “No, I am going to Cumorah.” This name was something new to me, I did not know what Cumorah meant. We all gazed at him and at each other, and as I looked round enquiringly of Joseph the old man instantly disappeared, so that I did not see him again.

J. F. S. [Joseph F. Smith] – Did you notice his appearance?

D. W. [David Whitmer] – I should think I did, he was, I should think, about 5 feet 8 or 9 inches tall and heavy set, about such a man as James Vancleave there,⁵ but heavier, his face was as large, he was dressed in a suit of brown woolen clothes, his hair and beard were white like Brother Pratt’s, but his beard was not so heavy. I also remember that he had on his back a sort of knapsack with something in, shaped like a book. It was the messenger who had the plates, who had taken them from Joseph just prior to our starting from Harmony. Soon after our arrival home, I saw something which led me to the belief that the plates were placed or concealed in my father’s barn. I frankly asked Joseph if my supposition was right, and he told me it was. Sometime after this, my mother was going to milk the cows, when she was met out near the yard by the same old man (judging by her description of him) who said to her, “You have been very faithful and diligent in your labors, but you are tried because of the increase of your toil, it is proper therefore that you should receive a witness that your faith may be strengthened?” Thereupon he showed her the plates. My father and mother had a large family of their own, the addition to it therefore of Joseph, his wife Emma and Oliver very greatly increased the toil and anxiety of my mother. And although she had never complained she had sometimes felt that her labor was too much, or at least she was perhaps beginning to feel so. This circumstance, however, completely removed all such feelings, and nerved her up for her increased responsibilities.⁶

5. James Vancleave, a newspaperman from Chicago, was among several people present during the interview at David’s request.

6. “Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith,” 2. Citations of this 1878 newspaper article have created three oft-repeated errors. The report was printed on November 27, 1878, not November 16. The newspaper states that Moroni said to Mary Whitmer, “You have been very faithful and diligent in your labors, but you are tried because of the increase of your toil, it is proper therefore that you should receive a witness that your faith may be strengthened?” “Tried” has been incorrectly reported as “tired,” and the question mark has been omitted.



Further accounts of Moroni's interaction with Mary Whitmer are given by her grandson John C. Whitmer (son of John Whitmer) and adopted granddaughter Elvira P. Mills (daughter of Christian Whitmer by marriage). John reports that he was told by Grandmother Whitmer that the encounter happened in the evening, on Mary's way to milk the cows and that Moroni was "carrying something on his back that looked like a knapsack." He then untied the knapsack and showed her the plates by turning the leaves of the plates over, leaf after leaf, showing her the engravings upon them.⁷ Elvira reports that Grandmother Whitmer told her the event happened at daybreak and she had two full buckets of milk in her hands. The description of the man is the same as David's: "a short, heavy-set, gray-haired man carrying a package."⁸ Otherwise, the three accounts are substantially the same.

Recreating the Moment

Kirk Magleby and John (Jack) Welch met with me at the beginning of this project to discuss how to recreate the moment. We agreed that viewers needed to feel a ponderous presence of the plates in the painting, echoed by Mary's expression of interest. Mary's face would be mostly visible, but not Moroni's face; he would be turned sideways, looking back or upward. The painting would be centered on the two individuals, with the backdrop playing a secondary role. The following considerations came from this central goal.

Mother Whitmer and Moroni were the only ones present. The visit happened somewhere between the Whitmer house and barn. It was either early or late in the day, when the sun would have been near the horizon. Cows were present; a field nearby would have been newly plowed with nothing growing yet; plants and flowers in the yard would be those present in early June. The look of the clothing, barn, house, and other objects would be consistent with the Whitmers' cultural background and local norms for that time period.

7. John C. Whitmer, quoted in "Mary Musselman Whitmer," in Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia: A Compilation of Biographical Sketches of Prominent Men and Women in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History, 1901), 283.

8. Elvira Pamela Mills, cited in Royal Skousen, "Another Account of Mary Whitmer's Viewing of the Golden Plates," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 10 (2014), accessed November 6, 2019, <https://journal.interpreterfoundation.org/another-account-of-mary-whitmers-viewing-of-the-golden-plates/>.

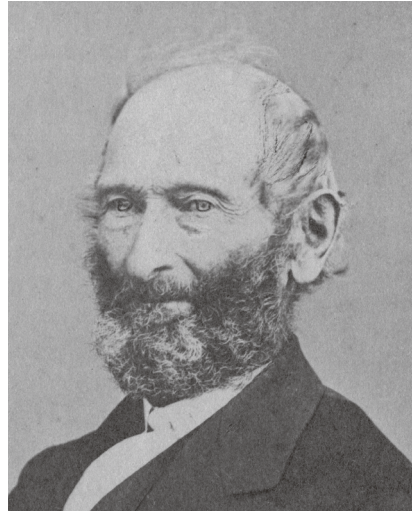
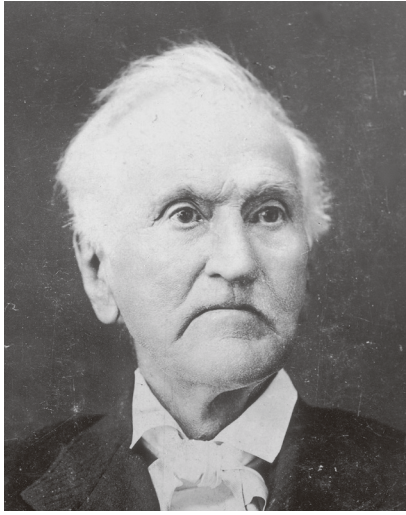


FIGURE 2. David Whitmer, age 72. Used by permission, Utah State Historical Society.

FIGURE 3. John Whitmer, age 68. Courtesy Church History Library.

What did Mary look like? There are no known photographs of her. I searched for likenesses and descriptions of Mary's children. A photo of her daughter Catherine exists, but its quality is so poor it is unusable. The only image of Elizabeth Ann is a painting of her when she

was in her twenties. The best photographs of her sons are of David and John (figs. 2, 3). Their faces exhibit intense deep-set eyes, seamed cheeks, a high forehead, a somewhat long nose, and thin lips.

We found a model for Mary Whitmer whose visage is similar to the photographs (fig. 4). The model and her husband emigrated from Russia in 2016 and now live in the Salt Lake Valley. Interestingly, the model has had life experiences similar to those of Mary Whitmer.



FIGURE 4. Model for Mary Whitmer. Courtesy Robert T. Pack.



They were among the early Church members in St. Petersburg, and their home was frequently used as an overnight accommodation for Russian Church members traveling to the Stockholm and Helsinki temples, and her work as a hostess was often difficult. While working on this project, she expressed a heartfelt empathy for how Mary Whitmer would have felt. We shot dozens of photos and selected one as reference for the painting that captured her with an expression of fatigue, wonderment, and awe while gazing at the plates.

Moroni is described by David Whitmer as about “5 feet 8 or 9 inches tall and heavy set, . . . his hair and beard were white like Brother Pratt’s, but his beard was not so heavy.”⁹ With no description of his facial likeness, we felt it best to turn Moroni’s face somewhat away from the viewer. The profile view somewhat obscures the model’s likeness and leaves the viewer to fill in the details. Doing so invites the viewer to be involved in the scene. Rembrandt van Rijn used this technique in painting Christ: “He would often place the eyes and the corners of the mouth in shadow, thereby forcing viewers to fill in what is in the shadow, to bring everything they know about Christ to the image. . . . Rembrandt understood that sometimes less detail is more spiritual power.”¹⁰ A side benefit of this approach is that it gave me more latitude in choosing a model.¹¹

The model chosen for Moroni has strong, chiseled facial features, a kindly visage, and intent eyes. He has white hair but no beard. David Whitmer said Moroni’s beard was not as heavy as Orson Pratt’s beard, and I consulted a photo of Orson Pratt taken by Charles W. Carter within a year or two the interview¹² and painted in a thinner beard.

In order to dress Mary in appropriate clothing, we researched her cultural roots. She was born in Germany on August 27, 1778.¹³ In Pennsylvania, she married Peter Whitmer, and they had eight children.

9. “Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith,” 2.

10. Richard G. Oman, “‘What Think Ye of Christ?’ An Art Historian’s Perspective,” *BYU Studies* 39, no. 3 (2000): 85.

11. The model for Moroni is actually the husband of the model for Mary and is also from Russia.

12. “Orson Pratt,” Charles W. Carter Glass Negative Collection, circa 1860–1900, PH 1300, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://catalog.lds.org/assets/f799121a-a59d-4b18-a988-079fd3288420/o/o>. Precise date of photograph is unknown.

13. “Mary Musselman Whitmer,” Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 6, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/person/mary-musselman-whitmer>.



In 1829, the family included Peter Sr., age 56; Mary, age 51; Christian, age 31; Jacob, age 29; John, age 27; David, age 24 (same age as Joseph Smith Jr.); Catherine, age 22 (who had married Hiram Page four years earlier); Peter Jr., age 20; and Elizabeth Ann, age 14 (future wife of Oliver Cowdery). One child, Nancy, died in infancy.¹⁴ Mary at 51 years old had already outlived her life expectancy, which at that era was about 40 years.¹⁵ Mary's family knew her as "Mother Whitmer." The family had lived in Fayette Township, New York, for two decades when they extended their hospitality to Joseph Smith. The citizens of the township were principally of German extraction who had previously lived in Pennsylvania.¹⁶ The Pennsylvania community included Mennonites, Amish, German Baptist Brethren, Lutheran, and German Reformed Church congregations.¹⁷ The Whitmers worshipped regularly at the early log structure of Zion's Church, a German Reformed congregation whose site was about a mile south of the Whitmer farm.¹⁸ Having been born in Germany, Mary emigrated to the Lancaster area of Pennsylvania by 1778, at which time she married Peter Whitmer. The Musselman family name in this region is strongly associated with a Mennonite cultural heritage.¹⁹ Though Mary had these roots, apparently her heritage was not strictly Mennonite.²⁰ Her manner of dress at the time may have had German influence, but the simple styles of the commoner in the eighteenth century were remarkably similar over a wide area of Europe: women wore a day cap, kerchief, apron, jacket bodice, petticoat, and long skirt. This combination was called a "short gown."²¹ Brown or more

14. Anderson, "The Whitmers: A Family That Nourished the Church," 35.

15. J. David Hacker, "Decennial Life Tables for the White Population of the United States, 1790–1900," *Historical Methods* 43, no. 2 (2010), provides data stating a life expectancy for females in 1829 ranging from 37 to 42.

16. Richard Lloyd Anderson, "Five Who Handled the Plates," *Improvement Era* 72 (July 1969): 39.

17. Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Pennsylvania's Crazy Quilt of German Religious Groups," *Pennsylvania History* 68, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 8–30.

18. *Manual of the Churches of Seneca County* (Seneca Falls, N.Y.: Courier, 1896), 102.

19. Forrest Moyer, "Our Immigrant Heritage: Musselman," Mennonite Heritage Center (blog), February 19, 2018, <http://mhcp.org/immigrant-heritage-musselman/>.

20. Mark L. Staker, senior researcher, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, personal communication with author.

21. Claudia Kidwell, "Short Gowns," *Dress: The Journal of the Costume Society of America* 4, no. 1 (1978): 30–65.



neutral colors were common, originating from the use of readily available natural dyes such as butternut. I selected this style for Mary's apron, jacket, and skirt. I decided to have Mary wear the kerchief tucked at the waist rather than tied in the middle; this style was considered a conservative arrangement of the kerchief. A white day cap and a straw sunbonnet is also period appropriate. Because the event occurred during the early morning or late evening, Mary would not have needed a sunbonnet, and so that item does not appear in the painting.

All we know about Moroni's clothing was that he wore a brown woolen suit.²² We also know that he wiped his forehead and declared it was very warm. Given that the season was early summer, it seems likely that the suit would be relatively thin. I depicted Moroni wearing a somewhat disheveled, field-worn jacket befitting a long hike, carrying a knapsack containing golden plates weighing about sixty pounds. He is wearing square-toed shoes and a preacher's hat that are period appropriate. I considered other popular hat styles such as a straw hat or felt top hat, but for aesthetic reasons I chose the preacher's hat. The knapsack sitting at his feet is a sturdy leather one that could hold a sixty-pound object.

No remnant or history of the barn at the Whitmer farm exists. We do know that it had to be suitable for dairy cows. Given the time period and relative poverty of the region, the barn was likely not painted.²³ During the visit to New York, I photographed various barns in the Fayette area and selected one barn for the scene. This selected barn was painted red, but I opted to portray it with grey, weather-beaten wood. I researched what the milk pails would have looked like and found that they had straight sides.

I imagine that Mother Whitmer was walking through the garden area between the farmhouse and the barn when Moroni appeared. In early June, any vegetables or flowers planted in her garden would have been in beginning stages of growth, and since the fields had just been plowed and planted, they would have still appeared brown. Some species of early flowing plants were likely in full bloom at the time. I searched through several online databases that predict where and during what season different native species of New York wildflowers bloom.²⁴ After

22. "Report of Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith," 2.

23. J. W. Glass, *The Pennsylvania Culture Region: A View from the Barn* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1986), 88–89.

24. Gerry Williamson, "Wildflowers of the United States," blog, accessed November 5, 2019, <https://uswildflowers.com/>.



considerable review, I decided to include pink Carolina wild rose bushes and blue forget-me-not flowers in the scene.

I visited the Whitmer farm in September 2017 to take reference photography. Since the event happened in the early morning or late in the day, I went during sunrise and sunset in order to capture the light and atmosphere. I documented the look of the native brush and forests at that time of day. From the dozens of photos I took, I selected elements of trees, fields, shrubs, and branches. Unfortunately, I could not visit the farm in early June, which would have been ideal, so I tried to envision how the shrubs and trees might have looked before a full summer of growth.

The golden plates carried in Moroni's knapsack are a central part of the scene. I endeavored to portray them with the proper size, shape, weight, color, and patina. The following characteristics are based on research by Kirk B. Henrichsen.²⁵ By the consensus of many witnesses who saw, hefted, moved, or manipulated the plates, we know that the plates were about eight inches wide, six inches long, and about six inches thick. They had three rings so that the pages could be turned over one by one; they weighed about sixty pounds; a half to about two-thirds of the plates were sealed; and the characters were small and beautifully engraved. There also exists a scholarly consensus that the plates were made from a copper-gold alloy.²⁶ We know this alloy has the same density as that calculated from the known volume and weight of the plates.²⁷ A testimony by William Smith, Joseph's brother, directly states they were made of copper and gold.²⁸ Ancient craftsmen knew how to remove the copper component of the alloy from the surface of plate through a chemical process, leaving a thin layer of pure gold on the surface. If there is any remaining copper, a rose hue appears in the gold, which could eventually tarnish, thereby dulling the sheen of gold with a greenish patina. I decided to color the plates this way in the painting.

25. Kirk B. Henrichsen, "How Witnesses Described the Gold Plates," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10, no. 1 (2001): 16–21, 78.

26. Read H. Putnam, "Were the Golden Plates Made of Tumbaga?" *Improvement Era* 69 (September 1966): 788–89, 828–31.

27. Robert F. Smith, "The 'Golden' Plates," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1992), 275–77.

28. William Smith, "The Old Soldier's Testimony," *Saints' Herald*, October 4, 1884: 644, cited in Henrichsen, "How Witnesses Described the Gold Plates," 17, 78.



FIGURE 5. Moroni model holding a fifty-pound weight. Courtesy Robert T. Pack.



FIGURE 6. Moroni model holding the golden plates replica. Courtesy Robert T. Pack.

It was important to the painting to have Moroni assume a posture that would support the sixty-pound weight of the plates. I posed the model holding a fifty-pound steel weight with a handle and photographed him (fig. 5). Then I removed the weight and had the model hold a replica set of golden plates (fig. 6). The replica plates were made of gilded brass with hand engravings.²⁹

Proceeding with the Painting

Once we selected models and rented or purchased clothing and props, I posed the costumed models as I wished them to appear in the painting. I took dozens of photos, trying various postures, arrangements, and angles, and settled on a few of them.

The next step was to create alternative compositions using arrangements of individual elements from various photographs. I employed computer manipulation using Photoshop software, but I also created

29. See James Spens, *Sacred Objects: Take Care of These Sacred Things* (CreateSpace, 2016), cover art. James Spens created and engraved the replica of the golden plates shown on the cover. He kindly loaned the replica to me for this art project.



my own thumbnail sketches. Though a lot can be done on a computer, thumbnail sketches are essential to analyzing alternative forms, tone, and color. This work must be done at the early stages in order to work out any problems before being committed to the full-scale painting. Figure 7 shows the thumbnail sketch that I finally chose as the reference for the painting. It shows Mother Whitmer and Moroni focused on the plates while sitting on the edge of a workbench. A pail of milk is set down next to the path Mary had been walking on.



FIGURE 7. Thumbnail sketch overlaid with a spiral curve. Courtesy Robert T. Pack.

One can see a milk cow looking out of the barn where Mary had just milked her. I decided to depict a morning scene because of the dew-laden misty atmosphere at a time when most of the path is in shadow with dappled light. The shadowed area provides overall contrast to the misty light off in the distance to the upper right. A freshly plowed field lies in the background. An axe is leaning against the bench since this is likely where axe-sharpening and other work-related activities would have taken place. Eventually, I chose to place the knapsack where this axe was. Even though the sketch is relatively rough and approximate, when seen from a distance it still gives the same impression as the final painting. If the sketch does not look good at this stage, the final painting will never look any better.

I overlaid a spiral line on the sketch. This is akin to the golden spiral used by the old master artists in many of their paintings. The sketch was built around this spiral geometry in order to lead the eye to a focus. In this case, the eye is led from the bottom right corner of the painting, over to the left edge, then up and around to the visage of Moroni. From there, the eye is directed down to the plates, then up to Mary's face. The triangular arrangement of the two faces and the plates holds the eye in this area. The golden plates were painted to stand out against a dark



background to make it a focus of attention. The eye tends to be drawn to the areas on the painting with the highest contrast. Even though the sketch was black and white, the colors were planned to be relatively muted except for the golden plates. As with high contrast, this strong color draws attention to the plates, which are the ultimate focus at the center of the painting. Finally, I added flowers, arranged to provide a needed touch of color.

The next step was to transfer the sketch to a thirty-two-inch-tall by twenty-six-inch-wide panel using a graphite pencil. I chose a copper ACM panel because the metallic copper sheen provides a wonderful undertone to the painting.³⁰ The copper is first sanded to provide enough tooth in the texture to accept graphite and paint. Sanding also helps the paint adhere for a long duration. I used oil paint based on linseed and walnut oil. No paint mediums, driers, or retouch varnish were used because these sometimes shorten a painting's lifespan.³¹ Material is an important consideration when creating historical paintings that one hopes will endure for as long as possible.

I applied the paint in thin layers, starting with an underpainting that fixes the values of lightness and dark. Fine hair brushes are used on the smooth copper so that the underlying copper sometimes shows through. This technique is particularly nice for facial features that tend to have a copper tint. Each layer typically dries within a day or two. Each subsequent layer is usually a refinement or correction of the previous one and proceeds in a variety of ways. One part of the painting might have one or two layers, while another might have a dozen. A certain amount of refinement takes place in the process. However, there is a risk of carrying a painting too far, so I wanted a certain amount of "impressionism," particularly in the backdrop. Even with multiple layers, rarely are brush strokes obvious because of the way the paint is applied to the smooth copper surface. When viewers observe the finished painting

30. ACM stands for aluminum composite material. Because ACM is manufactured for outdoor signs, it is much more durable than canvas and provides a stable, long-lasting support to the paint.

Danish artist Carl Bloch has many wonderful paintings on copper. I adopted the use of copper as a result of studying his work at the *Sacred Gifts* exhibition, BYU Museum of Art, 2013–14. His work is in immaculate condition after almost 150 years.

31. Art conservators have found that varnishes, mediums, and driers used in oil paintings have caused a variety of problems with longevity and quality in old master paintings over the centuries.



at various angles to the light, they can see some of the sheen from the underlying copper. Figure 1 shows the final result of this effort.

In the end, the goal was not to draw attention to my style or technique, but to draw the viewer into the story, transporting them to another time and place. I hope viewers will perhaps feel in their souls the miracle of this moment that happened so long ago.

Finally, I thank those who played an important role in this effort, including Kirk Magleby, Jack Welch, Lynne Hilton Wilson, Mark Staker, James Spens, Larissa Vaseleva, Victor Vaselev, Sonja Harris, and my wife, Lorri. Thanks also go to the several full-time missionaries I met when visiting the historical sites and visitors' centers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York and Pennsylvania in fall 2017. Their personal testimonies regarding the truth of this miraculous event inspired and propelled me forward with this work.

Robert T. Pack is a former engineering professor, Utah State University, Logan. He retired early in 2013 to take up full-time landscape and historical painting. His recent works include *Emma as Scribe*, which depicts Emma Smith working at the kitchen table on the translation of the Book of Mormon with her husband, Joseph; and *Chiasmus, John W. Welch Meets Paul Gaechter*, depicting Elder Welch as a young missionary meeting the Catholic scholar responsible for his introduction to, and discovery of, chiasmus in the Book of Mormon. Robert is married to Lorri Tondevold and has six children and two grandchildren.



Green Things

Faith, they say, is a seed that grows.
It swells, and as a mother I can say
that things inside swelling are not always
pleasant. But what sort of growing is always pleasant?

It swells. And as a mother, let me say—
growing things can pierce inside, an ache most
pleasant, but what sort of growing is always pleasant?
Blood happens, and ribs crack as time passes.

Growing things can pierce inside, an ache most
trying. Young things can die and be cut off
as blood happens. And ribs may crack as time passes
and thorns pierce through. A young plant is fragile.

Even in trying, young things can die and be cut off
when waves of pain move through you, as your insides hurt
with thorns piercing through. A young plant is fragile
and if you hold back the water, it will soon die back.

When waves of pain pass through you, when your insides hurt
because you have been stretched too far to keep
giving forth your waters, the bud will soon die back.
It will soon seem to die, but anything green lives still.

Because you have been stretched too far to keep
a bud alive over winters of creeping doubt
it will soon seem to die. But anything green lives still
and if you see green in the stem you cut, it lives.

A plant that lives over winters of creeping doubt
is a things that can still grow. *Cut it. Cut it.*
If you see green in the stem you cut, it lives.
If you see that green inside, the Word still lives.

—Sarah Dunster

This poem won honorable mention in the 2019 Clinton F. Larson
Poetry Contest, sponsored by BYU Studies.



Using Science to Answer Questions from Latter-day Saint History

The Case of Josephine Lyon's Paternity

Ugo A. Perego

DNA testing has been employed to study the ancestry and posterity of Joseph Smith Jr., founder of the Mormon movement. Thanks to information found on the paternally inherited Y chromosome, for example, researchers have been able to establish a likely Irish origin for the Smith line.¹ Y chromosome testing has also been helpful in resolving a number of paternity cases involving men who were allegedly sons of Joseph through polygamous unions. To date, all of the tests for these candidates have borne negative results.²

However, the strongest case for a child born through one of Joseph Smith's plural marriages is that of Josephine Lyon, born on February 8, 1844, in Nauvoo, Illinois. Because Josephine did not receive the Y chromosome from her biological father, her paternity could not be verified through science until recently. Josephine's mother, Sylvia Sessions, was sealed to Joseph Smith even though she was legally married to (but likely separated from) Windsor P. Lyon. Details about Sylvia Sessions's unions to both men—particularly to Smith—are highly debated among

1. Ugo A. Perego, "Joseph Smith DNA Revealed: New Clues from the Prophet's Genes" (lecture, FairMormon Conference, Sandy, Utah, August 7–8, 2008), <http://www.fairmormon.org/perspectives/fair-conferences/2008-fair-conference/2008-joseph-smith-dna-revealed-new-clues-from-the-prophets-genes>.

2. Ugo A. Perego, "Joseph Smith, the Question of Polygamous Offspring, and DNA Analysis," in *The Persistence of Polygamy*, ed. Newell G. Bringhurst and Craig L. Foster (Independence, Mo.: John Whitmer Historical Association, 2010), 233–56.



historians.³ This is probably due to the affidavit Josephine Lyon signed in 1915, in which she stated:

Just prior to my mother's death in 1882 she called me to her bedside and told me that her days on earth were about numbered and before she passed away from mortality she desired to tell me something which she had kept as an entire secret from me and from others but which she now desired to communicate to me. She then told me that I was the daughter of the Prophet Joseph Smith, she having been sealed to the Prophet at the time that her husband Mr. Lyon had was out of fellowship with the Church.⁴

The purpose of this report is to summarize the steps that were taken to establish the biological paternity of Josephine Lyon through the analysis of autosomal DNA from descendants of both Joseph Smith and Josephine Lyon.

Genetics: Autosomal DNA

The standard human has twenty-three pairs of chromosomes, which are tightly packed inside the nucleus of each cell and referred to as the nuclear DNA. The twenty-third pair is the sex chromosomes: a combination of YX would result in male offspring, while an XX pair would produce a female. The Y chromosome in the YX set is received exclusively from the father, and it is the genetic segment that was used to resolve a number of cases involving alleged sons of Joseph Smith through polygamous unions.⁵ The remaining twenty-two pairs of chromosomes are called autosomes (thus the name *autosomal* DNA), and they are the blueprint of our lives, containing instructions for our growth, function, and development.⁶ We receive one set of chromosomes from our

3. Brian C. Hales, "The Joseph Smith—Sylvia Sessions Plural Sealing: Polyandry or Polygyny?" *Mormon Historical Studies* 9, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 41–57.

4. Brian C. Hales and Laura H. Hales, "Sylvia Sessions," Joseph Smith's Polygamy, 2017, <http://josephsmithspolygamy.org/plural-wives-overview/sylvia-sessions>.

5. Ugo A. Perego, Natalie M. Myres, and Scott R. Woodward, "Reconstructing the Y-Chromosome of Joseph Smith: Genealogical Applications," *Journal of Mormon History* 31, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 42–60; Ugo A. Perego, Jayne E. Ekins, and Scott R. Woodward, "Resolving the Paternities of Oliver N. Buell and Mosiah L. Hancock through DNA," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 27 (2008): 128–36.

6. Mitochondrial DNA is a genetic marker not found in the nucleus (and therefore not part of the twenty-three pairs of chromosomes). It is found in organelles called mitochondria in the extranuclear fluid of the cell.



father and the other from our mother. Therefore, at each new generation, 50 percent of autosomal DNA from the previous generation is preserved, while the other 50 percent is lost. Consequently, each child carries half of their father's and half of their mother's DNA and approximately 25 percent of each of their grandparents' DNA, 12.5 percent of their great-grandparents', and so on.

DNA is measured in centiMorgans (cMs) and is inherited in segments.⁷ In humans, one cM corresponds to about one million base pairs⁸ on average, and our genomes contain an estimated 6,800 cMs. We can use the average percentage of inherited autosomal DNA (we inherit 50 percent from each of our parents and pass on 50 percent to our children) to calculate approximately how much shared DNA we would expect to observe between two closely related individuals. In a parent/child relationship, for example, we would expect to observe approximately 3,400 shared cMs, an uncle/nephew pair would have around 1,700 shared cMs, and so on.⁹

Because of the continued halving at each generation, autosomal DNA testing for genealogical purposes is limited to investigating family relationships within the past five or six generations. Beyond that, the amount of shared inherited genetic segments becomes too small and is no longer feasible to use to trace it back to specific ancestors.¹⁰ This means that although we can be genealogically related to all of our ancestors, we carry genetic segments for only a few of them. In fact, it is

7. "CentiMorgan," International Society of Genetic Genealogy (ISOGG) Wiki, last modified January 2, 2019, <http://isogg.org/wiki/CentiMorgan>.

8. "Base pairs" are pairs of nucleotides that are connected together with hydrogen bonds. In base pairing, nucleotides on one DNA strand bond with complementary nucleotides on a parallel strand, forming the double helix structure of the DNA. The order of these nucleotides determines a person's genetic code.

9. Similar values are also reported at "Autosomal DNA Statistics," ISOGG Wiki, last modified September 3, 2018, http://isogg.org/wiki/Autosomal_DNA_statistics. The difference between the figure reported in this article and the data reported in the ISOGG Wiki page is that the former is based on empirical data observed in approximately 22,000 pairs of close relatives and the latter is a straightforward statistic based on 6,800 cMs found in humans that are halved at each generation.

10. Christopher Phillips and others, "SNPs as Supplements in Simple Kinship Analysis or as Core Markers in Distant Pairwise Relationship Tests: When Do SNPs Add Value or Replace Well-Established and Powerful STR Tests?" *Transfusion Medicine and Hemotherapy* 39, no. 3 (2012): 202–10.



estimated that individuals bear autosomal DNA from only about 20 percent of their 1,024 ancestors who lived at the tenth-generation level.¹¹

Genealogy: Descendants of Joseph Smith and Josephine Lyon

Joseph Smith was born in 1805, and Josephine Lyon was born in 1844. Based on the inheritance properties of autosomal DNA, their children and grandchildren would have inherited approximately 50 percent and 25 percent of their DNA, respectively. Joseph Smith had nine biological children with his first recorded wife, Emma Hale. Four sons lived to adulthood, but only two of them, Joseph III and Alexander Hale, have a living biological posterity.¹² These two sons would also be half siblings to Josephine Lyon, if Joseph Smith was in fact her father. All children and grandchildren of Joseph Smith are deceased. A small number of great-grandchildren were still alive at the time of this project and agreed to contribute a DNA sample. It is estimated that these great-grandchildren would carry on average 12.5 percent of Joseph Smith's autosomal DNA.

Josephine gave birth to ten children, with seven surviving to adulthood.¹³ Descendants from six of these seven children donated DNA samples to the current study, including Josephine's only surviving grandchild (who has approximately 25 percent of Josephine's autosomal

11. "How Many Genetic Ancestors Do I Have?" The Coop Lab, Population and Evolutionary Genetics, UC Davis, November 11, 2013, <https://gcbias.org/2013/11/11/how-does-your-number-of-genetic-ancestors-grow-back-over-time>.

12. "Joseph Smith Pedigree Chart," The Joseph Smith Papers, accessed November 11, 2019, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/back/joseph-smith-pedigree-chart>; Fred E. Woods, "The Cemetery Record of William D. Huntington, Nauvoo Sexton," *Mormon Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (2002): 136; Almira Mack Covey to Harriet Mack Whittemore, February 24, 1842, Whittemore Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Jacob Scott to Mary Scott Warnock, March 24, 1842, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Mo.; see also Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith*, 2d ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 103. Although the Nauvoo sexton's record appears to group the entries listed on its first page under the heading "1839," many of these individuals died well after 1839; the entry for an unnamed infant gives no date or age at time of death. See Jannalee Rosner, "What Happened to Joseph and Emma Smith's Children?" *LDS Living*, October 17, 2015, <https://www.ldsliving.com/What-Happened-to-Joseph-Smith-and-Emma-s-Children/s/80310>; Michael Kennedy, "Joseph and Emma's Family," *Ensign* 48, no. 2 (February 2008): 39–41.

13. "Josephine Rosetta Lyon," FamilySearch, accessed October 20, 2019, <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/KWJC-GJH>.



DNA). The rest of her participating descendants are mostly great- and great-great-grandchildren, carrying approximately 12.5 percent and 6.25 percent of Josephine's autosomal DNA, respectively.

This investigation was extremely time sensitive, since the technology to address this case study became available only in the past fifteen years, and Joseph Smith and Josephine Lyon's surviving posterity who carry a sufficient amount of informative autosomal DNA to verify the alleged relationship are elderly and will not be around forever.

Materials and Methods

A total of fifty-six participants agreed to take part in the current study. These individuals were selected based on their relationship to either Joseph Smith Jr. or Josephine Lyon, with the objective of obtaining two balanced datasets for genetic comparison. During the selection process, particular attention was placed on the number of generations separating the living descendant to the ancestor of interest and on the spread or degree of separation among these descendants. The main objective in following these principles was to build a dataset of individuals carrying enough autosomal DNA from either Joseph Smith or Josephine Lyon to confidently demonstrate or exclude a biological connection between the two families.

The final dataset of the completed results used in this study follows:

- twenty-one descendants of Joseph Smith: eight through Alexander Hale and thirteen through Joseph III (five great-grandchildren of Joseph Smith, eleven great-great-grandchildren, and five great-great-great-grandchildren)
- six descendants of Hyrum Smith, used as controls
- twenty-two descendants of Josephine Lyon: one grandson, eighteen great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren
- seven descendants of other relatives of Josephine Lyon, used as controls

The majority of samples collected for this study were processed by 23andMe, a California-based commercial company offering direct-to-consumer (DTC) genetic testing.¹⁴ Although 23andMe is a commercial enterprise, its DNA samples are processed using a customized chip

14. Anne Wojcicki, "Power of One Million," *23andMe Blog*, June 18, 2015, <http://blog.23andme.com/news/one-in-a-million>.



produced by Illumina,¹⁵ a leading biotechnology firm that serves governments, as well as academic and private laboratories worldwide. 23andMe also has an extremely qualified scientific advisory board of highly respected researchers.¹⁶ A small number of samples were processed at Family Tree DNA and Ancestry.com, as needed. Both companies utilize similar technologies to 23andMe, so the results can be compared even though they were acquired through different laboratories. Once the processing was completed, the raw data was downloaded from each processor's website and submitted to the third-party, open-source database GEDmatch for analysis.

Results

Autosomal DNA comparison was performed and is summarized in six tables available in the supplemental online material, published on the FSI Genetics website.¹⁷ These tables include data from Joseph Smith's family, Hyrum Smith's six descendants, and Josephine Lyon's family. A positive linear correlation was observed for each family line because closer Smith relatives and closer Lyon relatives showed higher amounts of shared cMs and vice versa. Family members related to the individuals listed at the top of each table are listed in order of cMs observed, from largest (top) to smallest (bottom). Data listed in the six tables strongly support the correctness of the genealogical data provided, thus demonstrating that Joseph Smith's five great-grandchildren and Josephine's grandson are indeed related to everyone else within their respective family group who participated in the study. The degrees of relationship observed in this study among the different participants range from parent/child and full siblings to third cousins twice removed. For a small

15. "Autosomal DNA Testing Comparison Chart," ISOGG Wiki, last modified April 13, 2019, http://isogg.org/wiki/Autosomal_DNA_testing_comparison_chart.

16. "Research," 23andMe, accessed May 31, 2019, <https://research.23andme.com/research>.

17. See the tables in the report of this case study published in *Forensic Science International: Genetics*: Ugo A. Perego and others, "Resolving a 150-Year-Old Paternity Case in Mormon History Using DTC Autosomal DNA Testing of Distant Relatives," *Forensic Science International: Genetics* (2019), 1–7, [https://www.fsigenetics.com/article/S1872-4973\(19\)30066-3/fulltext#sec0040](https://www.fsigenetics.com/article/S1872-4973(19)30066-3/fulltext#sec0040).



number of the more distant familial relations, the observed amount of shared cMs was zero, which was an expected observation.¹⁸

Once the genealogical information of each of the two families was supported by the autosomal DNA analysis, the next step was to compare the DNA of each of Joseph Smith's great-grandchildren with that of Josephine's surviving grandson (carrying approximately 25 percent of her DNA). At the half second-degree cousin relationship, which the five descendants of Joseph Smith allegedly share with Josephine Lyon's grandchild, one would expect to observe an average of 106.25 shared cMs for most, if not all pairs. But none of the five Smiths shared any amount of autosomal DNA with Josephine's grandchild. On the other hand, when DNA comparisons were performed within each family group, the observed range for each set when 106.25 cMs were expected was 27.7–177.5 shared cMs, with a measured average of 107.46 shared cMs. Therefore, the observed absence of shared autosomal DNA between Josephine's grandson and Joseph Smith's five great-grandchildren indicates that the five Smiths are probably not biologically related to Josephine's grandson.

This was further corroborated when autosomal DNA from Josephine's grandson was compared to the DNA of Lyon relatives, who bear no apparent close relationship to the Smith family. Four of these relatives shared a significant amount of autosomal DNA with Josephine's grandson, with the amount of shared DNA ranging from 19.8 to 117.5 cMs. The absence of shared DNA between Josephine Lyon's grandson and Joseph Smith's five great-grandchildren, together with a significant amount of autosomal DNA shared by Josephine's grandson and four other relatives of Windsor Lyon, further indicates that Josephine was not related to the Smith but to the Lyon family.

Conclusions

In 1915, Josephine Lyon recorded that in 1882, her mother, Sylvia Sessions, told Josephine that Joseph Smith was her father. Historical records show that at some time Joseph was sealed to Sylvia, but the timing is not known. Whether it was before or after Josephine's conception in May of 1844 is uncertain. Neither is the type of sealing—whether for eternity only or for time and eternity—currently verified. In light of the genetic

18. For more details on observed and actual ranges of centiMorgans among known relatives, see Blaine Bettinger, "August 2017 Update to the Shared cM Project," *The Genetic Genealogist*, August 26, 2017, <https://thegeneticgenealogist.com/2017/08/26/august-2017-update-to-the-shared-cm-project>.



approach presented in this study, it appears that Josephine did not share a biological tie with the founder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Although a reconstruction of Joseph Smith's and Josephine Lyon's DNA through their descendants will never provide the same level of accuracy that DNA obtained directly from Joseph and Josephine could (a true paternity test), data presented in this study is consistent and offers the strongest evidence to date toward clarifying the alleged father/daughter relationship of Joseph Smith and Josephine Lyon. Based on this analysis, it appears that Joseph Smith did not father Josephine and that perhaps what Sylvia Sessions told her daughter has a different meaning than the biological relationship many historians have assumed. It will now be their job and challenge to help us clarify the statement, keeping in mind this additional piece of genetic evidence in their future research of Joseph Smith's practice of polygamy.

Ugo A. Perego holds a PhD in genetics and molecular science. He is currently the director of the Rome Institute Campus of Religion, a coordinator for Seminaries and Institutes for central Italy and Malta, a visiting scientist at the University of Pavia, Italy, and an adjunct instructor at Salt Lake Community College. From 1999 to 2012, he was a senior scientist for the Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation in Salt Lake City, where this project first began in collaboration with Dr. Scott R. Woodward. This is a summary report from the original article, "Resolving a 150-Year-Old Paternity Case in Mormon History Using DTC Autosomal DNA Testing of Distant Relatives," *Forensic Science International: Genetics* 42 (2019): 1–7, [https://www.fsigenetics.com/article/S1872-4973\(19\)30066-3/fulltext](https://www.fsigenetics.com/article/S1872-4973(19)30066-3/fulltext).



The Lucky

Chelsea Bagley Dyreng

I heard the rumors.

Something was going around at school. Also at church. They said it attacks like lightning and leaves you feeling like a grenade exploded inside your body. The one mercy of the ordeal is that it lasts for only twenty-four hours.

Perhaps my home will be spared, I thought.

But then, last Wednesday, just after lunchtime, the school called. It is never a good sign when the school calls. And somehow I knew before I answered what it would be about.

It was one of my daughters. *And she had it.* (She will hereafter be known as THE FIRST, since she was the beginning.)

I went to the school and picked her up, spoke comforting words, and brought her home.

Later, I waited for the bus to come, bringing home my younger kids. I waited and waited. Strange, I thought. This bus is never late. All of the sudden I had a terrible premonition: the bus is late because of *my child*.

Sure enough, when the bus finally arrived and my younger two children got off, one of them shouted up the driveway, pointing to her brother, “Mom! Guess who just threw up on the bus!” (She will hereafter be known as THE TATTLER, and he will be known as GUESS WHO.)

But I didn’t have time to answer her because just then, THE FIRST threw up again. She had almost made it to the toilet. Almost.

THE TATTLER and GUESS WHO walked into the house, and GUESS WHO told me, “Mom I’m not sick. I just don’t feel well.” After which he went to my bedroom and threw up on my gliding rocker.

I put GUESS WHO in the shower for safekeeping while I attended to the messes. THE FIRST was now curled up in a ball on the couch, while THE TATTLER told me in detail about what had happened on the bus. “We had to climb *over the seats* to get off!” But less than an hour later, the dreaded plague hit her too. At least she made it to the toilet.

Now even I was starting to feel woozy. Would I be next? But I *couldn't* get sick—I had a critical rehearsal that night in preparation for a huge multidenominational concert, and I was the director. I couldn't back out, and no one could take my place. But how could I go when my children were unraveling before my eyes? My only comfort and hope was that soon THE SPOUSE would be home. He would be able to help me fight this battle.

In between washing and sterilizing and more vomiting (from all three), I went outside to get some fresh air, and lo and behold THE SPOUSE rolled up in his truck! Salvation! He got out, his shoulders slumped, his feet dragging, his face as gray as a sidewalk. “I don't feel well,” he said. All hopes for my capable partner to help save this sinking ship were dashed as soon as he walked into the bathroom and closed the door.

So now there were four. If they were not vomiting, they were writhing in pain or moaning into their pillows. Access to the bathroom trumped privacy, and locking the door was no longer socially acceptable. At one point, there was a *line* for the toilet.

Yet there was still one more child left to arrive home. When she walked through the door, she gazed around in astonishment. “What's wrong with everyone?” (We shall call this child THE LUCKY, for the Black Angel of Gastrointestinal Rage saw fit to spare her.)

I could only give her a look of desperation and go back to my work of caring for the victims. For the next two hours, the battle raged. Oh, the horror! The horror!

Eventually I had to leave for my meeting. I needed divine help to get through this rehearsal, lest I be victim number 5 in front of my choir. Before leaving, I found a room where there wasn't someone lying on a bed groaning. My knees hit the floor, and I begged God to preserve me for the next two hours so I could direct this choir. After that he could do whatsoever he willed. *Just please help me make it through this rehearsal.* I rose from my knees feeling hopeful.

There was just one more thing to do.

I located THE LUCKY, who was trying to escape reality via a computer game. I plucked out her earbuds. I knelt before her. I grasped her

by the shoulders. I looked through her eyes and into her very soul. I said: "I am leaving. You are the *only one* in this house who can help people. You need to take care of *everyone*. If someone throws up while I am gone, you must help them. I am counting on you. *You are their last hope.*"

And then I left.

I conducted the rehearsal without incident, though it went longer than I anticipated. Afterward, I thought I'd better go to the store and get Gatorade to help replenish dehydrated bodies. When I returned home, it was very late. I parked in the driveway, delaying the inevitable. I would have a lot to do when I walked in that door. I had left the house in shambles. I hadn't fixed dinner (what was the point?), and I knew that dishes and cups and crumbs littered the counters. I knew I would have to start the laundry and maybe even clean the carpet, especially if there had been more accidents while I was gone. I hadn't eaten since breakfast. Miles before I sleep, miles before I sleep.

I entered the house. It was dark and (mercifully) quiet. I walked into the kitchen and looked around with some confusion. Was this the same house I had left? The counters were clean. The table was clean. The dishwasher had been emptied. The kitchen was spotless. The living room had been tidied and put in order. Not only that, but there was a mug on the counter, surrounded by a glowing ring of battery-powered candles. A little name card was propped up in front of the mug with the word *Mom* written in curly letters. In the mug was hot chocolate—*still warm*—insulated by layers of marshmallows.

Had THE SPOUSE done all of this, even in the throes of his tribulations? Since my last memory of him was staring at the ceiling moaning, "Death, come quickly," that seemed unlikely. Did he somehow rally the other sufferers into making an effort to clean the house?

I crept into the bedroom where THE SPOUSE was resting uneasily on the bed.

"Thank you for cleaning the house," I said.

"The house is clean?" he croaked.

"Yes. It wasn't you?"

"No. But I know THE LUCKY was doing something in the kitchen for a long time. And when GUESS WHO threw up in his bed, THE LUCKY took his sheets downstairs and put them in the washer and started it."

Really?

As I lay down to sleep that night, I thought of my twelve-year-old daughter and marveled. I have asked, begged, and pleaded with my children many times to clean this or that, to watch out for their siblings, and



to take care of each other, and there are times I feel like I am shouting into a black hole.

But when a person, even a child, knows that they are depended on, that they are *counted* on, and when they can witness—firsthand—that *all hope is riding on their shoulders*, they find an inner impetus . . . not from obligation, or force, or even a sense of duty, but a motivation from an undeniable understanding of purpose. Then duty transforms to pure love, and obligation blossoms into charity unfeigned. And that is when someone goes from being THE LUCKY to becoming THE HERO.

This essay by Chelsea Bagley Dyreng won second place in the 2019 Richard H. Cracroft Personal Essay Contest, sponsored by BYU Studies.



Captain Moroni's Revelation

Duane Boyce

Moroni reports receiving a revelation in which the Lord told him, “If those whom ye have appointed your governors do not repent of their sins and iniquities, ye shall go up to battle against them” (Alma 60:33). Moroni reports this revelation straightforwardly, but because Pahoran, the chief governor of the Nephites at the time, turns out to be innocent of the charges contained in Moroni’s subsequent epistle and in the revelation itself (see Alma 61), it is easy to think that Moroni’s revelation (or at least his report of it) is mistaken in some way. Indeed, this conclusion would seem to be the general default reading of this passage.¹ The logical implication of this conclusion is that Moroni must have some defect. Even though he presents the message as a quotation from the Lord, either he did not actually receive a revelation, or he misunderstood the revelation he did receive, or, at a minimum, he recorded his revelation inaccurately.

An Overlooked Detail

Such an interpretation overlooks a significant detail in the text, however: Pahoran is not the only recipient of the epistle Moroni wrote following

1. This seems to be the case not only among lay members but also in scholarly circles. Grant Hardy, for example, refers to this revelation at various points and calls it—and/or Moroni’s report of it—“mistaken” and an “off-the-mark revelation.” Indeed, Hardy speaks of the revelation as a “claim” made by Moroni. See Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 176, 177, and Kindle location 6815.



this revelation. Because Moroni mentions Pahoran by name (60:1) and because Pahoran both takes the letter personally and responds to Moroni (Alma 61), it is easy to think that Pahoran was the only one who received this epistle. But this is a mistake. In addition to Pahoran, Moroni directed his epistle “to *all* those who have been chosen by this people to govern and manage the affairs of this war” (60:1, emphasis added). It would seem natural for Moroni to mention Pahoran by name since he was the preeminent civil authority among the Nephites, but we learn from the text that Pahoran was not alone. Multiple leaders had governing power in Nephite society, and, as a group, they were responsible for mobilizing the Nephite population and supporting the Nephite armies (v. 2). It was to these multiple leaders—not only Pahoran—that Moroni sent his epistle.

We see this fact evidenced numerous times in Moroni’s letter. Throughout his epistle, he consistently speaks in the plural. On fifteen separate occasions, he makes it clear that he is talking to all the governors of the Nephites. For instance, he refers to “all” who were responsible for managing the war (v. 1) and says that he is speaking by way of condemnation “unto *them*” (v. 2). He also speaks of what “*ye yourselves* know” (v. 2), describes the Nephite leaders as sitting upon their “*thrones*” (v. 7), writes to them as “*brethren*” (v. 10), and says that “the blood of thousands shall come upon your *heads*” (v. 10). He then speaks again of their “*thrones*” (v. 11) and also of the government and “*their* exceeding slothfulness” and “*their* exceedingly great neglect” (v. 14). Later, Moroni speaks of what “*ye yourselves* are seeking” (v. 18), questions whether they are “*traitors*” to their country (v. 18), and again refers to those receiving his epistle as sitting upon their “*thrones*” (v. 21). He then speaks of “any *among* you” and of “*those*” who are usurping power (v. 27) and admonishes them to “*bestir yourselves*” (v. 29, emphasis added throughout). And it turns out that this usage of the plural is completely consistent with what the Lord had initially told Moroni—namely, that if the “governors” did not repent, he was instructed to go to battle against “them” (v. 33).

We learn in Pahoran’s response that Moroni was right: Pahoran had experienced dissensions, and the government was riddled with treason (Alma 61)—which is exactly what Moroni’s revelation had indicated. Pahoran’s innocence does not falsify the revelation, therefore, because the revelation was not specifically about Pahoran. Because the government was generally corrupt, the message contained in the revelation was completely accurate.



The Substantial Accuracy of Moroni's Epistle

A similar point applies to Moroni's epistle. If we think he wrote only to Pahoran, then, judging by Pahoran's response, Moroni was seriously mistaken. What we have seen, however, is that Moroni did not write only to Pahoran. His audience was more general. Thus, while it is true that Moroni was mistaken in lumping Pahoran in with all the other governors, this error is minuscule in the scheme of things. The epistle is certainly far less erroneous than it is frequently thought to be.

Recognizing this feature of the text informs our perspective on Captain Moroni. His only mistake was not being sufficiently nuanced in his greeting. To be more exact in his opening, he could have said: "I know that many, if not all, of you are guilty of sins and iniquities in not supporting our defensive war effort. Whoever you are, what I'm about to say is directed to you." Moroni actually does capture a nuance of this sort in one place in his letter, of course. He speaks of rousing whatever governors might have at least a "spark" of freedom remaining in them and of making extinct "those who have desires to usurp power" (v. 27). This indicates that Moroni thought that some of the governors might be different from others and that they could and would join him in uniting against the Lamanite assault. Moroni thus appears to have had in mind the possibility of both better and worse governors, even though he didn't display this possibility in his opening greeting. However, although it would have been technically more accurate if he had done so, it would seem unfair to fault Moroni for such inexactness given the circumstances. In the context and exigencies of war, it seems completely understandable that capturing nuance was not Moroni's highest concern.

What we see in the end is that, except for this lack of nuance in his greeting, Moroni's epistle was accurate, just as his revelation had been. It was both consistent with that revelation and subsequently confirmed in its essence by Pahoran himself.²

2. It is also possible that Moroni's epistle was more accurate regarding Pahoran than we generally think—that is, that Pahoran actually did deserve some of the generalized condemnation Moroni meted out. This notion is not implausible, since Pahoran was the chief judge, with ultimate authority over Nephite affairs, and yet he was equivocal in his response to the "exceedingly numerous" dissenters who (1) were actively seeking to overthrow Nephite society; (2) had driven Pahoran out of Zarahemla and occupied the city; (3) had appointed



Captain Moroni's Spiritual Character

Once we understand that the revelation Moroni reports receiving is completely accurate, we can understand something else we might not have appreciated previously—namely, that Moroni was a person of sufficient spiritual refinement that he could receive revelation from the Lord in complete sentences. We don't notice this quality if we think Moroni's revelation (or at least how he quoted it) contained errors. But once we understand that the revelation was accurate, we can appreciate that it confirms numerous other indications in the text of Moroni's commitment and faithfulness to the Lord.³

Because Moroni is immersed so fully in defending Nephite lives from Lamanite assault and because we observe his military activities in such detail, it is easy to overlook indications of his spiritual refinement and to see him one-dimensionally. This tendency is especially reinforced if we think he errs on something as significant as receiving revelation from the Lord. When we correct our misreading, however, we can see Moroni more richly: he is a man who, though immersed for years in defensive military action, nevertheless qualifies for specific, tangible spiritual direction from the Lord, and receives it.

their own king; (4) had formed an official alliance with the Lamanites—specifically to help them conquer the Nephites; and (5) were preventing the delivery of men and supplies to support the Nephite army (Alma 61:3–8). Although Pahoran reports that he had assembled sufficient support that the insurrectionists “do fear us and durst not come out against us to battle” (61:7), he also tells us that he was unsure if pursuing military action against his Nephite brethren was just (61:19)—this, despite their armed treason and their explicit alliance with the Lamanites to overthrow the society Pahoran had been appointed to lead and protect. Considering these elements of the text, it wouldn't be unreasonable to conclude that Pahoran's inaction placed him—at least to some degree—among those who deserved the Lord's condemnation, in which case Moroni's epistle, regarding Pahoran himself, is not as inaccurate as it might appear on the surface.

3. Although this is a topic that deserves attention in its own right, it is too large a matter to be addressed here. Relevant passages, however, include Alma 44:3–6, 11; 46:12, 13, 16–18, 20, 23–27; 54:10; 60:25, 28, 34–36; and 62:2. Mormon also describes Moroni in significant spiritual terms; see Alma 48:7, 10, 12, 13, 16–18.



Duane Boyce received his academic training in psychology, philosophy, and the clinical treatment of families. He received a PhD from Brigham Young University and conducted his postdoctoral study in developmental psychology at Harvard University. He was a member of the Moral Studies Group at BYU and served on the faculty there. He is a founding partner of the Arbinger Institute, a worldwide management consulting and educational firm, and is the author or coauthor of five books. He has published academic essays on scriptural topics in *BYU Studies Quarterly*, *The FARMS Review*, *Religious Educator*, *Interpreter: A Journal of Latter-day Saint Faith and Scholarship*, and the *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture*. He is author of the recent book, *Even unto Bloodshed: An LDS Perspective on War* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2015).



January Night

Once the snow has fallen,
moonlight becomes
superfluous.

Winterlight,
shadow-friend,
suffuses all.

The difference between night
and day
is a degree of iridescence.

No creature slinks towards us
from the umbral woods,
fangs dripping.

We are the creatures.
We are the woods.
We are the light
and the shadow,

all slumbering together
in the glow-dark hush.

—Susan Jeffers



*Your Sister in the Gospel: The Life of Jane Manning James,
a Nineteenth-Century Black Mormon*

By Quincy D. Newell

New York: Oxford University Press, 2019

Reviewed by Carter Charles

Biographer Quincy D. Newell admits that she approaches the story of Jane Manning James (1820–1908), one of the first black members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, “for what it tells us about religion and race in nineteenth-century America” (4–5) and because it is a “history of Mormonism from below” (135). Such a story, she argues, “demonstrates how a focus on temple rituals and priesthood,” though always central to Latter-day Saints, “blinds us to the everyday lived religion of thousands of nineteenth-century Mormons” (135). Beyond participating in the project of recovering the ethnically diverse past of the Church, Newell’s overall goal seems to be to position James’s story where it belongs: in the “books on African American history, American women’s history, and the history of the American West” (1).

Your Sister in the Gospel is a must-read, with eight chapters and just over 138 pages. About three pages of acknowledgements give insight into her multiple research venues and the experts who provided intellectual and material support (W. Paul Reeve, Patrick Q. Mason, J. Spencer Fluhman, Kate Holbrook, and Brittany Chapman Nash, to name just a few). Two notably welcome sections of the book are the “Who’s Who in Jane’s story” (three pages), in which Newell meticulously identifies everyone known to have been associated with Jane Manning James,¹ and the primary-source appendices (fourteen pages), which include her patriarchal blessings.

1. Newell makes a case as to why she mostly refers to Jane Manning James by her first name (3). I heartily welcome the sense of closeness of doing so, but here, I will adhere to the convention of using her full name or her most common last names.



The book is organized chronologically, allowing readers to follow James from childhood to her death (1908). The book also covers present-day interest in her life: Newell mentions the 2018 “Mormon Prayer Candles” (138) and a 2017 general conference sermon in which senior Church leader M. Russell Ballard enjoined Latter-day Saints to “eliminate any prejudice, including racism, sexism, and nationalism” (137).² Ballard’s call becomes even more meaningful to readers who know that he is also a great-great-grandson of Hyrum Smith—who blessed Jane Manning James in 1844—and a great-grandson of Joseph F. Smith, the last ecclesiastical leader she petitioned for her temple rituals, during the early phases of the Church’s temple and priesthood restriction for members with African heritage. James signed her last petition to Joseph F. Smith, “Your sister in the gospel” (130), which became the title of Newell’s book.

The book is free of jargon, which makes it accessible to a wide readership, without sacrificing quality or buying into easy conclusions. Newell thus rises to the challenge, for all good historians, to survey possible options—to “flesh out the possibilities and follow the suggestions of the evidence” while leaving room for other options “where the sources are inconclusive” (5). Because of that, she warns from the outset that “much of this story . . . is conjectural” (5). This translates into a non-negligible use of the past conditional tense (*would, may, might have* + past-tense verb) and adverbs of probability (*likely, perhaps, probably, certainly*). Their accumulation has the potential to trigger uneasiness.³ They can also be seen as a sign of professionalism and of humility in light of the scarcity of documents: as Newell’s extensive research shows, Jane Manning James did leave a paper trail “to be remembered” (1), but it was not as consistent and rich as that of other Saints who were more educated and wholly dedicated to record keeping.

Newell’s use of modals and conditionals will always be preferred to authoritative statements that are not warranted by either direct evidence or the larger context of a story. Readers who see them for their benefit will appreciate the possibility they provide to come up with hypotheses other than what Newell presents. For instance, to Newell’s possible reasons as to why plural marriage “might . . . have sounded more ordinary—less scandalous to Jane than to the white people around

2. M. Russell Ballard, “The Trek Continues,” *Ensign* 47 (November 2017): 106.

3. There are sixteen occurrences on pages 8 through 9.



her” (46), one may add that while James’s sense of marriage may indeed have been informed by circumstances imposed by slavery, she probably had no idea of what was going on, as evidenced in her insistence that she did not understand what “adoption”—in the sense of being sealed as an “adopted” member—into Joseph and Emma’s family meant (113).

Likewise, to the postulate that “Jane’s editorial comment in her Retrenchment Society remarks [about self-unction and healing] suggested a certain skepticism about the importance of the ecclesiastical priesthood to the practice of healing” (121), one might argue that her belief in charisma did not seem to make her feel superior to ecclesiastical authorities, whom she respectfully petitioned for rituals she believed were vital to her salvation. Newell shows that James forcefully disputed the racial basis of the denial of her temple rituals (105), but she does not come across as a radical or like William McCary, the black coreligionist who came up with his own prophetic claims and sealing ritual (63–64).

It will also take a little more for Newell to convince that the derogatory term *aunt*, used even when there was no filial connection, “erases” Jane Manning James’s sexuality (129). One may question how her sexuality was “a problematic part of her identity as a Mormon” and what part of her “sexual activity did not follow LDS norms” (129). If polygamy and temple marriage were the determining characteristics of that norm, then obviously she was outside of it. But since she was not the only woman who was not sealed in a polygamous union, that norm was not binding. And if it was not binding, it was hardly a norm. Newell convincingly demonstrates that Jane Manning James never lived with a man she was not married to. The only alternative left for a sexuality outside of the norm would be divorce. But even that, the author shows, was not uncommon (90), meaning that it was not dishonorable or “markers of failure” for her to have had the labels of “single” or “divorced” in nineteenth-century Utah (105).

Of course, the above discussions reveal more of my inability to fully grasp one or two arguments in a work whose quality is beyond question. Whenever possible, the book lays bare the whereabouts of Jane Manning James and of anyone who ever lived under the same roof as her. In the 2017 conference sermon Newell refers to, Ballard describes Jane Manning James as “a most remarkable disciple who faced difficult challenges,”⁴ without elaborating. Newell’s book is not intended

4. Ballard, “Trek Continues,” 104.



to “promote the faith of Latter-day Saints” (4),⁵ but Latter-day Saint readers might find their faith strengthened when they discover that “difficult challenges” meant difficulty for Jane Manning James to belong in America, difficulty to belong in the religion she had embraced, divorce, disappointments with children, death, denial when she basically asked if there was no balm in Gilead for her (105) and, through it all, the ability to still see the hand of God in her life.

Ultimately, beyond the praises of Newell’s peers in academia, those who claim a connection to the restoration initiated through Joseph Smith are indebted to her, a sister in humanity and in God, for bringing greater attention to Jane Manning James’s lifelong struggle to be fully recognized as a sister. The title of the book, *Your Sister in the Gospel*, is fitting for an observer like Newell. The challenge for all Latter-day Saints is to find ways to further own her as *our* sister.

Carter Charles is an assistant professor in the Department of Church History and Doctrine at Brigham Young University. Prior to coming to BYU, he was a tenured faculty at University Bordeaux Montaigne (France), where he obtained all of his degrees: a BA in linguistics, literature, and history of Anglophone countries (2004); two MAs in American studies (2005 and 2007); and a PhD (2013), for which his dissertation was titled “The Political Integration of Mormons in the United States, from Reed Smoot to Mitt Romney.”

5. Nor is it intended to provide fodder to those who want to “tear down the church” (4).



*The New Testament: A Translation for Latter-day Saints:
A Study Bible*

By Thomas A. Wayment

Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University;
Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2019

Reviewed by Philip L. Barlow

Thomas Wayment, classics professor at Brigham Young University, has earned a reputation as one of the most capable and reliable Latter-day Saint scholars of the New Testament and the ancient classical world in which Christianity arose. Educated at the Claremont Graduate School of Religion, Wayment generally addresses Latter-day Saint audiences, whose faith he shares. His writing includes credible work on New Testament manuscript traditions, Joseph Smith's translation of the Bible, and the historical lives of Jesus and Paul. Wayment has now accomplished his most ambitious project to date: a fresh translation, based on the best available Greek manuscripts, of the entire New Testament into a modern, lucid English.

Wayment's translation seeks to serve the perceived needs of English-speaking members of the Church. This goal is evident in both the translation proper and the supplementary material. Wayment explains the need for a New Testament in readily understood modern prose: "Jesus did not speak using archaic English terms and phrases. His speech was quite ordinary [for its time and place]. . . . As language evolves, so too translations need to evolve" (viii). A student of scripture, for example, can with Wayment's translation conveniently read Jesus's parable of the wheat and *weeds* in Matthew 13 without having to look at a footnote to learn what tares are (31–32). But more than mere convenience is at stake in this translation. In many passages, Wayment's modern English can save a hapless reader from being stumped by intricate Pauline arguments that are entangled in the half-foreign tongue of Jacobian English. Wayment's modernizing service to us is important. His text is readable and intelligible, hence inviting.

The presentation of this translation includes helpful, though not unusual, headings preceding and within each chapter. The volume also



includes able and undogmatic introductions to each New Testament book; these introductions address evidence of purported authorship; ancient manuscripts; and the structure, organization, traits, and apparent intent of each book. Excluding the introductions for the Gospels (for some unstated reason), the introduction to each book (or cluster, such as 1, 2, and 3 John) also comments briefly on the book's connection to Latter-day Saint beliefs, even where the connections are weak. The introduction to 1 Timothy, for example, acknowledges that the "Pastoral Epistles have not been overtly influential in the Restoration, but Latter-day Saints will find in them support for the sixth article of faith: 'We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church'" (379). By this, Wayment means to suggest that first-century bishops worked in connection with deacons and elders—a modest insight.

The volume's rich, succinct annotations compose a quarter to a third of a typical page and will help both casual and serious readers. Throughout the cross-references, explanatory notes, and introductions to each book, Wayment's prose, like his translation, is clear, lean, unpretentious, competent, and illuminating. His annotations reflect diligent mastery and admirable balance: they are as long as they need to be and no longer. The scriptural cross-references are informed by Wayment's direct textual, literary, historical, theological, linguistic, and conceptual expertise.¹ His annotations include variants in the ancient manuscript record and sometimes serve also as commentary. The following is a good sample of Wayment's annotation, commenting on Mark 1:30–40, in which Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law, departs from Capernaum, and heals a man with leprosy:

1:30 Paul also noted that Simon Peter was married (1 Corinthians 9:5).
1:32 The importance of *sundown* is that the Sabbath had passed and Jesus can now work freely. 1:34 Mark, more than the other Gospels, reports that Jesus frequently told people to not proclaim or make him known. This phenomenon is known as the *Messianic Secret*, and Jesus on occasion encouraged people to delay proclaiming him until it was the right time to do so (see Mark 1:44–45; 7:36; 8:29–30). Mark may have seen this as fulfillment of the saying recorded in Mark 4:11. 1:35 Mark frequently notes that Jesus liked to retire to uninhabited, or *deserted*,

1. For comparison, the cross-references in the standard Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible were largely created by an army of teachers in the Church's education system using primarily their devotion and best judgment; in many cases, this yielded poorly curated connections that are conceptually and theologically uncertain.



places (see Mark 1:45; 6:31, 32, 35). 1:40 Anciently, those with leprosy were banished (2 Kings 7:3–10). Little is known about how they were culturally accepted or ostracized in the first century CE. The Gospels do not portray them as living in separate communities. (69)

These notes are an unobtrusive asset.²

Despite these helps, Wayment's *New Testament* is not, of course, a full commentary; Julie Smith's admirable commentary on the Gospel of Mark is by itself twice the length of Wayment's translation of the New Testament as a whole.³ But as an annotated, convenient edition of the New Testament, cast in modern English for common use by Church members as a supplement to their KJV, Wayment's volume is uneclipsed by any other available Latter-day Saint presentation of the New Testament.

This translation is deeply beholden to the King James Version, which Wayment rightly says is “woven into our hymns, our ordinances, and our scriptural canon” (vii). He is eager not to offend KJV-reading Saints and insists that his years-long labor is not an attempt to replace the KJV but rather “an invitation to engage again the meaning of the text for a new and more diverse English readership” (vii). He therefore defers to King James phrasing unless he detects a compelling reason to overturn it. But while this is a courtesy to the common sensibilities of Church members, I found myself wishing that Wayment's translation was less beholden to tradition, thereby exposing us readers to better or alternate interpretations than the KJV proffers.

For example, Wayment's recasting of Matthew 5:48—“Therefore, you will be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect” (14)—puts only a slightly different angle on the enigmatic commandment given in the KJV: “Be ye therefore perfect.” Wayment's version does not resolve the ambiguity of whether the sentence is properly understood as *present imperative* (that is, a command) or *future declarative* (a prophecy). A bolder shift from tradition might yield alternate insight into what Christ intended. For instance, the Greek word behind “perfect” in Matthew 5:48, τέλειοι (*téleioi*), may be intended not as “flawless” but rather as “whole” or “complete.” Kenneth Samuel Wuest, in *The New Testament:*

2. For comparison, one might consult the exceptional quality of the notes in *The New Jerusalem Bible*, produced by Catholic scholars. *The New Jerusalem Bible* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985).

3. Julie M. Smith, *The Gospel According to Mark*, New Testament Commentary series (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2019).

An Expanded Translation, translates the same passage as, “Therefore, as for you, you shall be those who are complete in your character, even as your Father in heaven is complete in His being.”⁴ Wuest’s untraditional translation surrenders elegance by using as many English words as necessary to bring out the richness, force, and clarity of the original text, and although he stretches the limits of appropriate English word order and style, he does compel a reader’s attention to what he or she is reading. In such an instance as Matthew 5:48, the shifted implications for discipleship and living are substantial.

Both the Church’s traditional edition and Wayment’s more accessible, modern translation assist Church members in integrating the Bible, modern revelation, and Church teachings into a conceptual whole. These sources, however, may limit understanding if used exclusively or naively. Additional and important perspectives can be found in Bibles that seek not to harmonize ancient and modern scripture but to convey how Christians in the first century would have understood the texts. One dramatic example is David Bentley Hart’s *The New Testament: A Translation*.⁵

This and any such quibbles are meant to invite us to resist growing too inbred in our view of scripture and do not signal discontent with Wayment’s large achievement. “Where there is no vision, the people perish,” as the proverb teaches (Prov. 29:18). But the vision we require can be threatened by partial cataract if we do not have access to a Bible we can read and understand and that is relevant to the gift of the Restoration. Wayment’s New Testament translation is a Bible that readers can use to help clear their vision. I and potentially every English-speaking Church member ought to acknowledge our debt to him. Thanks be to the scriptural ophthalmologist we call Thomas Wayment.

Philip L. Barlow is the associate director of the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship at BYU and the former Leonard J. Arrington Chair of Mormon History and Culture at Utah State University. He is the author of *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of Latter-day Saints in American Religion*, updated ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

4. Kenneth S. Wuest, *The New Testament: An Expanded Translation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1961), 13.

5. David Bentley Hart, *The New Testament: A Translation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2017).



Bible Culture and Authority in the Early United States

By Seth Perry

Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2018

Reviewed by Kent P. Jackson

In his introduction to *Bible Culture and Authority in the Early United States*, author Seth Perry of Princeton University writes of “a shared set of symbols, types, behaviors, and vocabulary” that derive from or were influenced by the King James Bible (2). The book discusses the interaction of this shared set with early American society, asserting that the Bible and biblical language were resources that individuals in the nineteenth century used to create legitimacy—that is, *authority* in their relationships with others. *Scripturalization* is the term Perry employs to describe how people, language, rhetoric, and other aspects of society obtained this authority by drawing from the stories and texts of the Bible.

That the Bible played a major role in the early history of the United States is well known. Margaret Hills documented over fourteen hundred editions of the Bible that were printed in the United States between 1776 and 1850, the vast majority of which were Protestant editions.¹ Perry sees the proliferation of Bibles not only as a reflection of America’s unique culture but also, rightly, as a contributor to that culture.

Also of notable influence were the “parabiblical texts” that accompanied Bibles—the cross-references, concordances, commentaries, and other resources that surrounded Bible verses on the printed page or that were published in separate volumes meant to complement one’s Bible reading. “Because they carry interpretive meaning and instruct readers in that meaning, paratexts carry scholarly, ecclesiastical, social, or state authority into the text itself” (41). In the absence of clerical

1. Margaret T. Hills, *The English Bible in America: A Bibliography of Editions of the Bible and the New Testament Published in America, 1777–1957* (New York: American Bible Society and New York Public Library, 1962), 1–207.



intermediaries, guides of this sort were an essential part of scripture reading for many Protestants. Because of these parabiblical texts, “*scriptura* was never, ever, *sola*”—that is, the scriptures were not, in fact, the sole source of authority for early nineteenth-century Americans (22, italics in original).

Bible Culture and Authority highlights several individuals of the period to demonstrate the interplay between their religious careers and the language and content of printed Bibles. Some, like Lorenzo Dow and Ellen White, are well known, but Perry also introduces his readers to some who are less widely known, such as Adeline Hosner and Zilpha Elaw. In the case of Ellen White, Perry writes, “When seventeen-year-old Ellen Harmon [White] began slipping into trance states in 1844 she was joining a very old tradition of female visionaries, but she had access to an unprecedented print-bible culture that allowed her to parlay her visionary authority into something enduring: a fully articulated bible-based authority” (58). Perry might have written the same about the other individuals he discusses as well. Interacting with people who were part of a biblically infused culture, preachers and visionaries could speak in the language of scripture, placing themselves in the roles of biblical characters.

The book’s discussion culminates in the career of Joseph Smith, who not only presented himself in scriptural terms but also published volumes of new scripture. In most ways, the Latter-day Saint prophet fits well within Perry’s discussion of scripturalization: his followers were part of a Bible-based culture, and he produced scriptures and revelations that are often in the language of the King James translation. Joseph Smith’s life was scripturalization on a grand scale.

Explaining where the Latter-day Saint scriptural texts came from is, no doubt, a difficult task. Perry attempts to take on this topic in the last chapter of the book. Beginning from the premise that the Book of Mormon is a nineteenth-century creation and not ancient scripture, as Latter-day Saints believe, Perry suggests that the biblical phraseology of the Book of Mormon is the result of two factors: young Joseph Smith knew the Bible far better than other historians believe he did, and he used tools like commentaries, Bible dictionaries, and cross-references when he wrote the Book of Mormon. Perry views the parabiblical aids that were available in the early nineteenth century as key to understanding the Latter-day Saint scriptures. Joseph Smith knew these aids well, Perry writes, and drew from them as he wrote the Book of Mormon. He suggests that the Prophet and his scribes searched for biblical passages



in cross-references and concordances and arranged the passages in innovative ways to produce the unique Book of Mormon text (115–16). Perry makes the same case for the production of Joseph Smith's revelations and his Bible revision.

Perry's solution is a good-faith effort by someone who rejects the Book of Mormon's truth claims to explain the origin of its text. But his analysis often falls short. He fails, for instance, to account for the short timeframe (three months) in which Joseph Smith and his scribes produced the text. The book also does not consider the textual evidence provided by the existing sections of the original Book of Mormon manuscript and the printer's manuscript, which indicate no signs of hesitation, research, deliberation, or significant editing, which would be expected if the Prophet were consulting and studying biblical and parabiblical texts. Perry's argument regarding Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon is also harmed by a spattering of inaccuracies: Joseph was not the youngest son in his family (113), he never marked up his printed Bible "with corrections and additions" (126), and he did not continue to make corrections to the end of his life (126, 128).

The role of the parabiblical resources is an ongoing theme in *Bible Culture and Authority*, but I suspect that Perry overstates their importance in the lives of ordinary people. Paul Gutjahr points out that the presence of various charts, tables, lists, cross-references, concordances, and summaries printed in Bibles was a major factor in marketing the Bibles.² The evidence of sales shows that parabiblical content made a difference in what kinds of Bibles people bought because those add-ons made Bibles look scholarly, sophisticated, and useful—especially to consumers who did not possess religious libraries.³ Though Perry discusses the significance of cross-references, commentaries, and concordances vis-à-vis the biblical text itself, he argues, unconvincingly in my view, that they made sequential reading of the Bible increasingly less common. There is no doubt that preachers and pastors availed themselves of these tools in preparing sermons and publications, but Perry does not present compelling evidence that lay people made much use of them.

2. Paul C. Gutjahr, *An American Bible: A History of the Good Book in the United States, 1777–1880* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999), 39–88.

3. See Kent P. Jackson, "The Cooperstown Bible," *New York History* 95, no. 2 (Spring 2014): 255–61.



Readers who pick up *Bible Culture and Authority* will be disappointed if they are expecting an engaging and enlightening narrative like Paul Gutjahr's *An American Bible* or a revealing analysis like David Holland's *Sacred Borders*.⁴ *Bible Culture and Authority* seems more like a collection of essays than a monograph, and the chapters do not always logically lead from one idea to the next. Later chapters often unnecessarily repeat some of the information presented in earlier chapters. On the whole, the book contains, in my view, much over-reaching in an effort to package its stories within the book's thesis.

Kent P. Jackson is a professor emeritus of religion at Brigham Young University. His most recent book is an introduction to Islam: *Islam: A First Encounter* (Provo, Utah: Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies, Brigham Young University, 2019).

4. David F. Holland, *Sacred Borders: Continuing Revelation and Canonical Restraint in Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).



Lot Smith: Mormon Pioneer and American Frontiersman, by Carmen R. Smith and Talana S. Hooper (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2018)

This extensive biography of prominent pioneer and Latter-day Saint Lot Smith was written by mother-daughter team Carmen R. Smith and Talana S. Hooper. Both have had previous interest and experience in writing history: Carmen Smith was awarded the *Utah Historical Quarterly* Editor's Choice for her 1978 report on the rediscovery of the Mormon Battalion's Lost Well, and Talana Hooper has published several family histories and compiled and edited a history of the people of Central, Arizona.

Their involvement in this biography began with Jim Smith, Lot Smith's fifty-second son, who was born six months after his father's death and naturally had a deep interest in his father's life. This interest carried on to Jim's son Omer Smith, who continued the research and shared it with his wife and daughter, Carmen Smith and Talana Hooper. After Omer's death, Carmen and Talana carried on his work and compiled it into this biography. The personal, multi-generational investment of the authors and their years of sacrifice to pursue this research enrich the biography and the readers' experience with it.

The contents of the biography cover Lot Smith's time as a member of the Mormon Battalion; a minuteman in the Utah War; the color bearer general for the Nauvoo Legion; captain of the Life Guards who helped rescue the Willie and Martin handcart companies; a Civil War captain; a missionary to the British Isles; the first sheriff in Davis County, Utah; one of the first settlers of Arizona; and the most feared gunman in Arizona.

Though Carmen Smith and Talana Hooper have personal connections to Lot Smith, they do not shy away from

controversial topics such as polygamy, violence, and early settlers' relationships with Native Americans. All of these topics together make for an interesting and informative read. This book will appeal to readers interested in Church history, the Civil War, the history and settlement of Utah and Arizona, polygamist life in the nineteenth century, Native American history, and life on the frontier.

—Hannah Charlesworth

The Earth Will Appear as the Garden of Eden, edited by Jedediah S. Rogers and Matthew C. Godfrey (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2019)

The Earth Will Appear as the Garden of Eden is a collection of essays designed to introduce, review, illustrate, and promote research and scholarship on the environmental history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The book well accomplishes these purposes in an honest and engaging fashion. While essays in edited volumes such as this are often uneven in terms of the quality and the contribution they offer, each piece in this work is remarkably well written and significant. As the book's introduction explains, Latter-day Saint environmental history is a relatively new discipline, ripe with opportunities and avenues for engagement. The introduction and Jedediah S. Rogers's opening essay constitute a wonderful primer for anyone embarking on Latter-day Saint environmental history research—I found myself wishing I had had these articles when I first began to dabble in the discipline.

The remainder of the volume is divided into three parts. Part 1 contains two essays, one by Sara Dant and the other by Thomas Alexander, a pioneer in this genre of history. These essays chronicle the history of environmental



ethos, teachings, and practices that have prevailed among Church members and leaders over time and invite readers to assess their own understanding of the topic.

Part 2 contains four essays that focus on the Church's theology and its interaction with culture, geography, and the environment. In this section, Matthew C. Godfrey explores the Church's concept of Zion and how its placement and establishment have impacted the environment. Brett D. Dowdle reviews the social, cultural, and environmental challenges faced both by early missionaries to Britain and by British converts in Nauvoo. Richard Francaviglia next offers a fascinating discussion of what maps produced by early Church members reveal about Church environmental history and perceptions. Betsy Gaines Quammen concludes part 2 with an exploration of the historical, theological, cultural, economic, and environmental issues surrounding the establishment of Zion National Park.

Part 3 is a delightful anthology of articles covering a broad range of Church environmental history and issues. Jeff Nichols discusses the environmental and theological history of the livestock industry in Utah. Brian Frehner reviews the environmental history of irrigation in Utah and the challenges that controlling water created for the early Saints. Brian Q. Cannon follows with insights into the reasoning behind and environmental issues created by the Church's early efforts to establish new agricultural settlements throughout the Intermountain West and how those efforts fostered federal land use regulation. Nathan N. Waite next provides an overview of the historical theology and culture of gardening among Church members and the environmental issues that have contributed

to it. Rebecca K. Andersen concludes part 3 with a serious look at the environmental impact of aggregate mining in Utah and its interaction with the Church and its historical sites.

The volume concludes with two essays. The first is an epilogue by another pioneer in the discipline, George B. Handley, that provides a summary of what he has observed over the years regarding the Church's, and Church members', stances on, attitudes about, and actions toward caring for Creation. His essay gives hope for a future of responsible environmental stewardship. The closing essay by Elder Marcus B. Nash poignantly illustrates that hope and direction as he invites members of the Church to be environmentally careful and wise as we use and live on this earth God created for us.

—Terry Ball

Life beyond the Grave: Christian Interfaith Perspectives, edited by Alonzo L. Gaskill and Robert L. Millet (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2019)

As suggested in the title, *Life beyond the Grave* is a compilation of perspectives about the afterlife from a range of Christian denominations. The book's contents were taken from a 2016 academic conference hosted at Brigham Young University. Titled "Beyond the Grave: Christian Interfaith Perspectives," the ecumenical conference was designed to build understanding among Christian groups. Editor Robert L. Millet noted on the conference, "There has been no effort whatsoever to ignore theological differences between the various traditions, nor was it ever expected that a presenter compromise in the slightest what he or she holds to be true. . . . We



came together to listen, to learn, to ask questions and inquire, in short, to better understand one another" (viii).

Life beyond the Grave reports on the presentations of ten scholars, each from a specific faith, including those who are Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, Methodist, Calvinist, Latter-day Saint, Jehovah's Witness, Seventh-day Adventist, and Episcopalian. Some presentations are general introductions to a faith's basic beliefs: for example, in "Heaven Opened in the Soul: The Religious Imagination of Methodists," David McAllister-Wilson explains the Methodist open-ended or "ad hoc" belief of the afterlife. "Methodists seem to believe in the afterlife in the way we believe there will be life found elsewhere in the universe some day and a cure for cancer will be found: we expect so; we hope so. And our hopes are loosely derived from our belief in a wondrous creation and a loving God" (54).

Other pieces narrate theories or specific concepts regarding afterlife. Metropolitan Nikitas, for example, in "Changed by Grace: Some Introductory Thoughts on the Eastern Orthodox Understanding of Death and the Afterlife," looks at some Eastern Orthodox traditions regarding burial of the dead: "The body is not to be cremated or given to science for research. These actions are understood by many to be a type of irreverence shown for God's creation. . . . In fact, in traditional Orthodox lands there is no embalming, so the

body may return to the earth as soon as possible" (22).

Two of the ten chapters present Latter-day Saint perspectives: Brent L. Top's "The Near-Death Experience: Why Latter-day Saints Are So Interested" compares recorded near-death experiences of Latter-day Saints with the Church's doctrine, explaining that "core elements [of near-death experiences] feel familiar to most Latter-day Saints because of unique teachings regarding the immortal human soul, the nature and capacities of the spirit body, and the purposes and conditions of the postearth spirit realm" (96).

In "Christ's Descent into Hell: A Latter-day Saint Perspective," Robert L. Millet addresses the enduring Christian "soteriological problem of evil" (113) with an explanation of the Latter-day Saint doctrine of the redemption for the dead; he extensively quotes Joseph Smith and the teachings of the Restoration, concluding that "Latter-day Saints' hope in Christ is in the infinite capacity of an infinite Being to save men and women from ignorance as well as from sin and death. . . . His influence and redemptive mercies span the veil of death" (131–32).

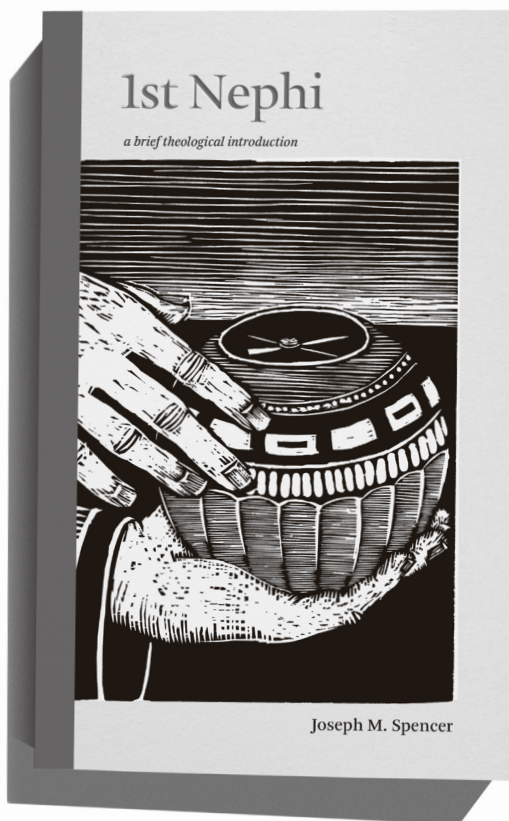
Life beyond the Grave will appeal to readers interested in comparative religion, eschatology, and cultural awareness.

—Alec Joseph Harding



The Book of Mormon

brief theological introductions



Slow down
Dive deeper
Find more

Rediscover the Book of Mormon
in twelve short books from
twelve remarkable scholars.

The Book of Mormon
brief theological introductions

FRESH. DEEP. FAITHFUL.

mi.byu.edu/brief

BYU Neal A. Maxwell Institute
for Religious Scholarship

